

London Contemporary Dance School (The Place)

Student Trusted Emergency Contact Policy and Procedure

Name of Policy Writer	Lead Post Holder	Date approved	Approved by	Review Date
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Student Trusted Emergency Contact Policy and Procedure

As a higher education institution, London Contemporary Dance School has a duty of care to all members of its community. This includes the responsibility to act reasonably to protect the health and safety of all its students and staff. Our duty of care must be finely balanced with our obligations under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and other relevant legislation.

It is mandatory for students to provide LCDS with a Trusted Emergency Contact when they register, in case we need to contact them in an emergency or if we have serious concerns about their welfare. Families, carers, and trusted others can play an essential part in supporting a student who is at risk or where there may be serious concerns.

LCDS is required to process student data in line with data protection legislation. This includes strict regulation of the information that we may share with a third party about a student, which includes parents, carers, family members or legal guardians (unless the student is a minor). Advice on the requirements and relevant exemptions on this can be sought from The Place's Data Protection officer.

This policy **does not** apply when a student provides details of someone that they wish a member of staff to contact on their behalf. In this case, direct consent has been given. The member of staff should ensure that they keep records in a secure manner for later reference.

Additional guidance will be provided to all staff with regards to the implementation and ongoing use of this procedure, including specific detailed guidance for staff members in roles that are part of the escalation and decision-making process.

This policy and procedure apply to the usual day-to-day study or living arrangements for students at LCDS premises (including Studio Wayne McGregor).

Where students are required to study away from LCDS, for example, on work placements or on exchange at another Higher Education Institution or Distance Learning, specific protocols will be needed in line with requirements of the hosting institution.

Where there is concern about a student away from LCDS, the Director of Registry and Student Well-Being (or nominee) can advise of the appropriate procedures to apply.

During a referral under the Health, Well-Being and Support for Studies procedure, if it is considered appropriate to contact the student's emergency contact, this policy will be followed.

Circumstances where we may use the Trusted Emergency Contact

There are two circumstances when LCDS may reach out to a Trusted Emergency Contact on the student record:

- 1) in the student's 'vital interest' (life or death situations), or
- 2) where there is a serious concern for their wellbeing.

When it is in the student's vital interests

Vital interest is a legal definition which relates to taking action where it is necessary to protect someone's life or that of another person.

Under data protection legislation, we may disclose personal information about a student without their consent when it is in their 'vital interest' to do so.

This would normally mean providing details about a student, including their emergency contact details, to a third party such as a member of the emergency services in the event of an accident or emergency medical admission.

LCDS may decide to contact a student's named Trusted Emergency Contact directly to inform them of a vital interest situation, for example if a student is experiencing a prolonged mental health crisis and is not engaging with LCDS or NHS support services.

Situations where it is vital to inform a Trusted Emergency Contact can include:

- attending or being admitted to hospital in an emergency;
- suffering a serious physical injury, including self-harm;
- ceasing to engage with studies and/or professional support and not responding to repeated attempts to contact the student;
- not being seen recently in the student's usual place of residence and not responding to repeated contact attempts;
- having an ongoing serious illness, and significantly deteriorating;
- experiencing a mental health crisis where there are serious concerns for the student's welfare and safety.

Every circumstance is considered on a case-by-case basis. We will not use the student's Trusted Emergency Contact without authorisation by senior staff and we will let the student know that we intend to inform their Trusted Emergency Contact.

When there is a serious concern for the student's welfare

A serious concern about a student under this policy means where a member LCDS has reason to believe that a student is close to a crisis situation in their mental or physical health, or they have fears for the student's safety that do not meet the 'vital interest' criteria.

Situations where there is serious concern for the student's welfare can include:

- not engaging with professional support and serious concerns for their health and wellbeing;
- using drugs and/or alcohol in high-risk amounts or combinations;
- attending or been admitted to hospital for non-routine treatment;
- suffering a serious physical injury, including an episode of high-risk self-harm, for example where this has required significant medical intervention;
- the student has ceased to engage with their studies and we have been unable to contact them.
- not being seen at their residence and we have been unable to contact them.
- the student has an ongoing illness and appears to be deteriorating.
- deteriorating mental health or appearing to approach a significant mental health crisis.

These examples are provided to give a benchmark of the seriousness of a concern that falls under this policy and is not exhaustive.

If a member of staff is concerned about a student and is unsure if this policy would apply, additional guidance is available from the Director of Registry of Student Well-Being.

It is noted that many of the examples above may escalate to a 'vital interest' concern if intervention does not occur.

Informing Third Parties

LCDS may also be required to pass Trusted Emergency Contact details and relevant information about a student to external partners, in an emergency situation. This can include the police, ambulance service, the emergency department at the hospital or secondary mental health services. If we cannot contact the student's Trusted emergency Contact, we may contact their GP or mental health services.

Providing Trusted Emergency Contact details to the LCDS

At registration each year, students will be asked to give consent for LCDS to inform their Trusted Emergency Contact in an Emergency or if there is a serious concern about their welfare.

This information is held on the LCDS student record system, in accordance with The Place's Privacy Notice for Students and Prospective Students and current UK data protection legislation.

This is a mandatory requirement to ensure that if it is in the vital interest of the student, the information can be provided to emergency services.

In addition to the mandatory requirement to provide these details, LCDS will request advance consent from the student to use emergency contact details where there is serious concern

regarding their wellbeing. This will include maintaining the accuracy of the information when updating their details at registration and enrolment.

When a student is deciding who they wish to nominate, they need to consider how that person would be able to support them in an emergency, or where serious concerns are raised about their wellbeing.

Who can be a Trusted Emergency Contact?

A Trusted Emergency Contact should:

- Be aware that they have been nominated as a Trusted Emergency Contact.
- Give their permission and understand their contact details will be held by LCDS.
- Be available and prepared to support the student if called upon.
- Understand the student's medical and personal history.
- In most cases, the contact would be a parent, legal guardian, spouse, partner or other close family member, but they do not have to be.
- Must be over 18 years of age.

A Trusted Emergency Contact **should not** be another student at LCDS.

Students should provide their Trusted Emergency Contact's:

- mobile phone number
- landline – where available
- email address.

It is important that this information is kept up to date. Students can update their Trusted Emergency Contact details at any time by filling in the Change of Details form. They can also have more than one Trusted Emergency Contact. LCDS will assume that the information is up to date and may need to use it without being able to check with the student first.

If a student is not able to provide details of an emergency contact, they should raise this directly with the Director of Registry and Student Well-Being.

Estranged Students

If a student is estranged from their family and struggles to find a Trusted Emergency Contact, Stand Alone, a charity which supports those estranged from or disowned by their family or key family member, will be able to support them.

Withdrawing consent for details to be used in a period of serious concern

Students are free to withdraw their consent for an emergency contact details to be used for serious concerns.

To withdraw their consent, students must inform the Director of Registry and Student Well-Being in writing and it will be added to their record.

A student **cannot** withdraw their consent for LCDS to use emergency contact details if we consider it is in the student's vital interest (life or death situations).

Example: If a student who is experiencing mental health issues withdraws their consent to contact their Trusted Emergency Contact but then has a mental health crisis or makes an attempt on their life, LCDS may take the decision to contact their Trusted Emergency Contact without their consent.

Considering using emergency contact details

Every student is an individual and their personal circumstances at the time will be taken into consideration before using the emergency contact details provided.

Our Well-Being and Senior Leadership Team will use their professional judgement to decide whether to alert the emergency contact.

If any member of staff considers that the student's Trusted Emergency Contact needs to be contacted, either in a student's 'vital interest' or because of a serious

concern, they should discuss this with the Director of Registry and Student Well-Being and any relevant senior staff who will then arrange a case conference.

Where it is not possible for the decision makers (or their nominees) to convene a case discussion within 48hrs of the concern being raised, the decision can be taken by the Director of Student Well-Being. Cases may also be referred to Designated Safe Guarding Officer in absence of the Director of Registry and Student Well-Being or where additional guidance would be beneficial.

LCDS will tell the student that we intend to notify their Trusted Emergency Contact, unless it is not possible for us to do so, or it would cause a critical delay.

Death of a student

In the event of a suspected or confirmed death of a student, LCDS will pass the emergency contact details to the emergency services to support them in their role of contacting next of kin. It is not the role of LCDS to inform the next of kin.

Record keeping

A central record will be kept by the Director of Registry and Student Well-Being (or their nominee) of all instances in which a case discussion is held about a student. This is so that

there is an accurate record of all instances under this policy in which emergency contact details are used in line with GDPR legislation.

The record will give sufficient detail of the discussion and agreed actions, including the final decision and, if necessary, who is authorised to make contact.

The record will be held securely and confidentially in line with the relevant retention requirements.

LCDS will use anonymised data for internal reporting purposes in order to support the well-being of students. No individual will be identifiable in such reports.

