 Farnborough College of Technology	Bereavement Policy
Owner	Vice Principal Teaching, Learning and Completion
Approved by Corporation	N/A
Date Reviewed:	April 2022
Date for next review:	April 2025

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to help everyone within the college community to deal with a death of a learner or member of staff. At a time when there may be shock, upset and confusion, it is essential to ensure that there is as little disruption as possible and that appropriate and effective communication is used to allow the wider college community to be supported.

When a Death Occurs

Notification of a Learner's Death

The Vice Principal should be the nominated point of contact with the learner's family following a death. However, if it is deemed more appropriate an Assistant Principal (AP) may be instructed to take on this responsibility. The nominated lead will gather factual information and where necessary gain consent from the family regarding their wishes in sharing information with the college community.

The Principal and Senior Management Team should be informed as soon as possible so that they can inform Programme Managers and relevant staff including Governors.

The Learner Services Manager should inform all other staff including:

- Counsellors and Student Health Advisor - to arrange for support if required, in the immediate aftermath and in the future for both learners and staff
- Reception - to direct calls to the appropriate department.

- Student Finance - to make the necessary funding arrangements.
- MIS - to prevent any standard communications going to the family, i.e. absence notification/reports and to update the college database and administration staff.

The aim of information sharing is to reduce unnecessary additional stress to the family.

Academic and Vocational Examination Information

In the event of a learner death the examinations department will be notified by the Programme Manager. Any forthcoming examinations linked to the learner will be dealt with immediately to prevent any future correspondence with the family. Other learners that may be affected by a death of a learner should discuss this with their Programme Manager who will contact the Awarding Organisation to discuss arrangements.

The Death of a Member of Staff

The primary point of contact for a member of staff's family following a death is Human Resources. Appropriate support should be provided for the whole college community. Special support, including appropriate cover may be needed for staff who worked particularly closely with the deceased. The Principal will determine the appropriate period of time for these pastoral supports to continue. In general, it is best to have a minimum of disruption to the college timetable. The structure of the college day is important to maintain, but some flexibility may be required. Great sensitivity and care will need to be taken in determining how lessons will be covered immediately following the death.

Learner Notification of a Death

Learners within the programme area should be informed as soon as possible by their tutor, if possible, within small tutorial groups. Information shared should

be kept to a bare minimum and information regarding support should be given out.

If a death of a learner occurs, parents of the other learners within the tutorial group should be informed to enable them to offer support. If learners are absent from college or on work placement, then parents should be asked to pass on the information in person, to avoid any confusion via social media.

Information Sharing - Press

If the Press are involved in reporting of the death, the Principal or SMT will consult with the Associate Director for Marketing and Learner Services regarding an official statement to be released by the College. Any enquires via phone calls, emails or letters should be sent directly to the communications team. Reception or other members of staff should also direct any correspondence to the communications team. A communications log may be used to make note of any correspondence.

Funeral Provision

When a funeral has been planned it is essential that the College is sensitive to the family's wishes. Members of the College community may be welcome to attend if the family wishes so. If it is to be a private funeral it may be appropriate to hold a short service of remembrance at college for those that wish to attend.

Possessions

The arrangements and collection of possessions of the deceased, including their work, will be managed by the Programme Manager or in the case of a member of staff, their direct line manager. The situation will need to be handled sensitively and with respect.

Memorials

Memorials may wish to be considered by the College. Examples could include planting a miniature tree (and labels with string) to be left in a suitable place, offering the chance for individuals to leave a thought/note/prayer or a book for messages to be written inside. Longer term memorials could include: planting of a tree, plant, plaque or bench.

Sending a card to the parents/guardians/family one year after the incident can also be a supportive gesture and one that may be well appreciated.

Discovery of a Death on College Premises

1. Upon finding a body, Police must be notified immediately via the Corporate Office.
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 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. A crisis (postvention) team should convene immediately which should include the Principal, SMT, Learner Services Manager, and the Health and Safety Lead. The team will disseminate any further information to the appropriate staff within one day (see annex 2).
6. The Police or hospital will normally arrange that the next of kin are informed. SMT must check that this has been done and which person(s) have been informed. The College may need to assist the police by making available information from its student records.
7. In the unlikely event that the police do not undertake this duty, responsibility may fall to SMT. It is essential that the veracity of the information about the death is clear before making any contact with the next of kin.

8. 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.
9. No information must be shared via phone calls, emails or social media to avoid the immediate distress of family members and friends.
10. In most cases, the sudden death of a learner 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 basis. Failure to communicate can lead to rumours and unnecessary anxiety in the college community.
11. 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 the College know this and do not pre-empt the Coroners verdict in communication. If the family do not wish for this to be disclosed, explain that having staff that are able to talk to learners about suicide and sudden deaths can help keep other people safe.
12. If a suicide is confirmed, the crisis (postvention) team will be asked to meet with other agencies/organisations who may be part of a Rapid Response Team. This helps with any learning from this event in the time immediately after the event.

Useful Contacts

Help is at Hand – provides people affected by suicide with emotional and practical support

<http://supportaftersuicide.org.uk/support-guides/help-is-at-hand/>

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Educational Psychology Service (HIEP)

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/childrenandyoungpeople/educational-psychology/contact-hep.htm>

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org.uk

Tel: 116 123 (UK) 24 hours.

Cruse Bereavement Care – one to one support, pre-bereavement support, telephone support and home visits, bereaved suicide group and family support.

www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

0844 477 9400 (national) Mon-Fri 9-5pm

0844 3303701 North Hampshire Area

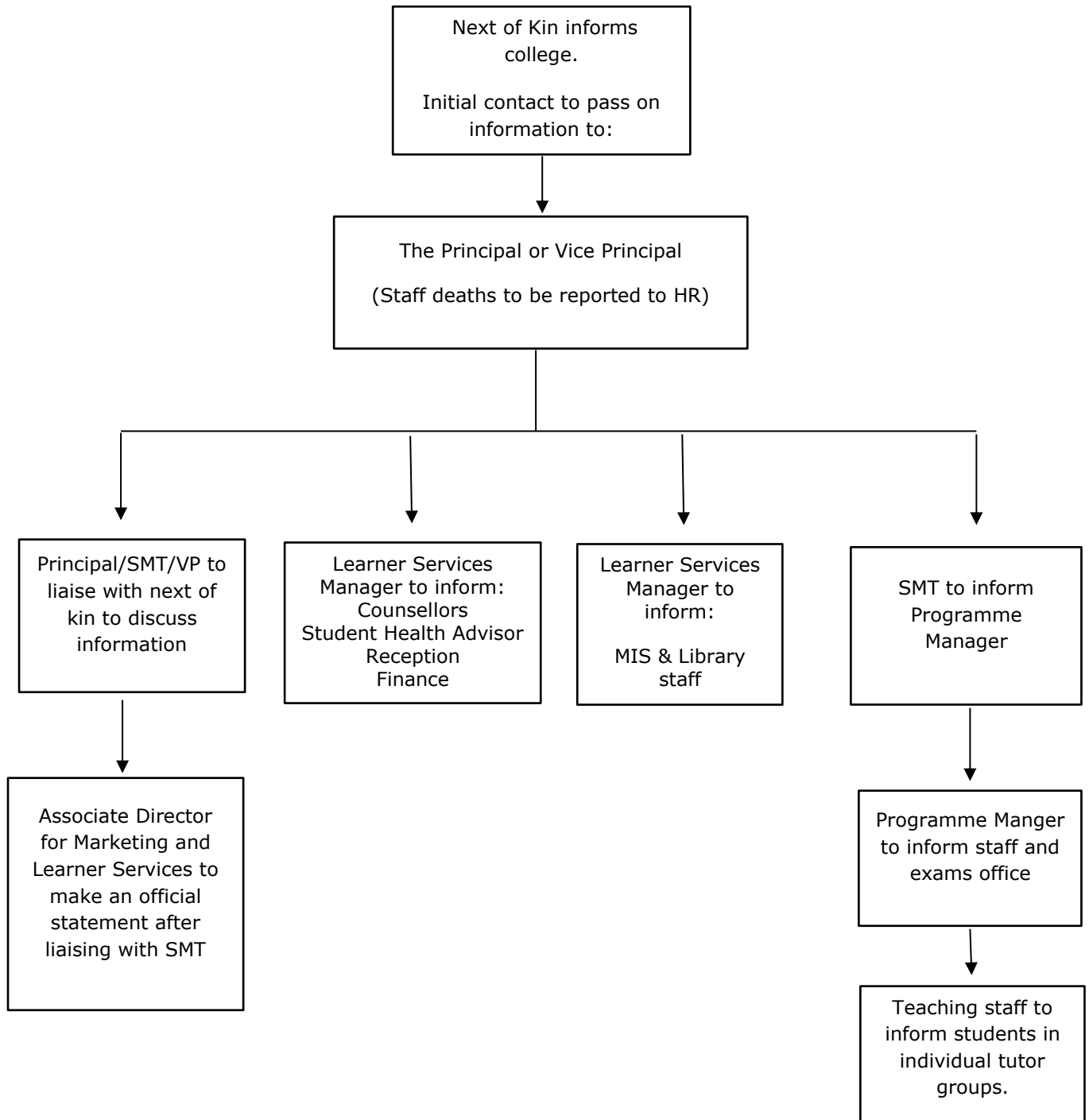
Simon Says – supports children and young people up to the age of 18 years who has a significant person in their life who has died or is dying.

<http://www.simonsays.org.uk>

Tel: 01794 323934 – Mon-Wed 9-4pm.

Annex 1:

Procedure for Reporting a Death outside of College Premises



N.B

If another member of staff is contacted directly by the next of kin to notify them of a learner's death, the Vice Principal should be contacted immediately in order to establish the correct pathway for reporting.

Annex 2:

Procedure for Reporting a Death within College Premises

