

Blackfriars Hall Policy Statement and Procedure for Accessing Student Accommodation Bedrooms and Common Facilities

Last updated: January 2026

1) Purpose, Scope, and Principles

Purpose. To set out when and how Blackfriars Hall staff, contractors, and agents may enter student **bedrooms** and **communal areas** (kitchens, lounges, corridors, plant rooms in residences) for:

- (A) **Reactive repair or maintenance**; and
- (B) **Non-maintenance purposes** (e.g., welfare checks, inspections, compliance visits, viewings).

The policy applies to all Blackfriars Hall-managed accommodation that is covered by the **UUK/GuildHE Accommodation Code of Practice (the “Code”)**, i.e. buildings at 16-17 St John St and 33 St Giles.

Key Principles

- Residents have a right to privacy and *quiet enjoyment*; entry will be **necessary, proportionate, and respectful**.
- Blackfriars will meet repair, safety, and compliance duties and follow Code standards and audit expectations.
- Entries outside routine maintenance are subject to **minimum notice**, with limited **exceptions** (emergency; lawful arrest/warrant; abatement of nuisance; serious welfare concerns).

2) Legal and Code Framework

- Blackfriars Hall accommodation is managed in accordance with the **UUK/GuildHE Accommodation Code of Practice (11 March 2025)**, which sets standards on repairs, maintenance, health & safety, and the landlord–tenant relationship, including **landlord access** provisions and verification/audit.
- The **Student Accommodation (Codes of Management Practice and Specified Educational Establishments) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2025** formally approve the 2025 UUK/GuildHE Code for England.
- General UK housing law recognises tenants’ rights to **quiet enjoyment** and requires **reasonable prior notice (commonly 24 hours)** for non-emergency entry; emergency entry is permitted to prevent harm to life or property.

- Blackfriars' published guidance confirms reactive access may be needed without prior permission where necessary to prevent damage or service interruption.
[\[bfriars.ox.ac.uk\]](http://bfriars.ox.ac.uk)

Note: This policy sits alongside residents' licence/tenancy terms, the Hall's Health & Safety policies, and welfare/safeguarding procedures.

3) Definitions

- **Resident:** Any student licensed or tenanted to occupy Blackfriars accommodation.
- **Communal areas:** Kitchens, lounges, shared bathrooms, corridors, utility rooms, stairwells, plant/service risers within a residence.
- **Reactive repair/maintenance:** Unplanned works in response to faults, defects, breakdowns, leaks, alarms, pests, or safety hazards.
- **Emergency:** A situation posing immediate risk to life, health, security, or the fabric of the building (e.g., suspected gas leak, fire alarm activation, active water leak, structural risk, forced-entry to assist paramedics/police).

4) Policy Statements

4.1 Access for Reactive Repair or Maintenance (Category A)

1. Categories of repair are prioritised as **emergency, urgent, and non-urgent requests**, and Blackfriars' service level statement is as follows. Access arrangements for each of these categories is set out below.
 - **Emergency repairs** are normally carried out within four hours.
 - For **urgent repairs**, Blackfriars aims to carry out 80% of all work within one working day, and 100% within two.
 - For **non-urgent requests**, Blackfriars looks to carry out 70% of all work within 5 working days and 100% of the work in 10 working days.
2. **Access for emergency reactive works (immediate):**
 - Staff/contractors **may enter without prior notice or consent** to prevent risk to life, serious injury, building damage, or essential service loss. Doors may be unlocked/opened using master keys where justified. A brief **post-entry notice** will be left, and the resident emailed as soon as practicable.
3. **Access for urgent but non-immediate reactive works:**
 - Where safe and practicable, Blackfriars will attempt to notify the resident (email/SMS/call) **before** entry; if the resident is absent or unreachable and

delay risks damage or service interruption, staff/contractors may enter to stabilise the issue and leave a **post-entry notice**.

4. **Access for routine non-urgent reactive works:**

- Blackfriars will normally provide at least **24 hours' written notice**, stating the **purpose, time of visit** and **expected duration**.

4.2 Access for Non-Maintenance Purposes (Category B)

Examples: welfare checks, routine inspections, statutory compliance checks, room viewings (where permitted), inventory checks, housekeeping assessments, investigations into complaints or potential breaches.

1. **Minimum notice and content (standard rule):**

- Blackfriars will give residents **at least 24 hours' written notice** (email or in-app message) for non-maintenance entries, specifying: (i) **purpose**; (ii) **date/time window**; and (iii) **estimated duration**. Entry will be at a reasonable time of day. (This reflects sector norms and the Code's landlord-tenant relationship standards.)

2. **Exceptions to notice (no prior notice required):**

- **Emergency** (as defined above).
- **Lawful entry by the police or authorised officers** to execute an **arrest** or **warrant** (including civil court enforcement officers acting under warrant).
- **Abatement of a nuisance** (e.g., disabling a blaring alarm, addressing an active leak causing damage to others).
- **Serious concerns about a resident's welfare, or prompt investigation of a serious incident being required** (e.g., credible reports of self-harm risk, no response to repeated knocks/calls, signs of medical emergency). In such cases, staff will follow the **Emergency/Welfare Entry Procedure** (section 5.3) and record justification.

3. **Communal areas:**

- Staff/contractors may access **communal areas** for cleaning and weekly routines such as fire alarm testing **without individual room notice**, but will **attend on a notified schedule in advance where practicable**; emergency access is permitted at any time.

4. **Right to quiet enjoyment:**

- Frequency and duration of non-maintenance entries will be **kept to the minimum necessary**; unnecessary or repeated entries are prohibited.

5) Procedures

5.1 Planning and Notifying Access (Non-Emergency)

Step 1: Justification and scope. The lead staff member confirms the lawful basis for entry, the **purpose**, the **minimum personnel** needed, and likely **duration**.

Step 2: Notice to resident(s). Send written notice within allowed timeframes given above, stating purpose, date/time window, duration, and names/roles (or contractor company) of those attending. Offer a **reasonable alternative** slot if the resident flags a genuine conflict or concern.

Reasonable adjustment must be made in advance for any occupier of Blackfriars accommodation who has a disability that affects how they will respond to uninvited entry into their environment. This reasonable adjustment may include, for example, communicating separately with the student in advance to agree a reasonable process for carrying out the inspection or works required.

Step 3: Identification. Staff and contractors **wear ID or branded uniform** on arrival; contractors must be pre-briefed on conduct, confidentiality, and safeguarding (see the separate [Building Access Permission guidelines](#))

Step 4: On arrival. Knock, announce "Blackfriars Hall, maintenance/inspection," wait a reasonable period, and **seek permission to enter**. If no answer and entry is necessary/justified per the notice, use master keys. Keep entry **only to the stated purpose and for a minimum duration possible**.

Step 5: After the visit. Use the Blackfriars maintenance ticketing system to confirm completion (or if further access is required), including any follow-up actions.

5.2 Reactive Maintenance

- **Emergency (immediate):** Enter, make safe, and **leave a post-entry note/email** summarising time of entry, reason, actions, and next steps. Where feasible, **photographic evidence** of the hazard (avoiding personal data) should be retained in the job record.
- **Urgent non-immediate:** Attempt prior contact; if not possible and delay risks damage or service loss, enter, make safe, and follow the post-entry steps above.

5.3 Emergency/Welfare Entry (Non-Maintenance)

Used when **no notice** is required (Section 4.2.2).

1. **Pre-entry dynamic risk assessment** (two staff where possible): consider information received, attempt contact (knock/call), and determine necessity and proportionality.
2. **Entry** using master key if justified; call emergency services if required.
3. **Safeguarding & escalation:** If welfare concerns are confirmed, escalate per the Hall's separate safeguarding and welfare procedures.

4. **Record & notify:** Create an **incident record** within 24 hours in line with Blackfriars' welfare policies, and notify the resident as soon as practicable with a brief explanation (respecting confidentiality).

6) Residents Refusing Access

- If a resident refuses access to **necessary** repairs, safety checks, or a properly-noticed visit, Blackfriars will **rearrange once**, explain legal and Code obligations, and, if refused again, **escalate** to the Bursar, Welfare Dean, and/or Senior Dean for proportionate next steps (e.g., formal warning per licence terms; liaising with welfare teams). Persistent refusal may constitute a breach of contractual obligations. **Forced entry** is not used except for the **exceptions** listed in 4.2.2.

7) Contractors, Data Protection, and Conduct

- Contractors must be vetted, briefed, and **supervised as appropriate**; they must only access spaces necessary for the job and maintain confidentiality. Access permission arrangements are set out in Blackfriars' [policy and procedures on who is allowed access to student accommodation](#).
- Staff must **avoid viewing or handling personal items**; if unavoidable, they must not disclose or record personal data except where strictly required for safety/compliance.
- Entries should be **single-purpose** and of the **shortest reasonable duration**.

8) Recording, Audit, and Assurance

- All entries (except routine presence in communal areas) must be **logged** with room details, date/time, purpose, personnel, notice given (Y/N), outcome, and follow-ups.
- Emergency/no-notice entries must include a **justification narrative** and any supporting evidence.
- Records are retained to support **UUK Code audits** (independent audits and annual self-assessments).

9) Resident Information and Transparency

- On arrival and annually thereafter, residents receive a **plain-language summary** of this policy, how to **report repairs**, response times, and how Blackfriars manages **urgent access**. (Blackfriars' public guidance already outlines the repair reporting process and reactive access.)
- A web page will host this policy and a **Frequently Asked Questions** section.

10) Complaints

Residents may complain via the Hall's complaints process; unresolved cases may be escalated in line with institutional procedures and, where applicable, sector routes (e.g., **OIA**). The Code requires an effective, transparent complaints process and tracking.

11) Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

When scheduling access, staff will make **reasonable adjustments** (e.g., for disabled students, religious observance, neurodiversity) and offer alternative slots and procedures where practicable, consistent with safety and compliance duties.

12) Summary of Notice Rules at a Glance

- **Emergency (life/safety/building at risk): No notice;** enter; record and notify afterwards.
- **Reactive urgent (risk of damage/service loss):** Attempt notice; may enter if necessary; record and notify afterwards.
- **Routine maintenance and all other non-maintenance visits: 48 hours' written notice,** at a **reasonable time**, stating **purpose & duration**.
- **Lawful arrest/warrant; abatement of nuisance; serious welfare concerns: No prior notice;** follow emergency/welfare procedure and record justification.

Appendix A: Rationale and Key References

- Blackfriars is a member of/operates under the **UUK/GuildHE Accommodation Code of Practice (2025)**, which sets standards for **repairs/maintenance, landlord access, health & safety**, and **complaints** and is subject to independent audit. [\[data.parliament.uk\]](https://data.parliament.uk)
- The **2025 Amendment Regulations** list the UUK/GuildHE Code among approved Codes for England, reinforcing compliance obligations for university-managed accommodation. [\[legislation.gov.uk\]](https://legislation.gov.uk)
- Sector-standard practice and legal commentary require **reasonable prior notice (commonly 24 hours)** for non-emergency entry, and recognise tenants' right to **quiet enjoyment**; emergency entry is permitted to mitigate immediate risk. [\[lettingaproperty.com\]](https://lettingaproperty.com), [\[witansolicitors.co.uk\]](https://witansolicitors.co.uk)
- Blackfriars' public guidance already explains that some repairs may require **access without permission** to prevent delays or damage. [\[bfriars.ox.ac.uk\]](https://bfriars.ox.ac.uk)

Optional Implementation Notes (for the Bursary/Accommodation Team)

- Configure the maintenance system to **auto-populate 24-hour notices** with fields for purpose, time window, and duration.
- Create a **post-entry card** template (room slip) and an **incident log** template for emergency/welfare entries.
- Run an annual staff refresher on **proportionality, safeguarding, and privacy in room access**; retain attendance and content for Code audits.