

SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH OF A STUDENT PROCEDURE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In the tragic event that a student of the School suffers a serious injury or dies, it is important that certain people within the School are informed as soon as possible so that necessary procedures may be implemented. News of a student's serious injury or death may be received through a variety of channels and by any member of the School's staff or student body. This document is designed to make clear whom you should contact if you receive such news, and to provide an outline of who does what within the School once that news has been passed on.
- 1.2 This procedure governs action to be taken in the event of a student's serious injury or death. However, it is difficult to describe a procedure that will fit every case since circumstances vary so much; the information provided in this document is to be used as a guide and is not meant to be prescriptive. The guidance cannot cover every detail of every situation and we need to be flexible depending on the circumstances involved. For example, there may be times when staff unavoidably find out after the media release a news story, or where there is a delay in letting those on School email distribution lists know because staff are managing the immediate crisis situation. This is a difficult situation for all involved parties, please try and be understanding of this when responding in this situation.
- 1.3 The overall aim of this document is to identify procedures that will enable the School to make a sensitive and appropriate response following the serious injury or death of a student. The specific objectives are:
 - To ensure a compassionate approach that recognises the distress felt by the next of kin, staff and students close to the injured/deceased.
 - To ensure a compassionate approach that recognises the distress for the person discovering the injured or deceased individual.
 - To identify clear lines of responsibility of various School staff and students in response to a student's serious injury/death.
- 1.4 One of the most immediate actions when a student dies will be to update their student record to show that the student is deceased. This is essential because we do not want any communication to be sent out to the student's correspondence address (e.g. about debt, library books, etc).

2. DISCOVERY OF APPARENT SERIOUS INJURY/DEATH ON SCHOOL PREMISES

- 2.1 The location in which the serious injury/death of a student occurs will have a significant bearing on the degree of involvement of the School and its staff members.
- 2.2 The degree to which the School becomes involved in ways other than being supportive may be affected by the manner of injury/death, for example accident, suicide or possible suicide, natural causes (with or without infectious disease implications) and crime.
- 2.3 Certain actions must be carried out on first discovery or notification of any serious injury/death:
 - If able/trained, the person should administer appropriate First Aid. If not, he or she should remain at the scene and not remove anything or allow others to do so until the emergency services arrive. If the person making the discovery has already contacted the emergency services he/she should notify the Reception staff immediately. This is vital, as Reception staff will need to direct the emergency services and attend the scene of the incident

- Unless the death occurs in a controlled environment, such as a hospital, it must be notified to the Police
- If a body is discovered, on no account should any action be taken (other than to secure the area) until the Police have arrived and their guidance has been sought
- If it is a 'violent, unnatural death, or sudden death of which the cause is unknown', the Coroner's Act 1988 imposes on the Coroner a duty (usually delegated to the Police at the scene) to establish: who the deceased was, where, when and how the deceased met their death and details required for the registration of the death
- The Police will normally arrange for the removal of the body and any necessary post mortem
- The Police (or Hospital) will normally arrange for the next of kin to be informed and the Co-ordinating team (See section 4 below) will work in partnership with the [Student Advice & Counselling Service](#) to liaise with the Police/Hospital.
- In the unlikely event that the Police do not undertake this duty, responsibility may fall to the Student Counsellor or a senior member of staff of the School. It is essential that the member of staff work with the Co-ordinating Team (see section 4) to confirm the veracity of the information about the death before making any contact with the next of kin
- Any witnesses whom the Police wish to interview should be taken to a private area removed from the immediate scene as soon as possible

2.4 The **person(s) discovering the injured student/body** must:

- Contact the School Reception who will then contact the Reception Manager.
- The Reception Manager will need to know where the injured/deceased student was discovered, by whom and, if applicable, whether the emergency services have been contacted

Keppel Street Reception –020 7927 2500

Tavistock Place Reception – 020 7927 2700

- Arrange for the site to become secure until the Reception Manager/Emergency Services arrive

2.5 The **Reception Manager** will:

- Ensure the Emergency Services can gain entry to the premises
- Assist the Emergency Services with the student's details such as name, age, home address, next of kin, etc.
- Ascertain with the Police who will make the initial contact with the family
- Check on timescales for removal of the body
- Be prepared to offer assistance, e.g. office space, telephone access, as required
- Find out who else is resident in the department/vicinity of the injured/deceased student and establish their whereabouts, if possible
- Ensure all residents in the vicinity are kept informed of the situation
- If the injury/death is treated as suspicious, Police may require possession of the room/area where the injured/deceased individual was found for a minimum time period. All staff/students may need to be moved
- All persons (staff/students) to be made aware that they should not comment to the press or general public and instead direct any enquiries to the Press team; telephone – 020 7927 2802 or email – press@lshtm.ac.uk.

3. WHO NEEDS TO BE CONTACTED?

- 3.1 If you receive news of a student's serious injury or death from any source other than the Head of your Faculty/Service, you should contact the [Student Advice & Counselling Service](#) on **020 7299 4705** or **020 7299 4706**, unless you know for certain that someone else has already made contact with them.
- 3.2 You should provide as much detail as you have been given about the injured/deceased student. It may be that staff in the [Student Advice & Counselling Service](#) are already aware of the situation from other sources, but please do not assume that this will be the case.

- 3.3 ****PLEASE NOTE, CONTACT MUST NOT BE MADE WITH THE NEXT OF KIN UNTIL THE CO-ORDINATING TEAM IS SATISFIED THAT THE POLICE HAVE ALREADY INFORMED THEM OF THE INCIDENT****

4. THE SCHOOL'S CO-ORDINATING TEAM

- 4.1 A Co-ordinating Team, consisting of the Director, the Student Counsellor, Dean of Faculty in which the student was based, the Academic Registrar and the Head of Communications, will be established to respond to the incident. The Dean of Faculty may wish to delegate this role to the injured/deceased student's tutor or supervisor or another appropriate member of faculty staff.
- 4.2 Normally the Dean of Faculty (or their nominee) will act as contact person for next of kin of the injured/deceased student. The Student Counsellor will assume this role in the absence of any Faculty contact.
- 4.3 The Co-ordinating Team will ensure that:
- Appropriate people in the School and externally are informed of the event and are updated as appropriate
 - All legal and other statutory requirements surrounding the event are being observed
 - Appropriate people are consulted and involved
 - Sufficient time and space is given for those affected to adjust to and recover from the news of the injury/death
 - All concerned have confidence that the School is acting in a responsible, compassionate and sensitive manner
 - No routine administrative procedure is continued which may cause additional distress to relatives or friends of the injured/deceased and cause embarrassment to the School
 - Follow-up enquiries, internal or external are channeled appropriately
- 4.4 The Co-ordinating Team will be solely responsible for issuing any statements or updates about the incident to individuals or services listed as *second tier* contacts (Section 5 below).
- 4.5 Any information which *second tier* contacts wish to circulate must be forwarded to the Co-ordinating Team for collation and onward transmission.

5. CO-ORDINATING TEAM ROLES

Dean of the Faculty of injured/deceased student (or his/her nominee) roles:

- Inform all relevant staff in the Faculty of the injury/death, first contacting the student's tutor/supervisor and/or Programme Director
- In consultation with appropriate staff, decide which students need to be informed of the injury/death in person and make arrangements for doing so
- Deal with any requests from the family of the injured/deceased student to talk to particular staff or to see where the student studied
- Ensure that students within the Faculty are aware of the support available from the [Student Advice & Counselling Service](#) and that staff are aware of the availability of support from Occupational Health
- Ensure that any Faculty records are amended accordingly
- Where applicable, either in person, or in consultation with the Student Counsellor, ascertain from the student's family details of the funeral arrangements and ensure that the School is represented (in accordance with the family's wishes). This representation should be a senior member of the School and a member of the Senior Leadership Team, where possible. This should always be the case regardless of the circumstances of the student's injury/death
- Contact the School's insurance team to ensure that the School and family are fully aware of any insurance cover that may be available
- Where applicable, consider submitting the deceased student for awarding of a posthumous qualification and representation at the School's Graduation ceremony – please contact the

[Events](#) team for advice and assistance; telephone – 020 7927 2236, or via email – events@lshtm.ac.uk

- In response to potential concern on the part of fellow students, note that it is not standard practice for the results of a post-mortem examination to be made public (as this information is confidential to the next of kin) but that any deaths giving rise to a public health concern will be handled swiftly by [Public Health England](#)
- On the advice of the injured/deceased student's personal tutor/supervisor, inform the Dean of any other Faculty in which the injured/deceased student had been studying
- The Deans of other Faculties concerned will have the same responsibilities as outlined above, except that they will not need to contact the student's family or tutor

Student Counsellor roles:

- Ensure that all *second tier* contacts (See section 5) are informed of the circumstances as soon as possible. For reasons of confidentiality, those involved in pastoral support will be provided with as much detail as possible by telephone rather than by any other means
- Contact the Dean of Faculty to reiterate what support we can be offered to students and liaise with HR regarding support for staff
- Where applicable, in liaison with the student's Dean of Faculty, obtain details of the funeral arrangements and ensure that the School is represented at the funeral (see Dean of Faculty section for further details)
- Where appropriate, arrange a debrief session at an appropriate time after the incident with all those directly involved (involving staff and students) to ensure that all issues have been dealt with and to consider any matters arising as a result of the incident that may inform future amendments to this procedure

Head of Communications roles:

- Where applicable, prepare a letter of condolence to the deceased student's family on behalf of and sent from the Director
- Prepare a statement for release to the media, if required
- Deal with any media queries about the injured/deceased student in consultation with the other members of the Co-ordinating team
- Ensure that copies of any press releases about the incident are forwarded to the other members of the Co-ordinating team
- Monitor any social media channels to check whether any inappropriate/misleading information is being posted. If applicable, direct this to the Police Press office to deal with and to issue any clarifications, if necessary. Furthermore, any communication posted on social media channels that could provide information to any on-going police inquiry will be forwarded to the Police Press office.
- Notify the Co-ordinating team of any inappropriate/misleading information being posted by students so that necessary action can be taken
- Discuss potential arrangements in relation to the School's Graduation ceremony with relevant Co-ordinating team members before discussing with next of kin

6. SECOND TIER CONTACTS AND THEIR ROLES

6.1 The Student Counsellor should inform the following *second tier* contacts at the earliest opportunity, providing as much detail as is appropriate in each case:

- Student Advice & Counselling
- Registry
- Immigration Advisory Service
- Finance
- Safety Team
- Occupational Health
- Chair of the Student Representative Council
- Library & Archive Service

- Communications & Engagement
- IT Services
- If applicable, Distance Learning team

Student Advice & Counselling Service

- Offer advice and support to students who may be affected
- If applicable, remove the student's details from any [Student Advice & Counselling Service](#) contact lists
- If necessary, organise specialist support for students with an appropriate external provider
- If requested, provide details of external bereavement counselling services

Registry

- Inform appropriate colleagues/departments at the School – e.g. Library & Archive Service, Finance, IT Services, Reception, Immigration Advisory Service
- Process an 'Interruption/Withdrawal of Studies' to ensure the student's record is accurate and they are not contacted by formal School channels
- Update the student records system to reflect the interruption/withdrawal
- If applicable, notify the injured/deceased student's joint-programme institution
- Where appropriate, inform external bodies such as sponsors and Research Councils
- Process the reimbursement of any outstanding finance to the family

Immigration Advisory Service

- Notify the Home Office, if the student is a visa holder

Finance

- Liaise with the Student Counsellor to ensure that the School and family are fully aware of any insurance cover that may be available

Safety Team

- Support the School/Emergency Services in any accident investigation

Occupational Health

- Liaise with appropriate Dean of Faculty to offer advice and support on immediate and long term actions that may be required by faculty staff members
- Where necessary, organise independent counselling support for staff

Chair of the Student Representative Council

- Establish if the student was a member of any School groups and ensure that appropriate steps are taken to inform other members
- Liaise with School sections as appropriate when students approach the Student Representative Council for support or advice

Library & Archive Service

- Halt all Library-related correspondence to the student.

Communications & Engagement

- Remove the student's name from any departmental contact lists that they may have, such as the Alumni database, Raisers Edge and Chariot.
- Where appropriate, via the Dean of Faculty, advise the deceased student's family of the options, if they wish to donate or establish a legacy.

IT Services

- Ensure that the students network and email accounts are disabled and that they are taken off mailing lists

Distance Learning Team

- Contact the University of London International Programmes office to inform them and update records accordingly

7. SERIOUS INJURY/DEATH WHILE STUDYING ABROAD

- 7.1 While abroad, students who become aware of the serious injury or death of a fellow student should notify their Programme Director or Supervisor at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 7.2 Where a student has suffered a serious injury or has died whilst studying abroad, the Student Counsellor will:
- Follow the steps outlined from section three onwards
 - Contact the student's family to ensure they are aware of insurance cover available including travel and repatriation
 - If applicable, inform the host institution and liaise with relevant individuals at the host institution to look at what support can be provided to other London-based students who may be affected by the incident while overseas
 - Inform and liaise with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (or relevant Embassy in the UK if the student is an EU national)
- 7.3 Where a number of students are together on the same placement, consideration should be given to bringing all students back to the UK, if only on a temporary basis, to offer some form of counselling.

*Last updated - 2018
Registry*