



Student Emergency & Trusted Contacts

Approved by: Executive Board
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Review by: December 2024

INTRODUCTION

1. Royal Holloway, University of London has a responsibility to act reasonably to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of our student and staff community. We recognise this responsibility is balanced with the requirements of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the needs of individual members of our community.
2. Details of how the university uses student personal data are provided in the Student Data Collection Notice which is kept under regular review. This includes strict guidance on the information we may share with a third-party contact about a student which includes parents, family members, carers, or legal guardians (unless the student is under the age of 18).
3. This document summarises what student emergency and trusted contact details are considered to be, how their details are collected and held, and under which circumstances the university may choose to use these.
4. Students will be required to provide (i) emergency contact details and (ii) trusted contact details at enrolment each academic year and will be asked to review these at the start of each term in that academic year.
5. In all cases we ask students to consider how the person(s) they nominate will be able to provide them with support in emergency or crisis situations and that it is appropriate for that person to provide this level of support.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

6. Your emergency contact should be a responsible adult of your choice and you may provide more than one emergency contact. We expect that for most students their emergency contact to be their next of kin – for example a parent, spouse or partner, legal guardian - but not limited to these relationships.
7. It is expected that anyone who is named as an emergency contact knows they have been named as your emergency contact, that they have given you their permission to be contacted in an emergency and understands their contact details have been shared with the university.
8. Wherever possible students should provide all contact methods (an address, mobile telephone number, email address and landline number where available) so that contact can be made promptly.
9. When identifying an emergency contact, we ask students to nominate adults who would be able to provide them with support in the event of a medical emergency or hospital admission, a serious incident, where close post-incident support may be required or to be notified if we have been unable to contact you.
10. Students can change their emergency contact(s) at any time and should seek to keep these updated if relationships and needs change. In providing an emergency contact, students are consenting in advance to the University contacting this named individual if there is serious concern about the student as described in the circumstances in which we may use these.
11. Whilst the contact remains on your student record, we will accept this as permission to use the contact details in accordance with this process. It is important that students review this information at least termly.

TRUSTED CONTACTS

12. We recognise there may be circumstances where your preference for immediate support may be a trusted contact rather than your emergency contact (next of kin). For most students their trusted contact may be the same person(s) identified as their emergency contact(s) but this provides you with the option to identify another responsible adult with whom you may feel more

comfortable with being contacted in the event of a serious concern about your mental health and wellbeing.

13. It is expected that anyone who is named as a trusted contact knows they have been named as your trusted contact, that they have given you their permission to be contact in certain circumstances and understands their contact details have been shared with the university.
14. Wherever possible students should provide all contact methods (an address, mobile telephone number, email address and landline number where available) so that contact can be made promptly.
15. When identifying a trusted contact, we ask students to nominate adults who would be able to provide them with support in the event of a mental health and wellbeing crisis, or another serious incident.
16. Students can change their trusted contact at any time and should seek to keep these updated if relationships and needs change. In providing a trusted contact, students are consenting in advance to the University contacting this named individual if there is serious concern about the student as described in the circumstances in which we may use these.
17. Whilst the contact remains on your student record, we will accept this as permission to use the contact details in accordance with this process. It is important that students review this information at least termly.

PROCESS TO CONSIDER CONTACT WITH AN EMERGENCY OR TRUSTED CONTACT

18. Careful and risk assessed consideration will be given to utilising your emergency or trusted contact details in all circumstances. This will normally be led by the Head of Wellbeing (or a nominated senior member of staff in the Wellbeing Department) in consultation with at least one other member of senior university staff from either a professional services team or an academic school (or example the Vice Dean – Student Experience).
19. The current and presenting circumstances of the issue of concern, and any background information we hold, will be taken into consideration as part of this assessment process. Decisions to contact an emergency or trusted contact will be taken on a case-by-case basis and contact for one issue will not be taken as consent to contact on future areas of concern.
20. The university will seek to discuss our intention to contact your emergency or trusted contact directly with you unless it is not possible to do so, would cause critical delay, or where capacity to consent has been significantly reduced or removed. In circumstances where you provide consent to make contact, we will seek to agree with you the parameters of information can be shared with them.
21. If capacity to consent is a concern the university will share, if requested, both emergency and trusted contact details with emergency services and clinical professionals including, but not limited to, Paramedics, Police Officers, Psychiatric Liaison Officers, Approved Mental Health Professionals, the Emergency Department of a hospital and General Practitioners.
22. The university reserves the right to contact an emergency or trusted contact without consent if we consider it in the students' vital interests to do so including where there may be a risk to life or serious harm.

CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THE UNIVERSITY MAY USE AN EMERGENCY OR TRUSTED CONTACT

23. The following are examples of circumstances in which we might contact an emergency contact. There may be other circumstances not listed below
 - (i) A student has attended or been admitted to hospital in an emergency.

- (ii) A student has an ongoing medical condition or illness which appears to be deteriorating or requiring further medical attention.
 - (iii) A student has sustained a serious physical injury.
 - (iv) A student is experiencing a mental health crisis, including self-harm, where there has been the involvement of secondary care services.
 - (v) A student has disengaged with their academic studies, and we have been unable to contact them via their School or follow up wellbeing contact by phone or email.
 - (vi) A student has not been seen in their accommodation, or by their peers, and we have been unable to contact them via a visit (where possible) or follow up wellbeing contact by phone or email.
24. The following are examples of circumstances in which we might contact a trusted contact. There may be other circumstances not listed below.
- (i) A student has sustained a minor physical injury and may require support with accessing medical care or attending hospital.
 - (ii) A student is experiencing poor wellbeing and may benefit from the support of the trusted contact to engage with support.
 - (iii) A student is experiencing a mental health crisis where there is not considered to be a risk to life and does not require the intervention of an external mental health professional.
25. In the event of a suspected or confirmed death of a student the university will pass emergency contact details to the emergency services. It is the role of the emergency services and not the university to first inform a next of kin of a death.

HOW TO RAISE CONCERNS ABOUT A STUDENT

26. Every member of our staff and student community is expected to promptly share all mental health and wellbeing concerns about students with an appropriate person and to support to a whole university responsibility for good mental health and wellbeing.
27. In the event of an emergency contact should be made with the emergency services on 999 followed by a call to Campus Security on 01784 443888. Guidance on where to seek other sources of emergency support and guidance can be found on our [intranet here](#).
28. If any member of staff considers that a student's emergency or trusted contact needs to be contacted they should raise this with the Head of Wellbeing or Executive Director (Student Journey) during office hours, or via Campus Security outside of office hours where an escalation process is in place through the Silver Command structure.
29. For non-urgent mental health or wellbeing concerns contact should be made by email to our Wellbeing Department via wellbeing@royalholloway.ac.uk or via disability@royalholloway.ac.uk if a student is known to be registered with the Wellbeing: Disability & Neurodiversity team.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

If anyone considers that this Policy has not been followed or for further information on the interpretation and application of this process please contact the policy owner.

Policy Owner	Head of Wellbeing
Approving Body	Executive Board
Version number	1

Royal Holloway University of London
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Related policies, procedures, and guidelines	XX.
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