Responding to A Report of a Missing Student

College takes its pastoral responsibilities to all its students very seriously and has an established reputation as a caring institution. Therefore, although it is not "in loco parentis" to its students and although it does not routinely check that students are not missing, College will follow up any report of a missing student promptly and carefully. The disclosures College can make about its students to non-College members are limited by Data Protection rules, but within these it will contact next of kin and if necessary the Police to try and ascertain a missing student's whereabouts.

Responsibilities

College has no duty to monitor students to ascertain that they are not missing or to otherwise to monitor their ongoing welfare.

There are attendance requirements for courses and deadlines for work submission and for examinations, but students may miss such deadlines and submit explanations at times distant from the absence. College also has a duty to check International Students are meeting attendance requirements and to inform the Home Office if they are not doing so, but this process requires students to miss more than one point of contact. Therefore neither process serves an early warning of a student being missing.

The College has a duty under the Data Protection Act to safeguard data about students so we cannot respond to enquiries from people outside the College or make contact with such people unless we have reasonable grounds to believe that a disclosure is necessary to ensure a student's safety.

Even if a student is under the age of 18, but is pursuing a course that is designed for adult students, they and their next of kin will have been made aware that the College will treat the student as an adult. If a student is on a course designed for under 18 year olds, special safeguarding arrangement will be in place beyond these guidelines.

College takes a pastoral interest in all its students and will therefore investigate if it is alerted to the fact that a student is unexpectedly missing and will seek to take reasonable steps to verify where the student is and - if this is not possible - to notify relevant people so that the situation may be addressed.

Determination that a Student is Missing

A student is most likely to be initially suspected of being missing by:

- A member of an academic department or a member of the College Support Services who is concerned that the student has not appeared at an expected time, that this absence has particular significance and that the student cannot be contacted
- Someone who is involved with a student's accommodation (whether belonging to the university or not) who notices the student is not present when expected and cannot be located
- A fellow student who is concerned at the non-appearance of the student in a College or social context

- A member of the student's family or social network outside the university who is concerned that they cannot make contact with the student.

Someone concerned that a student may be missing may, after making reasonable enquires his or herself, direct their concerns to the College Support and Advisory Services.

The Support and Advisory Services will investigate the concern and will seek to either make contact with the student to verify that they are safe or to find evidence that the student is taking part in activities that confirm their well-being.

Action in case of missing student

If this proves not to be possible, the Head of Support and Advisory Services will make a decision about whether it will be appropriate to contact a listed next of kin or other outside contact to verify a student's welfare. If this is necessary, disclosure concerning the circumstances will be kept to the minimum necessary.

If this action does not resolve the situation, consideration will be given to reporting the student to the Police as a missing person. Thereafter Police advice will be followed.

Related Documents

Under-18 Student Statement
Attendance Procedures
Parental Contact
Death of a Student
Data Protection Policy