

# STUDENT DEATH PROTOCOL

**Responsible for Implementation: Head of Safeguarding**

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**Authorised By: Chief Executive Officer**

**Version 3**

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## About Us

Access Further Education Ltd ('The College') has subsidiary companies, trading names and trading partnerships through which it operates. The trading names and partnerships might have their own names or brands, but the legal entity for the purpose of this policy is Access Further Education Ltd. Trading subsidiaries, trading names and trading partnerships include Access Creative College ('ACC'), Access Industry ('AI') and Access Sport ('AS'). The dBs Institute (DBS Music UK Holdings and its subsidiaries), whilst a separate legal entity, shares common Directorships with the College.

## 1. Statement of purpose

The purpose of the Protocol is to enable the College to respond sensitively to the death of an AFE student and to offer support to the student's family, College students and colleagues.

## 2. Introduction

The death of a student is a sad event, which can cause distress to family, students and colleagues within The College. Those most affected by the death, including the next of kin/family of the deceased, fellow students, and colleagues, will be offered support from The College.

This document is intended to provide a clear and effective response in the event of a student death. It identifies lead responsibilities and recommended time scales for implementation of the Student Death Protocol. The College operates a student death case review process separate to the student death protocol in order to apply learning and make improvements to our processes.

This Protocol is led by the Head of Safeguarding and supported by the Senior Management Team.

## 3. Principles for managing a student death

Following a student death, it is important to ensure that the deceased student's family, colleagues and students who are impacted by the death, are offered pastoral care and support and the delivery of sensitive information is shared in a timely and appropriate way.

Information about a student death may be received from a range of sources. The College colleagues should report this information to Head of Safeguarding, by emailing [Chelsea.Evans@accesscreative.ac.uk](mailto:Chelsea.Evans@accesscreative.ac.uk), T: 01522 442603, M:07345740317. This inbox is monitored daily during normal business hours. If a sudden death has occurred on a College

Campus or out of normal business hours, Emergency Services should be called on 999.

**If known, the following information should be included in the notification:**

- Student's name
- Date of Birth
- Campus, Course and Year
- Student Address
- How you became aware/informed of the student death, including contact details of the person who informed you (and their relationship to the student, e.g. friend, family, Police, Coroner), with the date and time you were informed.
- Your name, position and contact details
- The time, date and location of death if known
- If the incident is still ongoing? Have emergency services been called?

It is important that any information is not shared internally outside of communicating with the Head of Safeguarding or externally prior to the confirmation that the formal Student Death Protocol has begun.

Colleagues and students should refer all enquiries to the Head of Safeguarding.

Important: It is the role of the police or hospital to inform the next-of-kin. No member of The College should contact the next-of-kin until The College has been informed by the police or hospital that they have already been informed. It will then be the role of the Implementation Officer to make initial contact.

- The formal protocol begins after the Head of Safeguarding or nominee has confirmed that the information about the death is accurate and all relevant parties (Next of Kin/ Police have agreed that information about the student death can be shared within The College.
- Where the student death is by suspected suicide, the Implementation Officer will convene a Postvention team meeting at the first available opportunity.
- Once the protocol is started, clear and accurate information about the death should be distributed quickly to Initial Notification Contacts (see section 4) to ascertain the students and colleagues at The College who may require support. This must be done with the awareness of the sensitivity of the information, recognising the potential for distress and with regard for confidentiality where necessary.
- The Head of Safeguarding or nominee will lead as the Implementation Officer. The Implementation Officer will be supported by the deceased student's Head of Centre and Assistant Head of Support/ Learning Support Manager to identify and contact students and colleagues who knew the deceased student, and to ensure an offer of support is made.
- Media information about the death may be widely available. Any speculation on the details and cause of the death should be treated with care, with a focus on respecting the deceased and family/friends. It may not be possible to share information about the cause of death as this can only be confirmed by a Coroner's investigation and verdict.
- The main purpose of the Student Death Protocol is to ensure The College can provide timely and appropriate support to those impacted by the death. Information recorded as part of the protocol may be provided to support formal external reviews such as a Coroner's inquest.

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

### 4.1 Overall Responsibility for the Student Death Protocol

The Head of Safeguarding has overall responsibility for this Protocol and will lead or nominate a colleague as the Implementation Officer.

### 4.2 Postvention Team (PVT)

The Postvention team (PVT) is to be convened by the Student Death Protocol Implementation Officer (Head of Safeguarding or nominee) at the first available opportunity following the report of a student death by suspected suicide.

The PVT will consist of a Chair, Care of Students Lead, Care for Staff Lead, Family Liaison Lead, Communications Lead and Administrator. The PVT will consider support for affected students and staff, family liaison, communication, review of strategic priorities, potential risks, timescales, critical incident review, and follow up actions.

### 4.3 Implementation Officer

Duties of the Implementation Officer will include:

- Attend the incident (if onsite or in The College owned building) and will act in a supportive capacity to emergency services, students, and The College colleagues at the scene.
- Contact the Campus Learning Support Manager/ Assistant Head of Support to lead the pastoral response.
- Convene and lead the Postvention Team at the first available opportunity where the student death is by suspected suicide.
- Create a single case file to record key information about the student death and other relevant information and notification of contacts.
- Coordination of support with The College, Learning Support Manager/ Assistant Head of Support and other Professional Services
- Request a Book of Condolence where appropriate.
- Review of the case file and implementation process.
- To provide ongoing support/follow up actions and provide information where requested e.g. Student Death Review, Coroner's inquest.

### Notification of Contacts

The Implementation Officer is responsible for Informing the nominated contacts and working with them to facilitate support for colleagues and students. The contacts below should refer to the Student Death Protocol Colleague Guidance for details of responsibilities.

An initial notification will go to:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Managing Director
- Head of Operations
- Head of Center (Campus Student attends)
- Learning Support Manager/ Assistant Head of Support (Campus Student attends)
- Director of People Services

The Implementation Officer will be responsible for notifying the following key services so appropriate action can be taken in response to the student death:

- MIS
- Communications and Marketing
- Finance
- Student Support Services (Wellbeing Duty/Student Support Advisers/

The Student Death Colleague Guidance document can be used as a checklist by all nominated contacts to ensure they have completed the necessary actions within the Student Death Protocol.

## 5. Timetable of Actions

The details of responsibilities and actions are organised into five distinct periods, Initial Incident Response, Day 1 actions following the initial incident response, Days 2-10, Continuing, and Student Death Case Review (Staff should refer to the Student Death Colleague Guidance document).

### Initial Incident Response

- Head of Safeguarding is notified of the Student Death. Details of the student, last known movements at The

- College, and the incident, are investigated and any information received by the college is confirmed as accurate.
- Once the death has been confirmed and next-of-kin informed, initial notifications and actions can proceed.
- Where there is a student death by suspected suicide, the Implementation Officer will convene The College Postvention Team at the first available opportunity, who are responsible for caring for and communicating to staff, students and family, and depending upon the incident, maybe required to liaise with external parties e.g. Police liaison, coroner liaison, embassy liaison.

## Day 1 actions following the initial incident response

- The Implementation Officer will send initial notifications to key contacts.
- The Implementation Officer will arrange a meeting with the Chief Executive Officer, Managing Directors, Executive Head of Operations, Head of Centre to establish facts and agree on communications to staff, students (and parents/carers where the student was part of an FE cohort). The meeting may take place on Day 1 or 2.
- The Implementation Officer will request a Book of Condolence where appropriate from the Communications and Marketing team.
- The Implementation Officer will review all information gathered/actions taken at the end of Day 1 and will plan actions for the following day.

## Days 2 to 10 Actions

During this period, the focus will be on providing appropriate support to students and colleagues who are impacted by the student death. Ongoing support will also be offered to next of kin, family members and trusted contacts. Meetings will be led by the Implementation Officer in partnership with the Learning Support Manager/ Assistant Head of Support, Head of Centre and the Managing Director of the learners provision:

- Once communications have been agreed to staff and students, the Chief Executive Officer will ensure all relevant staff will be informed of the student death and sources of support, followed by informing all relevant student cohorts. This may include a face-to-face meeting/online meeting as well as an email notification. NB: The notification of students before receiving formal confirmation of the death should only take place during exceptional circumstances, e.g., if other students were present, due to media attention, or due to social media activity.
- The Managing Director of the learners provision or nominee will provide a summary and timeline of academic progress and School interactions with the student to the Implementation Officer.
- The Implementation Officer will notify key services so appropriate action can be taken in response to the student death, ensuring necessary administrative processes are followed.
- The Head of Safeguarding will contact the next-of-kin to offer support.
- The Chief Executive Officer and Managing Directors will each write a letter of condolence to the deceased student's next of kin/family.
- The marketing team will monitor for any media coverage and escalate to the Head of Safeguarding as appropriate, who will refer media to the Samaritans guidelines as appropriate.

## Continuing Period

Continuing support may be provided following the initial period of activity:

- The Implementation Officer and Head of Centre will liaise with family and friends/next of kin, to support and contribute to any funeral arrangements and memorial events.
- Students impacted by the death will be given academic advice and support within their Centre if assessment deadlines are affected.
- The Implementation Officer is responsible for conducting a closure meeting and minuting that all actions have been completed and reviewed on the student record.
- The Implementation Officer is responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of the Student Death Protocol and providing feedback on any learning during the implementation process. This will be discussed and minuted at the closure meeting at the end of the Student Death Protocol process and fed back to the Head of Safeguarding, and/or any relevant stakeholders as part of a continuous improvement process. This will be considered if a Student Death Case Review is initiated.

## Student Death Case Review

- The College operates a death review process separate to the student death protocol.
- Following the initial response to the death and provided sufficient information about the incident has been gathered, the CEO – on the advice of the Head of Safeguarding – will make a judgement on whether a formal review should take place.
- It is important to note that cause of death is unlikely to be confirmed until the formal coroner's process is concluded. However, collecting information from a range of sources (e.g., the Police, NHS, peers, families, Student Support Services, other departments) may enable AFE colleagues to make an early judgement on the likely cause of death to support decision-making in relation to a formal review.