

# In the event of a student death Procedure

[Content warning: Reference to death and death by suicide]



BATH SPA  
UNIVERSITY

## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. To ensure the University responds sensitively, professionally and appropriately to the death of a student, providing effective and compassionate postvention support. The detailed postvention checklist for this procedure is held in a secure Teams site managed by the Chancelry Administration Team.
- 1.2. This procedure is informed by and aligns with the Universities UK 'How to respond to a student suicide: Suicide-Safer guidance on postvention'.
- 1.3. As each situation will be uniquely different the University response will depend on the specific circumstances of each incident and adhere to the following principles.

## **2. Principles**

- The University, external partners and other agencies work together to manage the situation effectively, sensitively and professionally.
  - Care, compassion and sensitivity is maintained for those involved and affected.
  - The wishes of the family and/or supporters are to be respected and considered as a priority.
- 2.1. To follow the given guidelines regarding postvention roles and responsibilities, and requirements for record keeping.
  - 2.2. Adhere to information sharing protocols providing clear information while protecting the privacy and dignity of those affected and in accordance with legal requirements.
  - 2.3. Be sensitive to cultural and religious perspectives that may affect responses to death and death by suicide.

## **3. Scope**

- 3.1. This procedure applies to all Bath Spa University provision and students.
- 3.2. Educational Partners will follow the same principles outlined in this policy and are responsible for ensuring that an effective postvention protocol is in place. This must include:
- 3.3. Specified roles and responsibilities, including who leads the Educational Partner's postvention approach.
- 3.4. Notifying the BSU University Secretary & Registrar (Principal Safeguarding Lead) and Director of Student Wellbeing Services (Designated Safeguarding Lead for

students) within 24 hours following a student death via:  
[safeguarding@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:safeguarding@bathspa.ac.uk).

- 3.5. Ensuring that a record of information is maintained in real time and is available to the University, including the contact details of all involved, such as other students, friends, family or external agencies.
- 3.6. Assurance that no information about the death will be shared internally or externally without approval from the BSU University Secretary & Registrar (or their nominee) or the Director of Student Wellbeing Services (or their nominee).
- 3.7. In circumstances where it is a suspected death by suicide it is the responsibility of the Educational Partner to initiate its suicide postvention plan.

#### **4. Notification of a death**

- 4.1. Students or staff, on learning of the death of a student must without delay notify the University via [safeguarding@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:safeguarding@bathspa.ac.uk).
- 4.2. **If the death has happened on a University campus inform Security, 01225 875555.** The University Security Service act as the first point of contact and it is vital they are notified immediately, even if the person making the discovery has already called emergency services. They are open 24 hours, year-round and have access to University emergency contacts outside of usual working hours.

**Upon being informed of a confirmed or suspected death, Security will:**

- Secure the scene (if necessary).
  - Liaise with emergency services as required.
- 4.3. Check that the individual is a Bath Spa University student.
  - 4.4. Notify the on-call SWS Manager and the Senior Duty Executive on call.
  - 4.5. **Under no circumstances must staff or students contact the deceased's friends or family, or report anything on social media. In the event of a student death, it is essential for the Police to make the first contact with family.**
  - 4.6. The degree of involvement of the University in a student death will depend both on the location and circumstances. The location in which the death occurs will have a significant bearing on the degree of involvement of the University and its staff members. The courses of action to be taken will therefore be dependent on the individual circumstances of each case.

## **5. Actions on the day of a student death**

- 5.1. The Director of Student Wellbeing Services, (SWS) will assume the role of primary coordinator, ensure key staff (as listed in the postvention checklist are notified) and act as point of contact for family and external agencies pending the Postvention Team, PVT meeting.
- 5.2. The Chancery Administration Team will call an initial meeting of the Postvention Team, PVT<sup>1</sup>. The membership may vary depending on the situation, but will usually include the following, as appropriate or their nominee:
  - Vice-Chancellor/Deputy Vice-Chancellor – PVT Chair
  - Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor
  - Director of Student Wellbeing Services – Care for students lead
- 5.3. Head of Communications and Brand Development
- 5.4. University Secretary & Registrar
  - Academic Registrar
  - Director of Campus Life
  - Head of Facilities and Services
  - Security Manager
  - Head of School
- 5.5. Chief People Officer – Care for staff lead
  - Chief Information Officer
  - Students' Union President
  - Students' Union CEO
  - Chaplain – Family liaison lead
- 5.6. PVT will review the Postvention Checklist and complete it in real time to maintain a central record of all actions. PVT will continue to meet until it is determined all necessary actions have been undertaken.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Reports/postvention-guidance-forming-a-postvention-team.pdf>

- 5.7. In situations where it is a suspected death by suicide the University will implement enhanced supportive measures, including liaison with local public health teams to manage the risk of suicide contagion.
- 5.8. The University Secretary & Registrar (or nominee) will act as the single point of contact for the Coroner and organising a serious incident review, where this is deemed necessary.

## Document Details

**Responsible Office:** Student Wellbeing Services

**Responsible Officer:** Director of Student Wellbeing Services

**Date of Latest Approval:** April 2026

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**Supersedes:** Protocol for the death or serious injury of a student

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