

Dear colleague,

The continuing events in the Middle East are extremely distressing for all of us and particularly for those who have personal links to the region. Within our communities, there will be people with very different viewpoints and experiences, and this can of course create tensions.

As I mentioned previously, it is really important that we treat each other with respect, and respect different beliefs and points of view, particularly at difficult times such as these. Universities are precisely the places where difficult and complex issues should be debated, and we have a clear [code of practice for free speech \[PDF\]](#) to allow staff, students and official visitors to do this with confidence and within the law.

For the vast majority of the time, I see our University community coming together to support each other, so that everyone can enjoy their university experience. In those isolated instances where an individual's behaviour breaches any of our University policies, we will not hesitate to fully investigate. In the rare instance where unlawful behaviour has occurred, we will involve the police. Such instances are thankfully uncommon and isolated at Queen Mary.

Regarding the encampment on the Mile End campus, we asked on 16 May for it to be dispersed with immediate effect. The encampment is unauthorised, and we continue to be very concerned that it poses a risk to the health and safety of our communities. Given the encampment remains, we have written to them again today to instruct them to disperse immediately.

I would like to urge everyone to please continue to support each other with compassion, understanding and empathy, which I know the majority of our community are doing. If you have any concerns, please do contact your line manager and please also be aware there is support available via our [employee assistance programme](#).

Best wishes,

Colin

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