

## TRUSTED CONTACT/ NEXT OF KIN PROCEDURE

### 1 Introduction

1.1 This procedure is intended to ensure an appropriate approach to contacting a students' Trusted Contact/Next of Kin.

1.2 This procedure is aligned with relevant Falmouth University policies and procedures, including:

- Health, Wellbeing and Support for Study Policy
- Student Code of Conduct
- Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Student Data Protection Statement
- Behaviour Agreement and Suspension Policy

### 2 When do we use this procedure

2.1 In cases where it becomes apparent that an individual student's support needs are beyond the responsibilities of the University and there is serious concern for their safety or their vital interests are at risk, the Director of Student & Library Services or Head of Student Support will alert one of the following senior staff: the Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Services) or Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement to the situation. Some examples of this could include (but are not limited to):

- Unexpected admission to hospital for non-routine treatment
- Non engagement with studies and not contactable for confirmation of safety and wellbeing
- Ongoing illness which appears to be significantly deteriorating
- Serious mental health crisis
- Behaviour in ways which may pose a significant risk to own or others' safety and wellbeing
- Victim of a serious crime

2.1 Where other agencies – for example emergency services (ambulance, police) and the NHS – ask for 'next of kin' details in order to support the student in immediate and vital circumstances. The circumstances for each situation will be considered.

### 3 How do we use this procedure

3.1 Communication with the trusted contact will be initiated by the Director of Student & Library Services or Head of Student Support or their nominee. Essential information only will be shared about the University's concerns; the involvement of the trusted contact will be requested to provide support and intervention that might help to reduce risk for the student.

3.2 Wherever possible the student's consent will be sought before sharing information with their trusted contact. Where this is not possible staff will make an individual decision about whether the student is at risk of serious physical, emotional, or mental harm, and what

further action needs to be taken. This decision will be sensitive to the particular context and wherever possible informed by a clinical assessment of the risk to the student.

- 3.3 When making the decision to share information without consent, any potential risks involved will be considered and how best to mitigate them. Any preferences that the individual had previously expressed to the university will also be considered. For example, if sharing the full background of a student's difficulties involve disclosing sensitive information about their sexual orientation or gender identity then sharing more limited information in the moment will be chosen as a proportionate way of balancing ensuring a student's safety with respecting their privacy and their wishes.
- 3.4 The student should be informed of the decision to communicate with their trusted contact (unless this is judged to present a potential risk of harm).

#### **4 Appeal**

- 4.1 A student may not challenge the decision to contact a trusted contact. However, they have full recourse to, and may raise a concern via, the University's Complaint Policy and Procedure.

#### **5 Monitoring and review**

- 5.1 The operation of the Trusted Policy/Next of Kin Contact Procedure will be monitored by the Student Services Case Review Group.