POLICY 070
SUICIDE AND RISK INTERVENTION

If you have a disability which makes reading this document or navigating our website difficult and you would like to receive information in an alternative format, please contact: anddegree@acm.ac.uk

Policy 070: SUICIDE AND RISK INTERVENTION

1. PURPOSE

1.1 This Suicide and Risk Intervention Policy outlines ACM's approach to creating a safe and caring environment, encouraging open communication so as to ensure that anyone facing difficulties receives the necessary support.

2. POLICY SCOPE

2.1 This policy applies to all staff and students at ACM Guildford, ACM London and ACM Birmingham.

3. POLICY DETAILS

3.1 ACM is committed to creating a positive and compassionate community of staff and students. Positivity and compassion encourages individuals to flourish and to achieve their maximum potential. We are committed to promoting good mental health and to taking preventative steps to reduce the risk of suicide.

3.2 ACM recognises our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all that are associated with ACM. Safeguarding is a priority at ACM and promoting the wellbeing and welfare of our community is at the heart of everything that we do.

3.3 We will endeavour to provide a comfortable and welcoming environment where students, staff and visitors feel safe, respected and valued. We will be alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and will follow our policies and procedures to ensure that everyone receives effective support and protection from harm.

Prevention and Intervention

3.4 ACM is committed to taking a proactive stance on suicide prevention and intervention. We recognise the importance of a whole-institution approach to mental health and strive to create an atmosphere that promotes well-being, resilience, and a sense of belonging.

3.5 We ensure staff and students are aware of internal and external support information regarding mental health support.

3.6 We request feedback from staff and students regarding our support services each academic year to establish the health of the organisation and the effectiveness of the provision we have in place.

3.7 The Safeguarding team, through panel decision, will assess risk and determine the appropriate timing for contacting the next of kin, regardless of permissions set by the student on our internal systems during induction.

3.8 The assessment of risk will take into account specific factors:

(a) Whether contacting the next of kin poses additional risk to the student's safety and wellbeing.

(b) If the student's condition may deteriorate as a result of disclosing the intent to contact the next of kin.

(c) Where applicable, whether emergency services recommend or prefer to make the decision regarding contacting the next of kin.

3.9 If the assessment is inconclusive by panel decision, emergency services will be contacted for their advice and support on the matter.

3.10 If the risk is assessed as high, and the student is at immediate risk, ACM reserves the right to contact the Next of Kin as a supportive measure for the student's wellbeing and safety.

Compassionate Communities

3.11 ACM recognises that compassionate communities can support the mental health of staff and students. ACM strives to foster a supportive, inclusive environment where individuals feel comfortable sharing their difficulties and distress. We encourage open dialogue and seek to eliminate stigma surrounding mental health.

3.12 We provide safe spaces and easy reporting platforms of concerns for all staff and students.

3.13 We understand the challenges associated with sharing mental health concerns, which is why we prioritise creating multiple avenues for disclosure within our organisation. Our goal is to ensure that all individuals feel supported and empowered to share their experiences and seek assistance as needed.

3.14 We encourage staff and students to reach out if they feel that ACM is not adequately supporting their needs by contacting Human Resources (staff), Safeguarding and Wellbeing departments.

3.15 When concerns regarding adequate support are raised, a panel is convened to address the gaps in support and initiate a review of policies, procedures, and provisions in all relevant areas, where required.

3.16 When it is identified that a member or members of the ACM community are

posing a threat to the mental health of another member or members, appropriate action is taken, which may involve invoking the student or staff disciplinary procedures. All concerns will be thoroughly reviewed by the appropriate teams.

3.16 Where applicable content warnings will be provided regarding all course content before delivery.

Encouraging Disclosure of Difficulties

3.17 ACM takes the position that seeking help is a sign of strength and actively encourages the disclosure of mental health difficulties and distress. We are committed to providing a safe space where individuals feel heard and supported without judgement. Anyone suffering difficulties and distress should contact dsl@acm.ac.uk

3.18 We offer support for all members of our community, including staff, volunteers, and students, encouraging open disclosure. We approach every disclosure with a commitment to achieving positive outcomes for everyone involved, irrespective of circumstances, individual needs, or protected characteristics.

3.19 We design our disclosure platforms to accommodate a diverse range of needs and abilities, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity for all individuals.

Emergency support

3.20 Individuals experiencing feelings of self-harm can access support services from our Safeguarding, Wellbeing, and Student Services teams, regardless of their position within ACM. Our support service teams collaborate as part of a comprehensive, integrated approach, leveraging diverse experiences to guide individuals through a positive recovery and supportive journey.

3.21 If you feel you are in immediate danger of seriously harming yourself or someone else, please dial 999 to contact the Emergency Services or go to the nearest A&E Service Department or NHS Walk in Centre. Alternatively, please contact:

Papyrus UK Suicide prevention
Phone 0800 068 4141
Text 07860 039967
https://www.papyrus-uk.org/

or

The Samaritans Crisis Support 24/7
Phone: 116 123
Email jo@samaritans.org
www.samaritans.org

3.22 The ACM support services teams are here to assist you throughout this process, especially if reaching out for support feels challenging.

Identification and Signposting

3.23 We strive to identify anyone within the ACM community who may be experiencing difficulties and promptly connect them with appropriate support. ACM is committed to being proactive in identifying potential signs of distress and ensuring that concerns are followed up with sensitivity and care.

3.24 All staff undergo a minimum of two training sessions per year on safeguarding matters, which includes training on identifying signs of poor mental health. Staff are also briefed on disclosure processes and equipped with effective strategies for supporting student needs thereafter.

3.25 Staff receive regular updates through Monthly Safeguarding Newsletters and Termly communications, which cover topics aimed at raising awareness of identifying concerning behaviours, providing guidance on who to contact, and offering strategies to support students in preventing conditions from worsening.

3.26 The education and support services teams convene regularly to address concerns such as attendance, engagement, and students falling behind on their studies. This proactive approach aims to mitigate factors that may contribute to poor mental health among students experiencing difficulties with their academic pursuits.

3.27 Supportive measures, including, where required, the Fitness to Study framework, Team around the Student Initiative, and Student Services 1:1 wellbeing support approaches, are implemented upon the identification of concerns regarding a student's academic performance or disclosure of poor mental health. These approaches are activated following a panel decision.

Building Relationships with Local Partnerships

3.28 ACM develops and maintains relationships with local suicide prevention partnerships and external agencies. We recognise the value of collaboration and seek to benefit from the knowledge, expertise and quality frameworks of the organisations we work with in order to enhance our suicide prevention and risk intervention efforts.

3.29 We maintain our supportive approach throughout the support journey of staff or students, offering internal check-ins, sharing information with external organisations through partnerships, and facilitating communication with next of kin as needed.

Signposting Support

3.30 ACM is committed to providing clear information on the support available both within the institution and from external organisations. ACM will actively signpost individuals to relevant resources, counselling services, helplines, and other support mechanisms to ensure they have access to the help they need.

3.31 This commitment extends to:

(a) Internal Resources: ACM will maintain updated information on internal support services, including counselling services, mental health resources, and wellbeing initiatives available to staff and students.

(b) External Organisations: ACM will collaborate with external organisations and agencies to identify and provide information on additional support services available in the community, including inviting these organisations to present an assembly or talk on their provision of support.

(c) Helplines and Hotlines: ACM will ensure that contact information for helplines and hotlines, including those focused on mental health support, crisis intervention, and other relevant services, is readily accessible to all members of the ACM community on our internal VLE, website or posters around campus.

(d) Online Resources: ACM will curate and promote online resources, articles, and tools related to mental health, wellbeing, and self-care, making them easily accessible through digital platforms and communication channels.

(e) Training and Awareness: ACM will conduct training sessions and awareness campaigns to educate staff and students on how to identify signs of distress and effectively utilise available support resources. This will be provided at the start of the academic year.

3.32 By actively signposting support options, ACM aims to empower individuals to seek help and access the resources necessary for their mental health and wellbeing.

Training and Awareness

3.33 To further our commitment to suicide prevention, ACM will implement the following measures:

(a) Training Programmes: ACM will provide comprehensive training programs designed to equip staff and students with the knowledge and skills necessary to recognise mental health issues, identify suicide risk factors, and respond effectively to individuals in crisis situations.

(b) Awareness Campaigns: The wellbeing team will organise regular awareness campaigns focused on mental health issues, suicide prevention, and the importance of early intervention. These campaigns will aim to reduce

stigma surrounding mental health, promote help-seeking behaviours, and foster a supportive environment within the ACM community.

(c) Suicide Risk Assessment Protocols: ACM will develop and implement protocols for assessing and responding to suicide risk among staff and students. These protocols will outline clear procedures for identifying individuals at risk, initiating appropriate interventions, and connecting them with necessary support services.

(d) Collaboration with Mental Health Professionals: ACM will collaborate with mental health professionals and organisations to enhance suicide prevention efforts and ensure access to specialised support services for individuals in need.

(e) Crisis Response Plans: The safeguarding team will establish clear protocols and procedures for responding to mental health crises and suicide attempts on campus. These plans will outline steps for managing emergencies, providing immediate support to affected individuals, and coordinating follow-up care.

3.34 By implementing these measures, ACM aims to create a safe and supportive environment where individuals feel empowered to seek help, receive appropriate support, and access resources for suicide prevention and mental health promotion.

Review and Continuous Improvement

3.35 ACM is committed to continuous improvement in its approach to suicide prevention and risk intervention. This policy will be regularly reviewed to ensure its effectiveness and relevance, with reviews taking place not less than once per year.

4. RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

Internal

- Safeguarding Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Additional Needs and Disability Policy
- Fitness to Study Policy

External

- Equalities Act 2010
- Universities UK and Papyrus publication: Suicide-safer Universities

5. POLICY OWNER

- Safeguarding and Pastoral Services Manager

6. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Approval Date	Approved By	Publication Date
1.0	16 Jan 2024	Safeguarding and Pastoral Services Manager / QA	16 Jan 2024
1.1	18 Apr 2024	Academic Board	18 Apr 2024