



Student Emergency Contact Procedure

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| Responsible Office | Student Wellbeing Services |
| Responsible Officer | Head of Student Wellbeing Services |
| Approving Authority | Senior Leadership Group |
| Date of Approval | 5 July 2021 |
| Effective Date | 1 September 2021 |
| Related Procedures | Mental Health Framework Support to Study Procedure Protocol for the death or serious injury of a student |
| Related University Policies | Safeguarding Policy Data Protection Policy |
| Amended (if applicable) | N/A |
| Supersedes | N/A |
| Next review due | June 2022 |

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To explain how student emergency contact details are collected and updated and under which circumstances the University will make use of those contact details, how that process will be managed and who will be authorised to make contact.
- 1.2 To clarify when an emergency contact can be contacted by the University without student consent and in what circumstances the emergency contact will be contacted when a student has given advance consent by 'opting in'.
- 1.3 To provide a clear procedure for University staff, students, parents and supporters and the public and to ensure the correct procedure is followed.

2. Providing and updating emergency contact details

- 2.1 All students are required to provide details of an emergency contact person on registering with the University and this information is held securely on the University's student record system, SITS, in accordance with [BSU's Privacy Notice](#). It is mandatory for students to provide an emergency contact.
- 2.2 Students can nominate anyone they choose to be their emergency contact. It is expected that for the majority of students this will be a parent, partner or guardian, however, it can be another responsible adult.
- 2.3 Students should ensure that the emergency contact is aware that they have been nominated, that their contact details have been given to Bath Spa University and that they have given their permission to be nominated as your emergency contact. Students should ensure that the contact details are correct and that the phone number provided is the quickest and easiest way to contact your emergency contact person.
- 2.4 Students are asked to keep this information up to date and can make any changes by logging into the student portal. The University will assume that the information is correct, as in an emergency situation it may not be possible to check with the student first.

3. Circumstances when the University may use an emergency contact

- 3.1 Under data protection legislation, the University can legally use emergency contact information, without prior consent, in very serious situations where it is in students' vital interests to do so. This normally implies a life or death situation, or one where the student is physically incapable of giving consent.
- 3.2 Emergency contacts are not routinely given information about academic progress or any other aspect of the student's life at University. Those nominated will only normally be contacted when there is a significant concern about the student's physical or mental health, wellbeing or safety.
- 3.3 Examples of circumstances when the University may decide to contact the nominated emergency contact include, but are not limited to:

- a. When the University is made aware of an emergency admission to hospital, or collection of the student by emergency services in what appears to be a potentially life-threatening or critical condition;
 - b. When, in the opinion of the University, it is not possible to reasonably keep a student safe, such as when they might be considered to be a threat to their own life, or when the University is managing an emergency suspension or break from studies;
 - c. When the University has received a credible report that the student is missing, and there is genuine concern for their safety or wellbeing.
- 3.4 In addition to attempting to contact the emergency contact, where appropriate the University may also pass the contact details to the emergency services, for example to paramedics or hospital emergency departments, where the information will help them to care for the student.
- 3.5 In the event of a suspected or confirmed death of a student, the University will pass the emergency contact details to the Police or other emergency services to support them in their role of contacting the next of kin. It is not the role of the University to first inform Next of Kin of a death, and it should be noted that the emergency contact chosen by the student may not be their legal Next of Kin (see 2.2).

4. Providing advance permission – Opting in

- 4.1 From academic year 2021/2022 as part of their registration with Bath Spa, students will be invited to opt-in, i.e. give advance permission for their emergency person to be contacted. Opting in will allow the University to contact the student's nominated emergency person if there is serious concern about the student's wellbeing.
- 4.2 Opting in (or not) will be reviewed by students for every academic year of their studies at registration. Students are able to change their permissions at any time, by emailing Student and Registry Services: mycourse@bathspa.ac.uk.
- 4.3 Examples of circumstances when the University may decide to contact the emergency contact include, but are not limited to:
- a. Serious physical or mental illness, or concerns about behaviour which might mean that someone is seriously unwell;
 - b. When a student has missed key events without explanation, and we are unable to contact them; when there has been a prolonged lack of contact, despite efforts to get in touch with them.
- 4.4 Where students do not opt in, the University will only decide to contact a nominated emergency contact in the circumstances explained in section 3.

5. Authority to use the emergency contact

- 5.1 All requests for a student's emergency person to be contacted should be referred to a SWS Manager in the first instance. During usual working hours this can be done through the SWS urgent phone line for staff. Out of hours, by calling Security on 01225 875555 and asking to speak with the SWS Manager on call.
- 5.2 All contact with an emergency person, will generally be made by SWS staff, although there may be exceptions, depending on the situation and this will be authorised by the PVC Student Experience,

University Secretary or Head of SWS.

- 5.3 On no account should any employee of the University contact a student's emergency contact without authority as explained in 5.2.