



**Universidade do Minho**



### **Open letter to the Students of the University of Minho,**

In the last few days there has been a significant increase in cases of infection caused by the SARS-CoV-2 in Portugal, especially in the Northern Region, and there have been major outbreaks of COVID-19 in other Higher Education Institutions. The contexts of contagion are not related to the academic activities themselves, but with meetings and gatherings that would have occurred in the last few days and weeks, outside the premises of these Universities.

Right now, it is pivotal that everyone complies with the norms and recommendations for protection against COVID-19, particularly outside the academic context, where the risk of contagion is higher if such protective measures are not adopted in social contacts.

Because we want to keep the university open, because we want to keep our teaching activities face-to-face, because we want to guarantee everyone's comfort, and because we want to safeguard the health of our students, our teachers, our researchers, our employees and the families of each one of us, remember that this is not the time to promote meetings, gatherings, dinner parties, or other group activities, thus putting everyone's health at risk. Within the current pandemic scenario, encouraging students or groups of students to participate in these activities carries a public health risk that can lead to outbreaks with unpredictable consequences and potential legal implications.

It is essential that our university students make a permanent commitment to the prevention of COVID-19, by scrupulously complying with the recommendations of the competent health authorities and the rules in force - namely in terms of health, respiratory and hygiene etiquette, social distance and use of personal protective equipment. The permanent and correct use of a mask, together with physical distancing and frequent hand hygiene, significantly reduces the risk of contagion when in contact with a person infected with SARS-CoV-2.

It is imperative that everyone respect the outlined circuits of entry, exit and circulation in the different spaces and comply with the legal obligation not to participate in any sort of gatherings.

It is advisable to install the STAYAWAY COVID app, which allows, in a simple and safe manner, to be informed about risk exposures to the disease, through the monitoring of recent contacts. The app is voluntary and free to use and at no time will it have access to your identity or personal data.

**Be responsible. Protect yourselves and others.**

University of Minho, October 12, 2020

The Committee for the Development and Management of the COVID-19 Internal Contingency Plan,

Paulo J. S. Cruz, President of the Committee and Pro-Rector | Alexandre M. C. Carvalho, Guest Professor at the School of Medicine Pedro R. L. Morgado, Assistant Professor at the School of Medicine | Teresa A. Ruão C. Pinto, Associate Professor at the Institute of Social Sciences | Carlos A. S. Menezes, Administrator of the University of Minho | António M. V. Paisana, Administrator for Social Services | Mauro M. M. P. Fernandes, Computer technician at the Communication Services | Rui J. M. Oliveira, President of the Academic Association