

Dear student,

Similar to other universities across the country, on Monday (13 May) a demonstration began which involved an encampment on the lawn outside the Queens' Building on our Mile End campus.

The demonstration relates to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. The continuing events in the Middle East are hugely distressing for all, particularly those within our community who have family or personal links to the region. I would once again urge all our community to support each other with compassion, understanding and empathy for others' pain.

Whilst the demonstration is ongoing, please be ready to show your Queen Mary ID card as you enter the Mile End campus. All University activities will continue as normal and without disruption. We have enhanced our security presence to provide assurance to all our staff and students. If anyone has concerns when passing the protestors, please do [contact Security](#). I would also ask you to please be respectful to our Security team who are doing an incredibly difficult job and are here to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our whole community.

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 within the law.

The demonstrators did not seek authorisation to use our campus as required by our code of practice. We are monitoring the impact of the demonstration on our staff and student communities and the regular activities of the University, whilst being mindful of our legislative duty to promote free speech. We will keep this under review in consideration of our wider duties to foster good relations between members of our communities, assure safety and security of our communities, and the need to ensure all University activities can proceed unhindered.

Lawful free speech is actively encouraged at Queen Mary; however, we will not tolerate racism, antisemitism, islamophobia, abuse, incitement, discrimination, intimidation, or harassment of any kind. If you experience or witness anything like this, please report it immediately to [Security](#), or to your line manager/ School/Institute, or through our [Report + Support](#) scheme. Please also be aware that there is support available for all our staff and students. For students we have our [student wellbeing hub](#) and for staff we have our [employee assistance programme](#).

Best wishes,

Colin

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