

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School

Student of Concern Policy and Procedures

Purpose and Scope

In this document, “you” and “your” means the student; “we”, “us” and “our” mean the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.

- 1 This policy aims to:
 - provide guidance to staff and students who may be concerned about a student’s wellbeing.
 - provide information to help staff and students to decide the seriousness of an issue.
 - identify appropriate internal and external sources of support to which students can be referred.
- 2 This policy applies to students on our higher education programmes and any full-time short course of two terms or more, who are over 18 years of age and are not legally considered to be Adults at Risk. Young people under 18 and Adults at Risk are covered by our Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- 3 Concerns about students who may be at risk of radicalisation, regardless of age, as set out in the Prevent Duty, should be reported to the Student Support Manager who is the Prevent & Designated Safeguarding Lead, using the procedure set out in our Safeguarding Policy. Please refer to [Prevent Policy and Action Plan](#).
- 4 This policy forms part of the Respect at BOVTS Framework, which comprises the policies and guidelines expressing our approach to ensuring everyone can work and study in a safe, respectful, and welcoming environment. The other resources in the Framework are:

Related Policies

- [BOVTS Safeguarding Adults Policy](#)
- [BOVTS Safeguarding Adults Procedures](#)
- [UWE Student Conduct Policy](#)
- [BOVTS Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [BOVTS Emergency Contact Procedure](#)
- [Zero Tolerance Statement](#)
- [Staff Handbook](#)
- [Intimacy Coordination Policy and Protocols](#)

- [UWE Student Conduct Policy](#)
- [Prevent Policy and Action Plan](#)
- [Health & Safety Policy](#)
- [Sexual Misconduct, Bullying and Harassment Policy](#)
- [Zero Tolerance Policy](#)
- [Reasonable Adjustments Policy for students](#)
- [Staff-Student Relationship Policy](#)

5 All members of our community are required to familiarise themselves with this policy and to take steps to report any relevant concerns in accordance with the procedure set out below.

Identifying a concern

6 There are several ways in which you may come to know that a student is experiencing difficulties with their mental health or wellbeing. The student themselves may disclose their difficulties to you directly or indirectly, for example by telling you in conversation that 'things are a bit difficult'.

Listening and responding calmly in these situations can help you to determine whether the student might benefit from further support.

7 You may also become concerned about a student because of their behaviour or comments from other students. Examples of factors which may indicate an underlying issue include:

- Other students approaching you to tell you that they have concerns.
- Regular absence or lateness.
- Changes in the way the student engages with their work, such as a lack of concentration or inability to think things through.
- Working very long hours and a lack of balance between study and other activities.
- Presenting as unpredictable, disruptive, or withdrawn.
- Presenting as agitated, irritable, aggressive or sad.
- Lack of concentration, lack of energy/fatigue.
- Poor personal hygiene or unkempt appearance.
- Sudden changes in appearance or behaviour.
- Smelling of alcohol or showing signs of taking drugs.
- Visible bruising, cuts, or scars.
- Difficulties initiating and maintaining social relationships.

8 If you have concerns about a student having spoken to them or observed some of the behaviours listed above, the next step is to determine how urgent the issue is. The sections below provide guidance to help you determine where the concern falls within the categories of:

- Emergency and urgent need
- Serious concern
- Other concern

9 In all situations, if a student has a diagnosed long-term medical condition, a physical disability, a neurodivergent condition such as a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD), or a mental health condition, they can seek support from the Student Support Team. The team can help support them by signposting them towards support organisations, referring them for counselling or providing guidance on applying for Disabled Student Allowance (DSA), which can offer a range of support. Staff can signpost students to the Student Support Team by emailing julia.heeley@oldvic.ac.uk.

Please also see internal Intranet link to [Your Wellbeing section](#) for more information.

Emergency and Urgent Need

Emergency need (imminent risk to self):

- 10 When a student is in immediate danger of harming themselves or have indicated that they either have or are considering steps to take their lives (*i.e. have taken an overdose, have made a recent suicide attempt, have clear plans to harm themselves and have the means, or have posted what looks like a suicide message on social media*):
- The student should be advised to go to the nearest A&E Department accompanied by a member of BOVTS staff until the student is in the care of a clinician. Or if the student is unable or would not go to the hospital themselves call 999 to request an ambulance.
 - If safe, and time permits to do so, inform the School Reception that an ambulance has been called and advise them where they should direct emergency services. You should also inform the Student Support Team and Designated Safeguarding Lead if possible and there is enough time to do so.
 - Complete a [Report a Concern](#) form
 - The Student Support Team, where possible, will ask the student to give written permission to contact emergency services on their behalf.

Serious Concerns

Emergency need (imminent risk to others):

- 11 If a student is posing a risk to others, are violent or aggressive or under the influence of substances and behaving in a concerning manner, alert Reception and ask them to call the Police on 999.
- 12 The Student Support Team, where possible, should ask the student to give written permission to contact emergency services on their behalf.

Prolonged Absence (where you are concerned for that student's wellbeing or safety)

- 13 The Student and Academic Services Team monitor student attendance based on information passed to them by academic and other staff members.
- 14 When a student has absented themselves completely and you have been unable to contact them by phone or email for more than 24 hours, please discuss this with the Student & Academic Services Team in the first instance. They will then attempt to contact the student using additional contact information, such as a private email address or mobile number. You may also wish to check whether they have had contact with other students in the cohort. Where the student remains uncontactable, the Report a Concern (link) form should be completed. The Student Support Manager and Director of Studies will discuss whether to get in touch with the student's emergency or trusted contact as per the [Emergency Contact Procedure](#). (insert link) Where the student is suspected to be missing, a decision may be taken by the Student Support Manager and Director of Studies to report this to the police or to make a safeguarding referral.
- 15 Once the student is located, the Student Support Team will offer advice as appropriate.

Suicidal Ideation

- 16 NICE's guideline on depression in young people defines suicidal ideation as thoughts about suicide or of taking action to end one's own life.

For the purposes of this quality standard high risk of suicide could include, but is not limited to, children and young people with current active suicidal plans or thoughts.

source: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng134>

- 17 If a student is reporting suicidal thoughts and intent to harm themselves, even if it appears they have not acted on these thoughts or are not sure if they have or will, it is important that you report this urgently to the Student Support Team. Once you have done so, please complete a <https://forms.gle/miN6LZzEdZpEnkVM7> form. The Student Support Team will contact the student as a matter of urgency (Monday to Friday outside of closure periods) to offer support or signpost the student to relevant external services.

- 18 If more immediate support is needed, for example at the weekend, ask the student for permission to pass their contact information on to crisis services and call the police on 999, NHS 111 or the Samaritans on 116 123.
- 19 Students under 35 can also contact the Papyrus helpline 24/7 at 0800 068 41 41 (phone) 07860 039967 (text) or pat@papyrus-uk.org.

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Substance abuse and self-harm

- 20 Where it appears that a student is misusing drugs or alcohol or you become aware that they have harmed themselves, you should complete the [Report a Concern form](#). The Student Support Team will normally contact the student within 24 hours (Monday to Friday outside of closure periods) to offer support or signpost the student to relevant external services.

Homelessness

- 21 Where a student is homeless or at risk of homelessness, you should complete the [Report a Concern form](#) and either the Student Support or Admissions Team will respond to offer advice and support, which may include referral to local authority housing services.
- 22 Students facing eviction should be advised to contact the Admissions Officer or the Student Support Team who can provide help and support, and where appropriate funding to seek legal advice.

Experience of sexual assault

- 23 If a student discloses a sexual assault to you, or if they suspect that they have been spiked, you should advise them to contact their nearest [Sexual Assault Referral Centre](#) and complete the [Report a Concern](#) form. The Student Support Team will normally contact the student within 24 hours (Monday to Friday outside of closure periods) to offer support or signpost the student to relevant external services. Outside of these times, information on reporting and seeking support for sexual assault is available on the Student Wellbeing Intranet site: [How to get support for Sexual Misconduct, Harassment \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Other concerns

- 24 Where you have noticed poor engagement and/or frequent absence due to suspected health or wellbeing issues, you should inform the Director of Studies or Course Leader in the first instance. They may arrange a Stage 1 Fitness to Study meeting with the student to explore the reasons and identify supporting actions. You should also signpost the student to the Student Support Team.

- 25 Long term physical health conditions, such as long covid or chronic pain, may well impact on the student's ability to engage with their training, so it is important that students are offered support with managing the condition. Please seek advice from the Student & Academic Services and Student Support Teams to see what support might be available. Tutors should also be aware of any support requirements the student has disclosed as outlined in their Student Profile document.
- 26 Students experiencing financial or accommodation issues can be directed to the Admissions Team or to the advice on the [Your Finances](#) section of the Intranet.
- 27 Students experiencing a general deterioration in their mental health should be encouraged to refer themselves to the Student Support Team. If they are distressed and need immediate support, you should find a quiet space for them to sit and if you need additional support, request assistance from one of our Mental Health First Aiders by contacting reception.

Reporting a Concern

- 28 The [Report a Concern](#) form is available on our intranet and website and should be completed with as much detail as possible. If a student discloses an issue to you, you should advise them that you will need to make a note of the key points and make a report to the Student Support Team. You should not promise to keep the disclosure confidential and, where possible, you should encourage the student to contact the Student Support Team themselves.
- 29 Once a report has been made, due to confidentiality restrictions, the Student Support Team may not always be able to provide you with further information about the student's circumstances or any resultant actions, but if they can, they will ensure that you are kept informed.
- 30 Please note the Report a Concern form is different to the Anonymous Reporting form. The anonymous reporting form is for monitoring purposes of instances of discrimination, where a student or staff member wishes to remain anonymous.

The Report a Concern form must be used in any of the incidents outlined above.

Following up on concerns

- 30 In the first instance, any Report a Concern forms will be logged with Student & Academic Services and will be followed up by a member of the Student Support Team who will alert the Director of Studies if the concern is long term or needs further action within any of our more formal policies and procedures.

Confidentiality

- 31 As far as possible, any information on students who may be giving cause for concern will be held confidentially. However, in some cases, it will be in the student's best interest to disclose the concern more widely. The Student Support Team can provide more information about this.

Support for Staff

- 32 You are not alone in dealing with the issues you might encounter. Support and advice are available from your line manager, the HR & Business Operations Manager and the Student Support Team. If necessary, training, and further help can be sourced and provided.

If you have encountered an issue that has affected you personally, the Employee Assistance Programme is available 24/7 at...

Original Policy created	July 2024
Policy Updated	August 2024
Document Approved by	BOVTS Policies & Procedures Working Group and Academic Board
Date Approved	
Review Date	August 2026