Academic Guardians UK

Procedure in the Event of a student death

This policy summarises Academic Guardians UK key responsibilities and work procedures to manage the event of a student death.

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Policy owner	Updated	Review date
Andrew Kettle	August 2024	August 2025

Academic Guardians UK Ltd – Procedure in the Event of Student Death

Policy:	Procedure in the Event of Student Death
Summary:	This policy summarises Academic Guardians UK key responsibilities and work procedures to manage the event of a student death.

Policy Owner:	Andrew Kettle (Designated Safeguarding & Prevent Lead)	Update: August 2024
Next Review Date:	August 2025	

Please note:

*In the event of a death this document should be circulated to post holders outlined in the responsibility table below, so they are aware of what actions they need to take and when.

Overall co-ordination is via Andrew Kettle Designated Safeguarding & Prevent Lead

Please note, if the death or incident involves either a former or current member of staff then please call your normal personnel contact and refer to Dawn Kettle, Director.

Academic Guardians UK Ltd – Procedure in the Event of Student Death

The Purpose of the Procedure

At some point AGUK may be faced with the sad event of a student death. This procedure has the following objectives:

- coordinating an appropriate level of response from AGUK;
- avoiding confusion through the development of clear lines of responsibility
- mitigating organisational risk by ensuring legalities are observed, and the interests of the AGUK are protected in cases where negligence might be alleged
- acting with common sense in mind

Factors which may determine level and type of response:

The death of a student is most rare and a very unexpected event. The location in which the death occurs will have a significant bearing on the degree of involvement from AGUK and from staff. Notes at the end of this procedure give additional information on actions to be taken in the event of discovery of a death at a student's homestay.

Document Contents - This document is divided into four parts:

- Part 1 - Notification of a student death & The responsibilities of the Directors
- Part 2 - What happens next
- Part 3 - Contact Details

Contact details of the key people in this document are as follows:

Designated Safeguarding Lead & Prevent Lead – Director Andrew Kettle who can be contacted on 0203 515 8880, 07823 321 993 or andrew@academic-guardians.co.uk

Deputy Safeguarding Lead – Director Dawn Kettle who can be contacted on 0203 515 8880, 07931 954 106 or dawn@academic-guardians.co.uk

1.0 Notification of a student death

WHO MUST BE INFORMED BY THE "FINDER"?

One of the Directors Dawn / Andrew Kettle should be contacted immediately in the event of a student death

First Tier Responsibilities: -The following senior professional services staff will act together as a team, the role of which is to ensure the following:

- that appropriate people in AGUK and externally are informed of the death;
- that the legalities surrounding the event are being followed;
- that appropriate people are consulted and involved with the further actions that AGUK may wish or need to make;

	Immediately	Continuing
Directors Andrew & Dawn Kettle	• confirm the veracity of information and that the next of kin have been informed • notify next of kin if appropriate • notify relevant College officers of student death as above • to act as the overall co-ordinator of actions arising, liaising with the School/university • liaison with next of kin • Liaison with Police • Notify all staff of student death as above • take steps as outlined in the additional notes on discovery of a death on homestay host premises	• liaise with Police, Coroner's Office, legal representatives, as appropriate • co-ordinate offers of support to affected students/staff, • Maintain contact with agents, parents, homestay hosts and school/university etc. • to disseminate information on funeral arrangements and/or memorial events • Organise review at the end of the process, to consider potential improvements to response • liaise with the Chaplaincy over an appropriate memorial in the department • to arrange an appropriate tribute at the funeral of the deceased (taking advice from those in contact with the family and/or Chaplain, and with particular attention to cultural sensitivities)

Second Tier Responsibilities:

These are administration staff that may have responsibilities stemming from the death of a student. The aim in all cases should be:

- to ensure that no routine administrative procedure is continued which may cause embarrassment to AGUK and distress to relatives/friends of the deceased;
- to ensure that follow-up enquiries, internal or external, are channelled to someone with first-tier responsibility or someone delegated by that group;
- to put in place support and processes for those affected to adjust and recover from the news of the tragedy;
- to ensure that all concerned have confidence that AGUK is acting in a responsible, compassionate and sensitive manner;

	Immediately	Continuing
Dawn Kettle, Director	• ensure that the student's record is immediately updated, • ensure that all internal administrative enquires are referred to ensure that no AGUK communications, including invoices, are sent to the deceased's address • ensure that all arrangements in the name of the student are cancelled	• in consultation with those with first-tier responsibilities, • write a letter of condolence to the family/partner • contribute to AGUKs discussion on funeral arrangements, memorials • ensure any registrations and memberships are cancelled
AGUK Directors	• identify if the student was known to the Counselling service at the School/university • liaise with the School/university department and Chaplaincy over support being offered to staff and students, including in the breaking of the news • arrange alternative accommodation if required for those directly influenced by the event.	• in consultation with the School/University and Chaplaincy, local support agency to arrange and disseminate the availability of counselling professionals for distressed students and staff under the AGUK umbrella • ensure that cultural requirements relating to burial and funeral arrangements are taken into account

	• arrange alternative accommodation if required for those directly influenced by the event. • agree immediate statement if enquiries come in, defining facts and limiting what is said to whom • ensure switchboard direct all enquiries to the • directors	• liaise with College Safety Officer if appropriate • handle, or delegate the handling, of all media enquiries • where practicable, if necessary to assist with shielding the relatives from the media
Directors	• identify if the student was registered with the service and communicate any relevant information to the police/coroner via the Directors - liaise with hospital if necessary	• take any action required by law as the result of a possible death by reason of infectious disease to collaborate if appropriate with the NHS/local authority
Directors / Local Coordinators	• identify if the student had sought advice on any issue recently	• support students who use the advice service who may be affected by the incident and direct them to Counselling and/or the Chaplaincy if required • liaise with consulate/embassy if required • assist with arrangements for arrival of relatives
Dawn Kettle - Finance Office	• ensure there are no immediate letters to be sent to the student • provide any recent communication to the Director of Student Services if requested	• in consultation with those with first-tier responsibilities, • write a letter of condolence to the family/partner • contribute to AGUKs discussion on funeral arrangements, memorials • ensure any registrations and memberships are cancelled • consider banking implications, i.e. withholding direct debit request.

Directors / Local Coordinators	• identify if the student had sought advice on any issue recently	• support students who use the advice service who may be affected by the incident and direct them to Counselling and/or the Chaplaincy if required • liaise with consulate/embassy if required • assist with arrangements for arrival of relatives
Director - (Andrew Kettle)	• identify immediate risks to staff and students if incident was on campus	• assess Health & Safety implications of any incident • follow the reporting procedures required by law • advise on the implementation of immediate closures or changes in practice where necessary
Directors / Office team	• advise as to any immediate legal issues relating to the incident	• support the monitoring of communication around the incident • support the liaison with the coroner if required
Directors / Office team	• identify if the student was in liaison with the service and report anything relevant	• inform any relevant agencies/support workers

2.0 What happens next

2.1 Communication

It is of vital importance that only known facts are communicated in the first instance, especially via email. If other relevant people are identified as being required to know about the incident then they may be added to the contact list, however care must be taken to minimise distribution of initial information to only those that need to be aware for reasons outlines in the table above. Rumour and guesswork must not be allowed to spread.

2.2 Informing students

Informing fellow students of their colleague's death needs to be done sensitively and quickly. This can be done either by calling a special meeting, or, more likely, by the School/University. The School/University Counselling Service and/or the Chaplains should ideally be present when the news is broken but they can at the very least advise on conducting this type of meeting.

All facts, as far as they are accurately known should be made known, as should the availability of on-going support and a person to contact for further information. Another meeting may need to be called once the results of any post mortem are known.

If students are away on placement and it is impossible to inform them in person, then alternative ways of informing them should be considered. Email should be used if necessary but only when all face to face alternatives have been exhausted. It is imperative that students are told swiftly as social media can often shape the message without any control.

Experience has shown that it has also been helpful to have a notice posted in the School/university with the news, expressing the AGUK and School/University sorrow – and giving the contact details of Chaplains and Counselling team or AGUK Safeguarding Contacts.

2.3 Additional Considerations

2.3.1 Funeral

The funeral is likely to take place during the following week. The responsibility for the funeral rests with the family, and their wishes take priority. Some families prefer a small private ceremony, especially in the event of tragic or suspicious circumstances, and thus it may not be possible for staff or students to attend. Alternatively, the family may be glad if representative staff and students attend, with, where possible, the assistance of the AGUK and or School/University. Sometimes it may also be advisable for a member of staff, who did not know the deceased, to accompany affected students to the funeral in order to offer support, while at other times someone who did know him/her is appreciated. It is also possible to hold a parallel event in their School/university at the same time as the funeral for those who cannot travel or attend the funeral itself; or indeed at a later date - the School/University can advise on what might be suitable, taking into account the beliefs/faiths of all concerned.

2.3.2 Possessions

Collection of the possessions of the deceased, including their work, will be a distressing time, particularly for the next-of-kin or AGUK as instructed by the next-of-kin. The situation will need to be handled sensitively and with respect to the wishes of those directly involved. Liaison will be undertaken with the School/university representative, as appropriate. The family may also wish to have copies of the students' work and exam scripts. This can be

arranged via the form tutor. Again, the school/university may offer Chaplains or Counsellors to be available if required.

2.3.3 Continuing

As time passes and when AGUK and school/university records have been amended, staff and students may continue to be affected by the death. This may come to light in a number of ways such as exam or coursework grades, in which case the examiners need to be informed. Consideration needs to be given to these requests although some may be impossible to be granted for reasons beyond the control of the department.

2.3.4 Emergency Contacts / a Death that occurs outside of regular AGUK 'hours'

AGUK and the school/university have established procedures for dealing with an emergency outside of normal working hours. In the case of the death of a student, appropriate people will be notified. It is therefore important that all senior staff make the directors aware of any changes to their details and availability particularly during closed holiday periods. It can be quite a shock for staff and students to return to work/school/university and discover that someone has not only died but has been buried – and they missed it. This is when a school/university memorial service or event can be very helpful for all concerned. The School/University office should be consulted for assistance. Where possible the School/university will attempt to contact students at the earliest opportunity to inform them that a death has occurred during a vacation and supply a point of contact within the School/university should they want more information.

2.3.5 Withdrawal of a terminally ill student from a programme ofstudy.

In some cases, a student who dies whilst enrolled at a School/University is in fact temporarily withdrawn due to their terminal illness. Many of these students withdraw in the hope that they will be able to return at a later date. Schools/Universities are advised to discuss with the student how much contact they would like with the school/university. This will naturally vary, however normally the majority are pleased to continue to be involved in information mail outs. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to establish a point of contact within the students' family so that individuals can be kept aware of progress. Establishing what the best mode of communication might be– emails are particularly helpful as it helps keep contact but allows the family to reply when they have time and avoids staff feeling like they may be intruding. Establishing also how much of the information given can be passed on to colleagues or students. If a student does die whilst withdrawn due to serious illness the normal protocols are followed. A letter of condolence is written to the bereaved family from the directors at AGUK. Depending on how much of the programme was completed, the student may be given a posthumous award as a record of achievement.

2.3.6 Case Conference

In the following weeks a Case Conference will be called to bring together all staff who were close to the incident to assess if there is any learning that the AGUK can take from the incident. The meeting is not to apportion any blame but to identify opportunities to improve the support given to students. Key findings will be used to improve the processes involved. A template for the findings is attached in Appendix 3.

3.0 Contact Details:

3.1 AGUK Office & Directors

AGUK Safeguarding & Prevent Contacts – The contact information below is provided via the company website, policies, handbooks, guides and publications, to all those who come into contact with AGUK including, staff, parents, students, schools, homestay host families, drivers, local coordinators, agents and volunteers.

Designated Safeguarding Lead & Prevent Lead – Director Andrew Kettle who can be contacted on 0203 515 8880, 07823 321 993 or andrew@academic-guardians.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Director Dawn Kettle who can be contacted on 0203 515 8880, 07931 954 106 or dawn@academic-guardians.co.uk

3.2 Bereavement Care Counselling

The death of a student can be traumatic for both staff, parents & siblings, homestay hosts and other pupils. A student's death can unnerve other pupils and challenge any feelings of security they might Professionals in schools have a unique role in helping grieving children and young people, as children spend a significant amount of time in school. With the right help and support, most bereaved pupils will not need professional help; what they do need is the understanding of familiar and trusted adults. Schools are therefore well placed to support a bereaved pupil.

(http://childbereavementuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/1-2-3-What-helps-grieving-children-and-young-people.pdf?noredir=true)

AGUK provides support to the parents and students as well as frontline staff, local co-ordinators, homestay hosts and drivers.

National support services include:

Cruise Bereavement Care

The Cruse Bereavement Care helpline, for adults as well as young people. The National Helpline is 0808 808 1677 and their advisors will be able to tell you about the nearest Cruise service.

When you call the Cruse Area, you may get through to an answerphone - please don't let this put you off. Just leave your name and telephone number and someone will give you a call back. It may take a few days before someone returns your call.

Additional national support:

- Child Bereavement UK – 0800 028 8840 Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, or email support@childbereavement.org
- Hope Again – 0808 808 1677 Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5pm, or email hopeagain@cruse.org.uk
- Winston's Wish – 0808 802 0021 Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Appendix 1

Discovery of a death at a homestay host family home /School/University

Additional notes on discovery of a death under AGUK educational guardianship care:

1. The Police must be notified.

2. Nothing should be moved or touched until the Police have arrived and their guidance has been sought.

3. If there is a "violent, unnatural death, or sudden death of which the cause is unknown..." then the Coroner's Act 1988 imposes on the Coroner a duty (usually delegated to the Police at the scene) to establish; who the deceased was; where, when and how the deceased met their death; details required for the registration of the death

4. The Police will normally arrange for the removal of the body.

5. The Police (or Hospital) will normally arrange that the next of kin are informed. In the case of an international student the Police will normally contact their counterparts in the students' country, who will then inform the next of kin. The Director must check with the Police whether this has been done and which person(s) have been informed. AGUK may need to assist the Police by making available information from its student records system.

6. In the unlikely event that the Police do not undertake this duty, responsibility may fall to a Director of AGUK. It is essential that the veracity of the information about the death before making any contact with the next of kin.

7. If there are witnesses whom the Police will wish to interview, they should be taken to a private area removed from the immediate scene as soon as possible and provided with appropriate support.

8. In most cases, the sudden death of a student will become common knowledge to at least a portion of the community within a short space of time. Basic information should be disseminated without delay on a 'need to know' and 'need to support' basis. Failure to communicate can lead to rumour and unnecessary anxiety in the School/University and student community.

9. An apparent or alleged suicide is not a suicide until a Coroner says so. It is important that people acting in an official capacity within AGUK and the School/university know this and do not pre-empt the Coroner's verdict in communication.

Based on information provided by AMOSSHE

Appendix 2

It is with great sadness that we have to announce the death of XXX

(X was a 1st/2nd/3rd year YY student)

A bereavement can often be a very hard thing to deal with, and it can also bring back memories of other events that we have tried to suppress. There are people at AGUK as well as your School/University to whom you can speak confidentially if there is anything that you need to discuss.

Welfare & Counselling Services

(Area dependant)

Designated Safeguarding Lead & Prevent Lead – Director Andrew Kettle who can be contacted on 0203 515 8880, 07823 321 993 or andrew@academic-guardians.co.uk

Deputy Safeguarding Lead – Director Dawn Kettle who can be contacted on 0203 515 8880, 07931 954 106 or dawn@academic-guardians.co.uk

Appendix 3

Serious Incident Case Conference

Incident date:

Conference date:

Present:

Purpose:

This document is a recording of discussions between staff who were involved in handling the

incident and the response to it. It is not in any way a formal investigation into the events that led up to the incident and should not be seen as a definitive factual recording of the events. The purpose is to identify ways in which AGUK can learn from the incident and make improvements to systems and processes that may aid the handling of future incidents.

What happened	Is there anything we could have done differently?	Immediate / long term actions (Person responsible)
Before		
During		
After		