

University procedure in the event of a missing student

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this procedure is to outline the action that will be taken in the event a student becomes a missing person. It applies to all students and is to be used by any member of staff.
- 1.2 A quick access flowchart is provided in Appendix 1.

2. STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND ASCERTAINING A 'MISSING' STUDENT

- 2.2 The University is a vibrant and busy, collegiate community. Most students will be regularly attending, be that on campus, non-academic activities, or in the case of distance learners, online.
- 2.3 It is very rare that a student becomes a missing person, most students (as is expected – see Regulations 3.1 and 3.2¹) engage regularly with their studies and attend events for teaching and research activity. Some students will from time to time not attend or engage with their program and in most cases this is easily resolved through contacting the student².
- 2.4 For periods of absence, Regulation 3.4 states that except in cases of illness, “students will be granted leave of absence only with the prior permission of the Head of Department.” Therefore, students should seek advice and permission from their department in advance of any planned absence exceeding 2 weeks. This should be communicated to students and reinforced through induction and accommodation and department handbooks.
- 2.5 The responsibility for monitoring student engagement resides with academic departments, with personal tutors, supervisors and Directors of Studies/Research playing an active role. The main method for doing this with taught students is using attendance monitoring, but other methods of monitoring engagement can complement this (e.g. lab or tutorial attendance records). More information is explained online: <https://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/engagement-monitoring-for-student-wellbeing/>
- 2.6 Consequently, the following scenarios could result in this procedure being used:
 - A student has an unplanned absence exceeding 2 weeks
 - A student has an unplanned absence of concern (this may not be an absence exceeding two weeks, but there could be an underlying reason why the student's absence is of concern, such as an existing health concern)
 - The above can include students who are on placement or a Study Year Abroad, in which case this would continue to be initially addressed by academic departments

3. INVESTIGATING AN ABSENCE – ACTIONS FOR LOCAL DEPARTMENTS

- 3.2 The first step is for the absence to be investigated at the local level (without raising undue alarm). In practice this means the academic department will try contacting the student, or the accommodation department if the concern arose there.

¹ [Regulation3.pdf \(bath.ac.uk\)](#)

² [Responding to poor student attendance or performance \(bath.ac.uk\)](#)

- 3.3 Contacting a student should include emailing and telephoning the student. It could also include asking the student's friends, housemates, fellow students, or other staff (without revealing why and without causing undue alarm). In the first instance we are seeking to ensure the student is safe, and their peer network can be a helpful route to establish safety, without putting additional pressure on other students.
- 3.4 At this stage, this should **not** include contacting parents, trusted contact, or other third parties external to the University, except in cases where there is information suggesting the student is at immediate risk of harm, in which case emergency services and Security should be contacted and in turn, Student Support and Safeguarding. Security or emergency services may contact the student's trusted contact.
- 3.5 When contacting a student, departments are encouraged to use firm but compassionate wording, via email, text or leaving a voicemail.
- 3.6 Attempts should be made to contact the student at different times of day and if need be, over a number of days.
- 3.7 Usually, this contact will generate a positive response and confirmation of the student's safety. If not, Section 4 of this procedure should be used.

4. CONTACTING STUDENT SUPPORT AND SAFEGUARDING

- 4.2 If the local enquiries fail to locate the student, the department should contact Student Support and Safeguarding who will coordinate the University's response to the situation. Contact should be made via the staff advice line x4321 or email studentsupport@bath.ac.uk.
- 4.3 Upon contacting Student Support and Safeguarding, the department should have relevant information available:
- Date of their last contact with the student
 - A summary of attempts made to contact the student
 - Information about any known concerns, such as IMCs or previous concerns for the student's wellbeing
- 4.4 The Student Support Advice Team will make further attempts to locate the student and assess the possible level of risk involved. This may include:
- Trying to phone or contact the student at different times of the day, or leaving a message explaining that we will call again in a short while
 - Reviewing records in Student Support and Safeguarding
 - Asking Security to visit the student's accommodation (possibly with a member of staff from Student Support and Safeguarding)
 - Asking the Students' Union, Security, Computing Services, STV and the Library for any evidence of the student's whereabouts
 - Establishing last known contacts and whether the student evidenced any unusual patterns of behaviour which gave rise to a concern about their safety

4.5 If the student's whereabouts cannot be established, the University may enact the Student Trusted Contact Policy to establish whether to contact the student's trusted contact.

4.6 Where a student's whereabouts and immediate safety has been established, this will be fed back to the original referrer, see Section 6.

5. REPORTING A STUDENT AS A MISSING PERSON

5.2 In the rare circumstances when a student cannot be located, the student may be reported as a missing person to the police and/or their Embassy with a member of staff from Student Support and Safeguarding as the main University point of contact for the police. The Director of Student Support or deputy will be notified.

5.3 The Director of Student Support and Safeguarding will inform relevant senior leaders including the PVC Student Experience, the relevant Dean, the Director of Corporate Communications, and the Director of Academic Registry.

6. SUPPORTING THE STUDENT ONCE FOUND

6.2 When the student has been located and their safety and general wellbeing ensured, the academic department will remind them of the engagement and attendance expectations, and that any planned absences exceeding 2 weeks should be notified in advance to their academic department.

6.3 Support to help address any underlying difficulties will be offered and if necessary, a meeting may be arranged in accordance with the Health, Wellbeing & Support for Study Policy and Procedure.

7. RELATED POLICIES

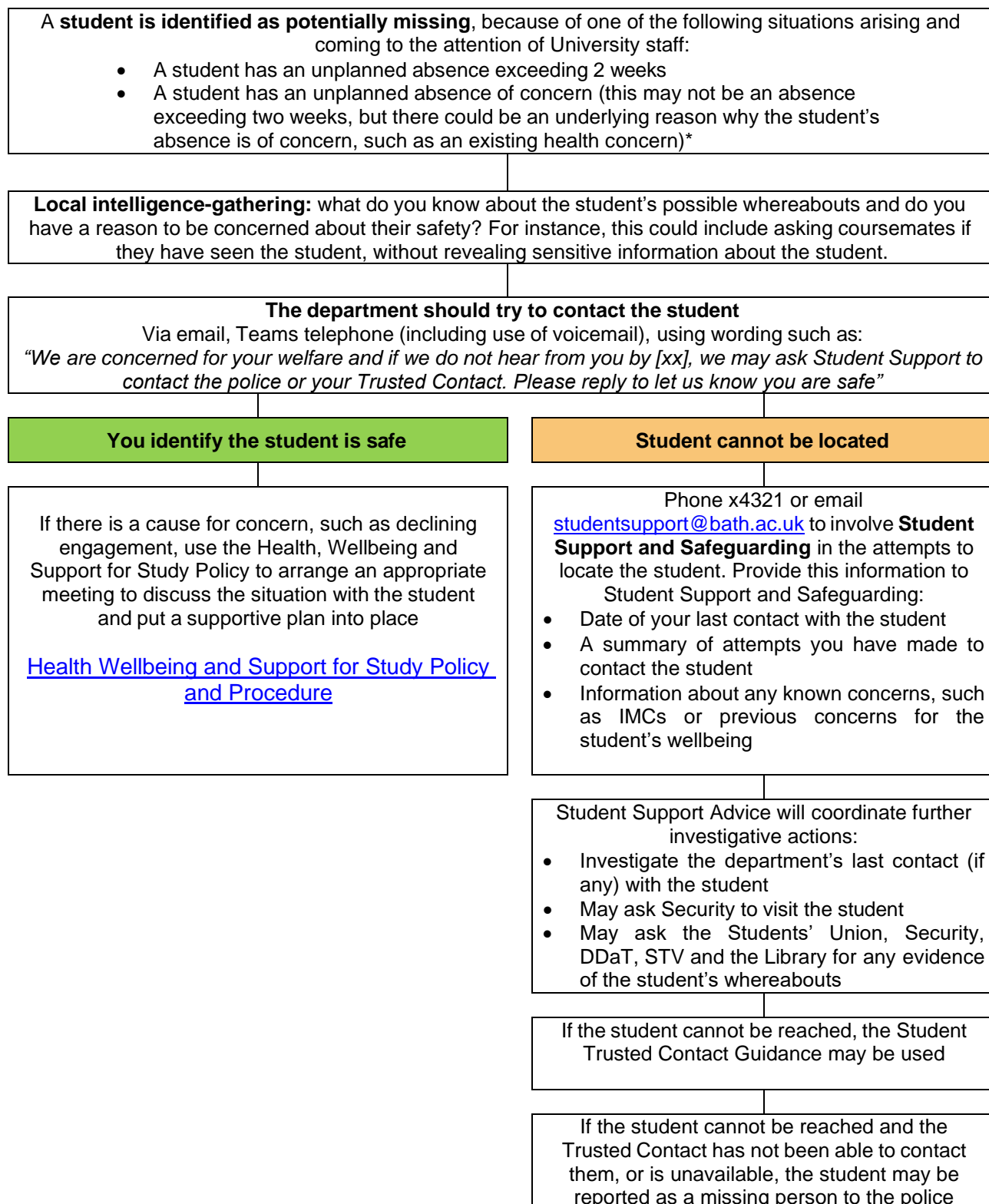
7.2 Student Trusted Contact Guidance: <https://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/student-trusted-contact-guidance/>

7.3 Health, Wellbeing & Support for Study: [regulations-for-students-2023-24-appendix-2-health-wellbeing-and-support-for-study-policy.pdf](https://www.bath.ac.uk/regulations-for-students-2023-24-appendix-2-health-wellbeing-and-support-for-study-policy.pdf) (bath.ac.uk)

DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

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Appendix 1 – Flowchart



*in the event of an urgent welfare concern arising, Security should be telephoned immediately on 01225 383999. Emergency services may also be contacted if necessary, by dialling 999 (do not use this procedure in such urgent and emergency scenarios).