

LONDON SCHOOL
OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Policy and Procedures if a Student Dies

Version 3.0

Approved by the Board of Governors

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. When the tragic death of a student occurs, this can have a significant impact on the whole community and, in the case of LSST, the wider local population. It is vital that LSST responds with care and sensitivity, following procedures that reflect the following principles:

- A thoughtful response from the LSST, with help from external agencies when necessary.
- A compassionate and understanding approach that acknowledges the deep emotional impact on students, staff, families, and loved ones.
- Clear responsibilities to ensure that School staff and students can offer meaningful and coordinated support in the aftermath of the loss.
- A respectful and caring approach to the needs of all those affected by the death, providing right support.

1.2. This policy offers an overview of the responsibilities and actions required by staff when responding to the loss of a student.

1.3. This procedure applies to all reported student deaths regardless of the source, whether from internal services such as students, security, teaching staff, or from external organisations like the police, social media, hospitals, or directly from the student's family.

1.4. In every case, the LSST Principal, Vice Principal, Head of Student Lifecycle, Dean of Learning and Teaching, and Head of Registry should be notified at once by email, ensuring a compassionate and prompt response.

1.5. In the case of the death of a former student, the Principal, Vice Principal and Alumni should be notified at once to provide support.

2. PROCEDURE PRINCIPLES

2.1. The aims of this procedure are to ensure that:

- Relevant individuals, both within LSST and externally, are promptly informed of a student's death and are involved in responding appropriately.
- Those responsible for managing and responding to the death do so with responsibility, care, compassion, and sensitivity.
- Sufficient time, space, and support are provided for those affected to begin processing and coping with the news.
- Confidence in LSST's response is upheld, and all necessary actions are carried out.

3. FACTORS WHICH INFORM RESPONSE

3.1. The death of a student is typically an unforeseen event, and this guidance is based on that assumption. However, in cases of expected death, the grief experienced by those close to the deceased will still be deep but there may have been some preparation. To ensure the response level and type, factors which influence the death will be considered. However, in all cases, LSST will respond to the death with care, compassion, and sensitivity.

3.2. Location

3.2.1. The location where a death occurs significantly affects how LSST becomes involved in the first stage of addressing the situation and notifying the authorities. Each potential setting presents distinct circumstances for LSSTs response:

- **In a campus building or other LSST location:**
  When a death occurs in a campus building, campus security or relevant department staff will handle the l situation. They will contact emergency services and local authorities. LSST may also be involved in reviewing any potential connections to academic or course activities, especially if the death occurs during teaching hours.

- **Off campus while taking part in course activities (off-site activities):**
  If the death occurs while an individual is off-campus as part of a course-related activity, such as a placement, the placement provider would be the first to respond following their own policies and procedures.

- **Off campus in the individual's permanent residence or a public location:**
  If a death occurs in a person's home or a public place away from LSST property, the primary responsibility falls to local emergency responders and authorities. LSST would play a secondary role in offering support, such as contacting the student Next of Kin and providing wellbeing support for affected individuals within the LSST community.

3.2.2. In each situation, LSST involvement ranges from handling the first notifications to offering emotional and logistical support, depending on the circumstances and location of the death. The immediate response typically focuses on collaborating with local authorities while helping the affected LSST community members.

3.3. Circumstances of Death

3.3.1. The level of involvement from LSST staff, beyond providing emotional support, will depend on the circumstances surrounding the death:

- **Student Death on an LSST Campus:**
  If the death is because of a fall or fatal injury, LSST will contact emergency services. There will also be an urgent review of campus safety protocols to assess any contributing factors.

- **Possible suicide:**
  If the death is suspected to be a suicide off-campus, LSST will offer support to those affected. If the death is suspected to be a suicide on-campus, LSST will

contact emergency services and local authorities. LSST may also be involved in reviewing any potential connections to academic or course activities, especially if the death occurs during teaching hours.

- **Natural causes (including infectious diseases):**
  In cases of death from natural causes, such as illness or age-related conditions, LSST's involvement will primarily be in supporting those affected and managing practical matters. If the death is linked to an infectious disease, there may be additional coordination with health authorities.

- **Crime or suspected crime on LSST Property:**
  If the death is believed to be related to a crime, LSST will collaborate with law enforcement. The focus will be on supporting those involved or affected, while ensuring the investigation is not hindered.

- **Possible substance-related death:**
  In cases where substance use is involved, LSST may review its support services and policies, while helping those affected by the event.

4. IF A BODY IS DISCOVERED

4.1. **Do not touch or disturb anything** (other than to confirm that the person is deceased).

4.2. **If on campus:** Immediately contact Campus Security and ask them to notify the police.

4.3. **If off campus**: Call the police directly.

4.4. **Securing the scene:** Where appropriate, those present should ensure the area is secure until the police arrive. If on campus, the Campus Security will lead this process.

4.5. **Managing others at the scene:** If there are other individuals at the scene, they should be approached with care and sensitivity. Ideally, they should remain nearby until the police arrive, preferably gathered in a separate room. Efforts should be made to provide immediate support and comfort, and the names and contact details of everyone present should be recorded.

5. LSST RECEIVES NOTIFICATION OF STUDENT DEATH

5.1. LSST may be informed of a death through various channels. Typically, this will be from other students, or from statutory services seeking confirmation from LSST. Alternatively, a family member of the deceased will notify a staff member, or the news may reach students or staff through a media outlet. Regardless of how the information is reported, it is crucial to ensure that the facts are recorded accurately. The contact details of the individual providing the information should also be obtained to allow for any necessary follow-up).

5.2. It is crucial that any information related to the death is verified before any further steps are taken.

5.3. The Campus Wellbeing Officer with support from the student's Campus Dean and Personal Academic Tutor, should take responsibility for learning the facts about the notification of student death. This may be achieved by privately enquiring with the staff or student who initially became aware of the student's death or reviewing the legitimacy of the media channel where the notification was found.

5.4. Once the notification of death has been confirmed, the Campus Wellbeing Officer, PAT, and Campus Dean must contact School Principal, Vice Principal, Head of Student Lifecycle, Dean of Learning and Teaching, and Head of Registry confirming the student's death.

5.5. Upon notification from the campus team, the Registry Department will change the student's record to "Deceased (Under Investigation).

5.6. The Campus Wellbeing Officer will handle liaising with the students next of kin to obtain a copy of the death certificate. The only people who have a right to information following a death are the next of kin, so we must request information sensitively.

5.7. Once obtained, the death certificate should be issued to the Registry Department. The Registry Department will then handle notifying the students awarding body and updating the students record to status "Deceased".

6. COMMUNICATION FOLLOWING THE DEATH

6.1. Once the facts have been confirmed or corroborated, the following individuals will be notified by the Campus Dean:

- CEO
- Dean of Learning and Teaching
- Registrar
- Campus Operations Manager
- Vice Principal
- Principal
- Head of Student Lifecycle
- IT Manager
- Course Leader
- Safeguarding Lead
- Student Union

6.2. In cases which require continued collaboration with local authorities, usually where the death has occurred on LSST premises, the Head of Student Lifecycle will act as LSST Coordinator from this point onwards.

6.3. After receiving confirmation from the Police or Coroner's Office that the family has been notified, the following individuals will be informed, by the Head of Student Lifecycle:

- Registrar – to notify the administrative teams
- Campus Student Support Team
- Students Lecturers
- Any other relevant School department (e.g., if the student was employed by LSST, took part in an internship, or held a student ambassador role)

6.4. Informing other students about the death is a delicate and important process. Typically, this should begin with close friends, and those studying the same programme(s). Whenever possible, it is preferable to share this news in person, such as by addressing a year group at the end of a lecture, rather than sending an email. However, in some cases, an email may be the most effective way to inform a larger cohort or School community promptly.

6.5. All communications from departments to staff and students must be approved by the Head of Student Lifecycle prior to being sent.

7. MEDIA AND PRESS ENQUIRIES

7.1. All media enquiries should be directed to the LSST Press Office, who may prepare a brief statement to release to enquirers.

8. POLICE OR CORONER'S OFFICE LIAISON

8.1. In case of a sudden death, the police have two key responsibilities. Initially, in the immediate emergency response and later to gather evidence for the coroner's investigation, which could be used in any potential criminal proceedings.

8.2. An unexpected death is reported to the coroner in the district where the body is found. The coroner's role is to establish the identity of the deceased and determine the time, place, and cause of death. They have authority over the body until all necessary information has been gathered, which usually includes the results of a post-mortem examination conducted by a pathologist.

8.3. A liaison with the police is typically managed by the Campus Operations Manager, while communication with the coroner's office is usually handled by the Head of Student Lifecycle.

9. FAMILY LIAISON

9.1. To provide the right support to the family and help with funeral arrangements for those wishing to attend, it is crucial to establish a single point of contact within the family. In some cases, the family may not wish to engage with LSST, and in such situations, we will adjust our approach accordingly.

9.2. Ideally, the family contact should be an LSST staff member who knew the student personally. Experience has shown that families value this most. Typically, it is best for this to be a senior staff member from the department who has had direct teaching or other meaningful interactions with the student.

9.3. If no one who knew the student, or those who did, do not feel comfortable undertaking the role of family liaison, if they are able, the Head of Student Lifecycle can take on this role.

9.4. The University family contact has several key responsibilities:

- **Determine the family's needs:** Establish if the family needs any assistance, such as help collecting personal belongings, visiting the department, or accessing other parts of the Campus.

- **Clarify funeral arrangements:** Confirm the details of the funeral and whether the family is open to students and staff attending.

- **Serve as a source of practical information:** Act as a point of contact for logistical matters, such as returning fees or arranging for a transcript and/or certificate for a posthumous award.

- **Understand the family's background:** If possible, learn about the family, particularly the parents, so that a letter of condolence from LSST can be addressed appropriately.

- **Identify concerned students:** Note any students the family may mention who are close to the deceased, as the family may have knowledge of close friends, we are unaware of.

- **Memorial event discussions:** The family contact may also be asked to discuss the possibility of a memorial event at LSST with the family, including whether they are comfortable with such an event, if they wish to attend, and if there are any religious or cultural considerations to keep in mind.

10. ONGOING SUPPORT AND WELLBEING STAFF AND STUDENTS

10.1. When a student dies, a small group of close friends and a partner will be deeply affected, followed by a broader group who are shocked and upset. The nature of the death, particularly if it seems preventable, can intensify these emotional responses.

10.2. These reactions are natural and should be acknowledged. Initially, other students, staff, and sometimes family members will offer support to those most impacted. LSST is usually best placed to manage this support.

10.3. The LSST Wellbeing Team will coordinate outreach to close friends and work with academic departments to ensure affected students receive support.

10.4. The LSST Wellbeing Team may notify academic departments about the situation and the student's connection to the deceased. Affected students should also be encouraged to contact their department within a couple of days to address any academic work and request mitigation if needed.

11. POSTHUMOUS ACADEMIC AWARDS

11.1. A posthumous degree or award is one that is granted to a student after their death, typically in recognition of their academic work completed before passing. This award is often given when the student has successfully completed enough coursework to merit the degree, but unfortunately, they were unable to receive it in person due to their death.

11.2. Should a student pass away part-way through their studies, the students Awarding Body will decide whether they are eligible for an academic award or certificate for the work they already completed upon notification of their death.

11.3. When a posthumous award is granted, the student's next of kin should be consulted on how they would like to receive the certificate, if at all. A family member may accept the certificate during a degree ceremony, or have it posted.

12. FUNERAL AND MEMORIAL ARRANGEMENTS

12.1. The next of kin is responsible for arranging the funeral, which typically takes place near the family's home. Family members may appreciate the presence of students and staff, but this is their decision.

12.2. In some cases, the family's preference is that the students' School is represented at the funeral. Where this is agreed, the Head of Student Lifecycle, and the student's supervisor or another colleague. Where the funeral is to take place abroad, far from the students' place of student, this will not be possible.

12.3. If the funeral is to take place some distance away, and many students and staff wish to pay their respects, a memorial event on Campus may be more appropriate.

12.4. Memorial events to be arranged by LSST should be approved and organised via the usual School events management channels. Those interested in attending a memorial for the student should contact the Head of Student Lifecycle and/or Principal.

13. REVIEW AND UPDATE OF THIS POLICY

13.1. This Policy will be periodically reviewed by the Head of Registry to ensure it remains fit for purpose and consistent with all awarding body and external regulatory requirements. Changes to this policy will be reviewed by the Executive Committee and ratified by LSST's Board of Governor.

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