

DEATH OF A STUDENT POLICY 2021-2024

APPROVED BY SELT COMMITTEE ON 10 NOVEMBER 2021

Applies to:

Harrogate College



Keighley College



Leeds City College



Leeds Conservatoire



CHANGE CONTROL

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

The death of a student is a serious matter for the whole of the college community, especially the student's close friends, peers, tutor, and teachers. Therefore, it is important that the college reacts to events in a way that acknowledges the loss properly, respecting cultural and religious traditions, while dealing sensitively with the aftermath and supporting the bereaved.

The Luminare FE colleges are committed to the emotional health and wellbeing of its staff and students and will work towards this in all aspects of college life and to provide an ethos and environment that supports and prepares students for coping with separation or loss of a loved one.

2. POLICY AIMS/OBJECTIVES

This policy provides guidance and a step-by-step checklist for who needs to do what and when in the event of a student death. For the purpose of this policy, the term "student" refers to a person who is enrolled but not yet embarked on their course, a current student or a former student. Much of the procedure may equally be relevant to the death of a member of staff, although the Human Resources department would lead in this case.

A coordinated response is essential both to support staff and students affected by the death and to ensure that the student's family receives appropriate support and consideration. These guidelines will outline the essential stages in dealing with a student death.

3. INITIAL NOTIFICATION

The report of death may come from a student or someone else who says they are a relative or friend, in person, by mail or e-mail or via a telephone call. Information about a student death may arrive on the desk of any member of the academic or support staff. The death should be reported immediately to the relevant Principal/Curriculum Director who will first verify the information.

For students who are under 18 or are vulnerable adults (usually up to 25 years) contact should be made with the Child Death Overview Panel of the Local Safeguarding Children Board where the student lived who will provide further information and clarification. This contact may also assist with verification (below).

4. VERIFICATION OF DEATH

It is essential to verify that the report is true before taking any action. Whether or not the report is true, it would be insensitive to contact the student's home to verify. The local police will usually be able to verify the death of a person; it is not a confidential matter. However, it is important not to speculate on the cause of death until the facts are known.

Once verified, the relevant Principal/Curriculum Director will ensure that the student's Head of Department, Head of Safeguarding and Wellbeing, and Head of Marketing are all informed.

5. ACTIONS UP TO AND INCLUDING THE FUNERAL

5.1 Identify one person to liaise with the family

Once the death has been verified, the Head of Department should identify the most appropriate person to liaise with the bereaved family. This Liaison Person could be any suitable member of staff. Their role would include trying to establish if there are any known siblings or other close relatives enrolled at the college as specific support may need to be offered to these individuals.

5.2 Breaking the news to relevant parties

The Head of Department in consultation with the Principal/Curriculum Director will decide who the appropriate person is to break the news to the deceased student's tutor, teachers, friends, and classmates. (See Appendix 1 for guidance)

5.3 Ensuring support is available

The Principal/Curriculum Director and the Head of Safeguarding and Wellbeing will work with the Wellbeing Team to identify an appropriate offer of support and provide information on how to access on-going support internally from the college Wellbeing Team and from external support agencies.

5.4 Letter of condolence

The college will send a letter of condolence to the family. It could include a request for information about funeral arrangements to avoid having to trouble the bereaved family with a phone call. The condolence letter should be signed by the Principal/Curriculum Director. (See appendix 2 for guidance)

5.5 Notification for administrative purposes

The Head of Department will notify representatives of the College Information Systems, College Administration, Student Finance, Examinations, Library and Admissions teams of the student's death to ensure that all communications are blocked that would be addressed to the student and his/her family. All central records relating to the student will be suitably annotated to record their death or remove them, as appropriate. The student's tutor will inform any work placement currently being undertaken or due to be undertaken by the student.

5.6 Book of condolence

A book of condolence may be made available to all staff and students to sign where the student group feels this is appropriate. Initiation of this would normally be through the student group.

5.7 Media Contact

Any calls or enquiries from the media should be referred to the Communications team.

Promotional material featuring the deceased student

If the student was featured in any promotional material from the college such as photography on social media, case study on the website or in the prospectus, it's important that the liaison person speaks to the family about this to ascertain whether they would like us to remove the student or keep them on our materials. This will also depend on the nature of the death. The Communications team will be able to advise on a case by case basis.

5.8 Funeral

The timing of the funeral may vary, for instance, some faith traditions hold funerals very quickly following a death, while others do not. Advice can be sought from the Equality and Diversity Manager on these issues. In addition, a funeral may be delayed awaiting the outcome of a post mortem in some instances.

If appropriate, the Liaison Person will contact the family to ask if a member of staff and/or fellow students would be welcome to attend the funeral; if so, they will consult with the Principal/Curriculum Director about who would be appropriate to attend the funeral representing

the college. The wishes of the family will also be sought on the appropriateness of flowers; charity donation or other contribution the college could make.

If appropriate and agreed with the family, students who were close to the deceased will be allowed to miss classes, if necessary, to attend the funeral.

6. ONGOING SUPPORT

Students who were close to the deceased may need continuing support following the event; in addition, emotional and/ or behavioural difficulties may arise at some time after the event. Tutors can help by being vigilant and sensitive, and/or by giving individual support, but if difficulties seem serious or persistent, they can refer for on-going support, as appropriate to their needs. The college Wellbeing Team is available to support students with bereavement and associated issues, signposting on to other agencies and support groups, where appropriate.

Memorial

The possibility of holding a memorial event in college should be considered. The Liaison Person should firstly consult with the family regarding their wishes in relation to holding an event of this kind, and then with relevant parties such as the student's tutor. If appropriate, the Equality and Diversity Manager could be involved in this. The Liaison Person will arrange a suitable location and work with the Communications team to support the event. The nature of the event should be relevant to the deceased student and those attending, for example the music that the student liked, motifs of relevance like their favourite sports team, words spoken about them by a friend.

7. APPENDIX 1 GUIDELINES ON BREAKING THE NEWS

Staff should be aware of how to break bad news in person to someone who has been close to the deceased.

Breaking the news to groups of students or classmates of the deceased:

Where groups of students are to be told, the news should be given by a staff member who is confident to do so and has a good relationship with the students. In the case of students on Foundation Learning programmes or other very vulnerable students, it may be necessary to inform parents and carers beforehand. The news should be given in a calm and clear way following the guidance given for informing the individual below.

Breaking the news to individuals:

The news should be given by someone with a prior relationship with the student or member of staff being told. It is preferable to be face-to-face in a quiet room where the person is seated. They should be warned that there is some bad news and then told directly and clearly. Be aware that they will be in shock for a while, and need time for the news to sink in. They are unlikely to take in any information that they are given after being informed of the death. The presence of a close friend or colleague to give them support is important. It may be appropriate to ask them not to speculate on the cause of death until more information becomes available. Students and staff should be made aware of the support available from the college counselling service; this may include referral to external specialist agencies, if appropriate or if numbers exceed the capacity of the service.

8. APPENDIX 2 GUIDELINES TO DRAFTING A LETTER

Guidelines to consider when drafting a letter to significant others (for example, parents/carers, partner, spouse) on the death of a student. The following guidelines are intended to be helpful when composing a letter of condolence on the death of a student.

Any letter should be written as soon as possible after official confirmation of the student's death and should be addressed to the closest known relative(s) of the student. The Communications team can help with drafting the letter.

In expressing sympathy, avoid using euphemisms for the student's death. Where appropriate a brief mention of the circumstances of the student's death could be included. For instance, I / We were very sorry to hear of (student's name)'s (sudden) death (yesterday, on Saturday, on 4th March etc). I am / We are aware that it will be no consolation at such a difficult time but would like to assure you that you are in our thoughts.

Some reference to the student's personal qualities and/or attributes as a student could be made, in terms of the loss to fellow students and staff who knew him/her and how he/she will be missed.

Rather than having to trouble the bereaved relative(s) with a phone call, the request could be made that they or their representative might let the college know of any arrangements for funeral/memorial service. For example, I / We would be grateful if you could let us know of any arrangements which may be made for the funeral, as I am sure there will be students and staff who would like to attend.

Please let us know if we can be of any assistance at this difficult time.

Yours sincerely,

Principal/Curriculum Director

Leeds City College/Harrogate College/Keighley College

9. APPENDIX 3 CHECKLIST

Checklist for use with the policy for the Death of a Student

The Principal/Curriculum Director should both be informed of the death of a student, who will then inform the governing body, as appropriate. Once the information is verified, they will ensure that key contacts are informed and a checklist of actions is monitored and signed off.

Name of Student:	Date of Death:
Student No:	Date of Birth:
Tutor:	Department:

Checklist

Checklist	By Who	By When	Signed off Date
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Next of Kin Student's next of kin details: Name Relationship Tel no Address Confirmation of death <i>Consider whether there is a need for liaison with the Police and/or the Local Council for the area where the student lived, or any other official bodies (e.g. Home Office, Consulates, Embassies)</i>	Principal/Curriculum Director Principal/Curriculum Director	Immediate Immediate	
<input type="checkbox"/> Inform key personnel Deputy Principal, Teaching & Learning, Curriculum VP Head of Department Campus Manager Senior Tutor Head of Communications Head of Safeguarding and Wellbeing <i>(It may help to have a CIS printout with a photograph of the student)</i> Immediately flag student's records that no further correspondence should be sent without	Principal/Curriculum Director /HoD	Immediate	

prior reference to the VP (Student & Learning Services)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Records Cancel ID card Inform Finance – request confirmation that no further invoices will be sent Inform Library Inform Examinations section who will make any necessary arrangements with exam boards and awarding bodies Inform relevant Curriculum Admin team Inform student funding bodies, as appropriate Inform Admissions if prospective student and to archive student’s central file Inform any work experience placement/ sponsors/employers (phone and then send a follow up letter)	HoD in liaison with relevant Campus Admin Team	Immediate	
<input type="checkbox"/> Liaison Person Identify the most appropriate person to liaise with the bereaved family. The Liaison Person is: Name..... Contact Details..... 	Principal/Curriculum Director	Immediate	
<input type="checkbox"/> Informing Students and Staff In consultation as appropriate with the Head of Department / Equality and Diversity Manager and Communications team put in place arrangements for informing affected students and staff. Check whether the student has relatives enrolled at college.	Head of Department/ Head of Student Wellbeing/ Equality & Diversity Manager Communications Team	Immediate	
<input type="checkbox"/> Student and Staff Support Liaise with college Wellbeing Team / Human Resources on appropriate bereavement counselling and wellbeing support for students and / or staff. Promote signposting support to staff and students.	Head of Safeguarding and Wellbeing HR Manager	Immediate and on-going as required	

<input type="checkbox"/> Letter of Condolence Draft letter of condolence from Principal, with support from the Communications team, if required, including a request for information about the funeral. Note: This should be the only official letter from the college – all others should be of a personal nature Establish: Whether or not the family needs support from college and make arrangements accordingly.	Principal/Curriculum Director in liaison with relevant Campus Admin Team	once all facts are known	
<input type="checkbox"/> Students Possessions Arrange to return any possessions to student’s family	Liaison Person & Personal Tutor	Timing on advice from Liaison Person	
<input type="checkbox"/> Press Release Prepare press release or response to media	Communications team	If required	
<input type="checkbox"/> Book of Condolence If appropriate, open Book of Condolence and publicise its location; send to bereaved family on completion.	Principal/Curriculum Director	Immediate	
<input type="checkbox"/> Funeral What are the funeral arrangements: _____ _____ _____ Identify who will represent the college: _____ _____ Are flowers appropriate, or a donation to a specific charity – make arrangements accordingly	Liaison Person	As appropriate after verification of death To coincide with the funeral	
<input type="checkbox"/> Memorial Event Consider if a Memorial Event is appropriate and co-ordinate arrangements for this	Liaison Person	If required	

<input type="checkbox"/> Bereaved Family Support Establish whether on-going support of college is needed by bereaved family - especially any family members enrolled in college.	HoD in conjunction with the Wellbeing Team	After funeral has taken place	
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Signed..... Date.....

Name Post.....

10. APPENDIX 4 BEREAVEMENT AND DEATH BY SUICIDE SUPPORT

In cases of death by suicide, addition to following the steps in above, it may be appropriate to seek advice and support from the organisations below.

Samaritans

See <https://www.samaritans.org/your-community/samaritans-education/step-step-stepbystep@samaritans.org> or call 0808 168 2528.

Read 'Help When You Need It Most' a Step-by-Step guide on how to prepare for a respond to suicide in schools and colleges.

https://www.samaritans.org/sites/default/files/kcfinder/files/HWWNIM_Feb17_Final_web.pdf

Cruse

Bereavement Support

<https://www.cruse.org.uk/>

<https://www.cruse.org.uk/understanding-grief/grief-experiences/traumatic-loss/coping-when-someone-dies-by-suicide/>

PAPYRUS

Prevention of Young Suicide

<https://www.papyrus-uk.org/suicide-bereavement-support/>

NHS

Help is at hand

<https://www.nhs.uk/livewell/suicide/documents/help%20is%20at%20hand.pdf>

Mind

Bereavement information and support

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/bereavement/useful-contacts/>

Support after Suicide

<https://supportaftersuicide.org.uk/>

Staff Support

CiC Confidential Care

Employee Wellbeing Programme 0800 085 1376 or +44 (0)20 7938 0963

Email: assist@ciowellbeing.com

Text relay: 18001 0800 085 1376

Online and Live Chat:

www.well-online.co.uk

username: leedsc

password: wellbeing

(same password for Keighley College and Harrogate College)

AOC Charlie Waller Trust

Talking about suicide A guide for college staff

<https://charliewaller.org/resources/talking-about-suicide>

11. APPENDIX 5 TRANSITION RITUALS: A FAITH-BY-FAITH GUIDE TO RITES FOR THE DECEASED

<http://www.beliefnet.com/Health/Health-Support/Grief-and-Loss/2001/05/Transition-Rituals.aspx?p=1>

Baha'i

Belief about death

Death is regarded as a 'messenger of joy' for the deceased. Baha'is believe the soul lives on after the body's death and embarks on a spiritual journey.

Funeral practices

Baha'i dead must be buried within an hour's travel distance from the place of death. Baha'is do not embalm or cremate their dead. The dead body is washed and wrapped in a shroud. Baha'is are often buried wearing a Baha'i burial ring. The only ceremonial requirement of a funeral is the recitation of the Prayer for the Dead.

Mourning rituals

There are no Baha'i mourning rituals.

Buddhism

Belief about death

Death of the physical body is certain, but only a part of an ongoing process of re-incarnation until one receives enlightenment. After death it is believed that the dead person goes through a transformation in which they discover death and prepare for their rebirth (if there is one).

Funeral practices

In early times and commonly today, Buddhists cremate the bodies of their dead. The first seven days after death are the most important for final and funereal prayer.

Mourning rituals

Prayers are said weekly, during a 49-day funeral period. It is during this period that the prayers of the mourners are believed to help the deceased during the post-death transformation and awaken their spirit to the true nature of death.

Catholicism

Belief about death

Catholics see death as a passage from this life to the new, everlasting life promised by Christ. The soul of the deceased goes on to the afterlife, which includes Purgatory as well as Heaven and Hell. According to Catholic belief, the bodies of the dead will be resurrected at the end of time.

Funeral practices

The Catholic funeral service is called the Mass of the Resurrection. During it, Jesus Christ's life is remembered and related to that of the deceased. Eulogies are not allowed during the funeral mass but may be delivered at a wake or other non-religious ceremony. There is also a final graveside farewell, and additional traditions depending on the region. The Church encourages Catholics to be buried in Catholic cemeteries. In 1963, the Vatican lifted the ban on cremation for Catholics. However, the remains must be interred, not scattered or kept at home.

Mourning rituals

The community and the church support mourners through the funeral mass and through non-religious services like wakes.

Eastern Orthodox

Belief about death

Orthodox Christians believe death is a necessary consequence of human life, due to original sin. Death is necessary to achieve everlasting life.

Funeral practices

The Eastern Orthodox hold a special vigil over the dead called the parastasis or panikhida, as a time of contemplation on death. The funeral service includes hymns, chants, and bible readings. Burial is preferred but the Orthodox Church allows cremation if the law of the country requires it. Mourning rituals

Orthodox Christians pray special prayers for the departed asking God to have mercy on the souls of the dead.

Hinduism

Belief about death

Hindus believe death is part of the continuing cycle of birth, life, death, and rebirth. The soul of the dead transfers to another body after death.

Funeral practices

Hindus generally cremate their dead. In preparation for cremation, the body is bathed, laid in a coffin, adorned with sandalwood paste and garlands, and wrapped in white cloth. In the cremation ceremony, the body is carried three times counter clockwise around the pyre, then placed upon it. The chief mourner hits the cremation switch.

Mourning rituals

The days of mourning are considered a time of ritual impurity. Mourners cover all religious pictures in the house and do not attend festivals or visit swamis or take part in marriage ceremonies. Mourning period length varies, though Hindu scriptures caution against excessive mourning.

Islam

Belief about death

Muslims believe that there is another world after death for which the believer should prepare during their lives on earth.

Funeral practices

The corpse is bathed, wrapped in a plain cloth (called a kafan). The deceased is buried in the ground after the funeral service. Only burial in the ground is allowed according to Shari' ah (Islamic law).

Mourning rituals

Mourners gather and offer Janazah, prayers for the forgiveness of the deceased. Once the body is buried, Muslim mourners offer one final Janazah prayer.

Judaism

Belief about death

Jews believe death in this life will eventually lead to resurrection in a world to come.

Funeral practices

The dead are buried as soon as possible. The body is washed to purify it, dressed in a plain linen shroud. The casket, a plain wooden coffin, remains closed after the body is dressed. The body is watched over from time of death till burial, as a sign of respect. The kaddish, a prayer in honour of the dead, is said.

Mourning rituals

There is an intense seven-day mourning period, called shiva, following the burial. Mourners traditionally rent their garments as a symbol of grief. Today, people often wear a black ribbon instead of tearing their clothes. Mourners also cover mirrors, sit on low stools, and avoid wearing leather. The full mourning period lasts a year, after which mourners observe the dead's yahrzeit, or yearly anniversary of the death.

Lutheran

Belief about death

Many Lutheran groups believe that death goes against what is naturally intended for us by God. It is thought that because of humankind's rebellion against God, death was created as a punishment.

Funeral practices

There is usually a funeral burial service for the dead. The service takes place in a church, but can also be held in a private home, funeral home or crematory, if desired.

Mourning rituals

A last viewing before the beginning of the funeral service takes place, after which the funereal coffin is closed. Mourners may also be invited to pray at the burial site, and those nearer to the grave may throw handfuls of earth onto the coffin as it descends into the earth.

Mormonism

Belief about death

Mormons believe that at death, the spirit and the body separate. People go to judgment by God. Death is something to mourn but is also a time of hope because it is seen as a step into the next life and eternal life with God

Funeral practices

Funeral services are usually held in an LDS chapel or mortuary. Burial is preferred to cremation because internment in the earth symbolizes the return of dust to dust.

Mourning rituals

The gravesite of the deceased is viewed as a sacred spot for the family to visit and tend.

Pagan

Beliefs about death

Pagans believe that physical death is not the end of life. The dead become unborn and enter into a state where they may find temporary rest, after which healing and renewing energy for rebirth into a new life occur.

Funeral practices

Believers in the pagan goddess traditions wash the dead body with a mixture consisting of spring water, a few drops of ocean water (or water from another special place), scented oil, and the herb rosemary for purity and protection. While washing, a special blessing is usually said. Then, the body is smudged (or censured) with an appropriate incense for the cleansing. Finally, the body is wrapped or dress in simple cloth or clothing.

Mourning rituals

Pagans hold funerals and memorial services, during which, special prayers are said to help guide the dead to healing in their afterlife journey to rebirth. Rituals include offerings to nature and the ancestors, invoking spirits, music, chanting, sharing stories and more.

Presbyterianism

Belief about death

Presbyterian Christians believe that whether the reward of heaven or the punishment of hell, the consequences of life have a bearing on where you end up after death, and they begin immediately after death.

Funeral practices

Most funerals take place two to four days after the death. Most services are held in the church sanctuary. Funeral practices vary from person to person. No one form of interment is either encouraged or discouraged among worshippers.

Mourning rituals

Worshippers are encouraged to provide the "ministry of presence" to those who have experienced a loss. Whether one calls, writes or visits the bereaved, the act of being present for them is enough.