

Personal Safety

Generally, the UK is a safe country with low levels of violence and street crime. However, you need to be aware of the types of situations that may put you at risk and what you can do to avoid them. Taking the personal safety advice suggested below and insuring your belongings when you arrive should be one of your first priorities.

Is my personal identity safe?

Your identity and personal information are valuable. Criminals can try to obtain your personal information and use it to open bank accounts, obtain credit cards, loans and documents.

Treat your personal information and online log in details e.g. your user name and passwords in the same way you would your house keys. Do not give them away!

Be aware of Phishing. Phishing is a way of attempting to acquire sensitive information such as usernames, passwords and credit/debit card details by pretending to be a trustworthy source in an e-mail. E-mails purporting to be from trusted organisations e.g. banks, Student Finance England, are commonly used to lure the unsuspecting public. You will often be directed to enter details on fake websites that look and feel almost identical to the legitimate one. **DO NOT REPLY TO THEM!**

The website **www.identitytheft.org.uk** can help you to protect yourself, advises what to do if it happens to you, and suggests where to get further help. Be aware that some antifraud companies offer fraud protection for a payment.

Can you give me any tips on looking after my belongings?

- Use an ultraviolet pen to mark your valuables with your name and student ID number.
- Make sure your TV, computer and other valuables cannot be seen through a window and never leave cash or credit cards lying around.
- If you have a bicycle, always lock it up by its frame and wheel to a fixed object when you're not using it. Mark it with your postcode.
- Try not to use a computer case when carrying a laptop; use a less obvious bag and think before using it. Don't display other expensive items such as watches, jewellery and mobile phones in busy public places.
- Don't leave your mobile on a table and, if it is stolen, immobilise it by calling 0870 1123 123. You will need to have your IMEI number when reporting a stolen phone - this can

be found by dialling *#06#. You can register your mobile phone free of charge with Immobilise Phone Crime at **www.immobilise.com**

How can I make my home secure?

- Use safety chains and lock all outside doors and deadlock windows.
- If you are female and live in a flat with a door entry system do not put Miss, Mrs, or Ms in front of your name; just use your family name.
- If in doubt about a visitor, do not let them in.
- If you live in a flat or a house with an outside light, use it.
- If you have a telephone-answering machine, don't record a message saying 'I am not available', as this tells the caller you are a single occupant.
- If you live in a shared house, don't assume there is someone else in who will make it secure when you go out. Make sure you leave the house secure at all times.
- If you are leaving the house empty, ask a friend to open and close your curtains/blinds and use a time-switch for your lights to make it look as if there is someone in, or put a lock on your room door keeping your valuables in this room when out.

Have you got any safety tips when I'm out and about?

- When you first move into your accommodation, find suitable and safe routes to shops and telephones. Try to find routes that are well-lit and busy.
- Walk on the pavement, facing on-coming traffic.
- If you are returning home late at night, walk in a group or use public transport. Avoid putting yourself at risk by taking shortcuts, for example, through dark alleyways or parks.
- Don't carry large amounts of cash with you when you are out.
- Always carry enough change and/or a telephone or telephone card to make a telephone call, or to get a taxi, should you need one.
- Be alert and brief when using a mobile phone and try to conceal it.
- Carry a personal attack alarm in your hand when walking at night. Some police stations give them away for free. Go to **www.suzylamplugh.org** or Tel: 0808 802 0300 for more information.
- Be aware of others around you at cash point machines and try not to use them at night or in poorly lit areas.

- Always memorise your PIN to access your money from a cash machine. Never write down your PIN or give it to anyone else. You can get cash at supermarket checkouts when buying other items.
- Have your keys ready well before you reach the door of your car or house.
- Carry your bag close to you with the clasp facing inwards or strap it over your shoulder. If someone grabs your bag, let it go. Your safety is more important than property.
- If you live in halls of residence, make sure no strangers follow you when you walk through the main entrance.

When using buses and trains:

- If travelling by bus, try not to wait alone at bus stops. When on the bus, sit downstairs where the driver and other passengers can see you.
- Arrange for others to meet you at the bus stop if you are returning late and have a long way to walk.
- If you can, take a taxi rather than walk the streets with a road map.
- If you travel by train, don't sit in an empty carriage. Try to sit near groups of people in a well-lit area.
- Check the time of the last train, bus or tube home to avoid being stranded at night.
- To remain safe and alert don't listen to personal stereos or have long conversations on mobile phones while you are walking.
- If you are lost, or in need of assistance when travelling by train, find a member of staff or telephone the British Transport Police on free phone 0800 40 50 40.

When using Black Taxis and Minicabs:

- Contact 0843 222 1234 to check if your local minicab firm has got a licence. Often, licensed cabs are cheaper than Black Taxis.
- Check the back of the cab to ensure there is an official licence plate or badge attached before you get in.
- Be aware that some minicabs that stop in the street may be cheaper, but are not licensed, and are therefore not safe. The Police have warned against using these cabs.
- Agree the fare before you get into a non-metered taxi in order to avoid misunderstandings when you get to your destination.

- Share a taxi where possible, but if you can't always sit in the back of a taxi and directly behind the driver.
- It is quite acceptable to chat with the driver, but do not give away any personal information.
- Have your cash ready and leave the cab before you pay the driver i.e. pay at the window.

Reporting a crime or a Cause for Concern on campus

Visit the security office in the Quad, College Building

Emergency Line: 020 8411 6200

Non-Emergency Line: 020 8411 4329

Cause for Concern: 0208 411 6200 Cause4Concern@mdx.ac.uk

The Cause for Concern Procedure has been designed to provide all staff and students with clear guidance on what to do should they be concerned about a student: <https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/your-support-services/cause-for-concern-procedure>

Fraud and personal identity theft

More information from www.actionfraud.police.uk

- Destroy and preferably shred receipts with your card details on and post with your name and address on.
- Make sure your computer has up-to-date anti-virus software and a firewall installed.
- Sign-up to Verified by Visa or MasterCard Secure Code whenever you are given the option while shopping online.
- If you receive bills, invoices or receipts for things you haven't bought, or financial institutions you don't normally deal with contact you about outstanding debts, take action.
- Be extremely wary of post, phone calls or emails offering you business deals out of the blue.

If you need advice about fraud, call Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 to discuss your situation with one of the specialist fraud advisors. To report a fraud, you can either use the online fraud reporting form or make your report by calling 0300 123 2040.

Any questions?

Contact the Middlesex University Student Welfare Advice Team on 020 8411 3008 or email: welfare@mdx.ac.uk. You can access some of our other Welfare Advice Guide information leaflets at: unihub.mdx.ac.uk/welfare-guides

Middlesex University Student Advice Team have made every effort to ensure that the information contained in this leaflet is accurate. Middlesex University however, cannot be held responsible for any omissions or errors.

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