

Student emergency contact procedure

1. This procedure summarises how student emergency contact details are collected and maintained and the circumstances under which the university will use these.
2. Students are required to provide Next of Kin details (a name and phone number) at the point that they enrol and asked to confirm these when they re-enrol each year.

Emergency contact details

3. From 2022/3 enrolment students will be invited to provide contact details (name, relationship and phone numbers) for an emergency contact who may be contacted if the university has significant concerns about the student. These will be in addition to the Next of Kin details.
4. Students can nominate any responsible adult to be their emergency contact, we expect that in many instances students will choose their parent, guardian or other person who is their next of kin, but they may choose another trusted friend or relation. The person chosen should be someone who is stable in the student's life.
5. Students should ensure that the person they have chosen has given their permission and is aware that the university will hold their contact details for this purpose.
6. Students can change or remove these contact details at any point and should endeavour to keep them up to date. As long as they remain on the system the university will accept this as permission that the contact details can be used in line with this procedure. It is therefore important that students review the information regularly.
7. The contact information will held on the university's student record system, in accordance with the University's Privacy Notice and current UK data protection legislation.

Circumstances when the University may use an emergency contact

8. Under data protection legislation, we may disclose personal information about a student without consent when it is in their 'vital interests' to do so; this means in serious or life and death situations. In these circumstances we may contact your Next of Kin.
9. In providing an emergency contact, students are consenting in advance to the University contacting this named individual if there is serious concern about the student's welfare.
10. The current personal circumstances of an individual student will be taken into consideration before using the emergency contact details provided.
11. The decision to contact an emergency contact will be made on a case by case basis collectively by the Welfare Group.

12. The Welfare Group is a group of senior staff which meets weekly to review students with particular well-being concerns. The group includes the Dean for Student Support and Welfare and the Assistant Registrar for Student Services. The group will meet or correspond to for Student make a quick decision where necessary.
13. Where possible and appropriate we would normally tell the student that we intend to alert their emergency contact before doing so. However this may not always be the case and the Welfare Group will make the decision on whether to do this.
14. The following are examples of circumstances in which we might inform the emergency contact, the list is not comprehensive:
 - A student has attended or been admitted to hospital in an emergency.
 - A student has suffered a serious physical injury, including self-harm.
 - A student has ceased to engage with their studies and we have been unable to contact them.
 - A student has not recently been seen in their accommodation and we have been unable to contact them.
 - A student has an ongoing illness and appears to be deteriorating.
 - A student is experiencing a mental health crisis
15. Students are free to withdraw their consent at any time. However, we may still decide to inform their Next of Kin if we consider it to be in their vital interests to do so.
16. The University may also pass Next of Kin contact details to the emergency services, for example to the ambulance crew or by telephoning the Emergency Department at the hospital, so that they can support the students as their patient.
17. In the event of a suspected or confirmed death of a student, the University will pass Next of Kin contact details to the emergency services. It is not the role of the University to first inform next of kin of a death.

Staff concerned about a student

18. Staff are encouraged to raise serious welfare concerns which they have about a student with the Assistant Registrar (Student Services), the Dean for Student Support and Welfare or the Academic Registrar.
19. If any member of staff considers that a student's emergency contact needs to be contacted, they must raise this with the Assistant Registrar (Student Services), the Dean for Student Support and Welfare or the Academic Registrar within office hours.
20. Contact with emergency contacts or Next of Kin will be made by one these individuals or their nominee.
21. In the case of serious concern and/or immediate danger outside working hours staff should contact the Police or emergency services.

Withdrawal for lack of attendance or engagement

22. Where a student is not attending teaching and engaging with their studies, under the *Attendance and Academic Engagement Policy* they will receive communication from the course team to chase this up and remind them that they risk withdrawal of their registration on the course if they do not meet attendance requirements.
23. Attendance requirements vary from course to course and is covered by the Attendance and Academic Engagement Policy.
24. If a student does not respond or does respond but continues not to engage with their studies, following a number of attempts to contact and engage them, they can be referred to the Academic Registrar for withdrawal.
25. The Academic Registrar will seek assurance that there are no significant welfare issues regarding the student.
26. The Academic Registrar will write to the student to indicate that the process to withdraw them will be initiated and will implement this one week later if there is no change in the meantime.

Missing Student

27. A missing student is one who is not attending or engaging with their studies and is also not communicating and has not been seen or heard from i.e. in teaching sessions, on placement or by others in the university.
28. The university has a duty to follow up where a student is missing from their course with no contact.
29. If a student has missed important contact points, has not been seen or heard from and/or the course team have specific concerns for a student's welfare they should attempt to contact the student initially by email (personal and sgu) and then by phone.
30. Communication should be supportive, signpost support available from the university and the SU and ask for a response within 2 days.
31. Following this, if the course team has a concern that the student is missing or has a significant welfare concern, they should contact the Dean for Student Welfare and Support, the Assistant Registrar (Student Services) or Student Accommodation and Welfare Advisor.
32. The case will be referred to the Welfare Group to consider whether the Student Emergency Contact procedure should be used to contact the student's trusted contact or whether other steps should be taken to support the student, including referral to Counselling or the Psychiatrist.

Information for concerned parents, friends and family

33. If a parent, family member or friend has a concern about the well-being of a student they should encourage the student to seek support at the university, from their course team or one of our central services: [Student support A-Z \(sgul.ac.uk\)](http://sgul.ac.uk)

34. If a friend of family member is concerned because they have not been able to contact a student they can make contact with the university.
35. The university will seek to make contact with the student, including where the student has been recently de-registered from their course.
36. We will ask the student to contact the friend/family member and will follow up with the student regarding any welfare concerns that we or they have, but we cannot disclose any information to family or friends.
37. Under data protection legislation the university cannot disclose any information about a student to a third party, including next of kin and parents.
38. This includes information about their enrolment/registration status, academic progress, attendance, their well-being or any complaints or disciplinary processes they have been involved in.
39. As noted above we can inform next of kin where this is in the student's 'vital interests'.
40. We can also share information with named individuals where we have specific written consent from the student.

Academic Registrar
Feb 2023