



# **Student and Staff Welfare Policy: Protocols for Death of a Student or Staff Member 2024-25**

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## **Ethos**

Learning Together, Growing Together

## **Vision & Values**

At Dove Green, we are creating a world class British school that promotes a respectful, happy, caring and inclusive community. We strive to prepare all students to become lifelong learners and responsible citizens, ready to meet the challenges of the future. In partnership with families and the wider community, our goal is to create purposeful, enriched opportunities for students that inspire them to become leaders of their own learning and develop the knowledge, critical thinking skills, and character necessary to succeed in an ever-changing world. We are dedicated to providing stimulating learning experiences through an evolving, challenging curriculum, fully reflecting the culture of the UAE and the wider world

## **DGPS Way**

At Dove Green Private School, we are:

**Determined learners**

**Global thinkers**

**Positive achievers**

**Striving for success**

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## **1. Scope and Purpose of this Policy**

The primary aim of this policy is to ensure that in the event of a death, Dove Green Private School responds with professionalism, compassion, and sensitivity. This policy outlines protocols for handling communications, support for those affected, and actions to be taken immediately following the death of a student or staff member.

## **2. Notification of Death or Potential Death**

When a notification of death is received, it is essential to accurately capture details of the death, including the source of information (name, contact number, etc.). This is especially important if the information is received from a third party. During office hours, the Pastoral and Wellbeing Teams should be alerted. Outside of office hours, Security should be contacted, and they will alert the Pastoral and Wellbeing Teams or their nominee.

## **3. Disclosure of Information**

To prevent misunderstandings and to respect the privacy of those involved, only verified information will be shared. Dove Green Private School will not make any public statement regarding the death until official confirmation is received. Individual staff members are reminded to respond sympathetically to inquiries but avoid speculation or sharing unverified information.

## **4. Role of the Pastoral and Wellbeing Teams**

The Pastoral and Wellbeing Teams will coordinate the initial response of the school, liaising with Security and/or relevant authorities and notifying necessary parties within the school. They will inform specific roles, as outlined in sections 5 to 10, and consider any additional staff who need to be involved. They will also work with the Principal to coordinate an appropriate letter of condolence.

## **5. Role of the Principal**

The Principal will remain informed by the Pastoral and Wellbeing Teams and ensure that any issues potentially affecting the school's reputation or daily operations are addressed. If necessary, the Principal will escalate matters according to the school's crisis management plan.



## **6. Role of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Representative**

The SLT representative will be responsible for initial communication with the next of kin on behalf of Dove Green Private School. This contact will be made as soon as is practical, with the goal of offering support, gathering any family preferences for the school's response, and coordinating a follow-up call by the Principal if desired. The SLT representative will also provide support to any staff and students affected by the news.

## **7. Role of the Marketing and Communications Department**

The Marketing and Communications team will monitor social media activity and advise the school on any relevant online discussions. They will manage internal and external communication in coordination with the Pastoral and Wellbeing Teams. Staff members are advised not to speak to any media outlets without prior approval from Marketing and Communications.

## **8. Role of the Director of Faculty Operations**

The Director of Faculty Operations will handle internal communications for affected faculty and students, offering support resources and ensuring those affected are informed respectfully and in a timely manner. Support options, such as counseling, will be shared with both students and staff. The Director will also arrange for any tributes or memorial acknowledgments in collaboration with faculty and students, if desired.

## **9. Role of the Principal in Communication with the Family**

If the family expresses a wish for additional contact, the Principal will follow up with a phone call, typically within a few days of the initial communication. This outreach serves to demonstrate the school's regard for the individual and provide additional support to the family as they navigate this difficult time.

## **10. Role of the Accommodation Manager (if applicable)**

If a deceased student was residing in school-sourced accommodation, the Accommodation Manager will coordinate support and communication for affected residents. If the accommodation was externally managed, they will work with the Pastoral and Wellbeing Teams to ensure appropriate measures are taken, such as arranging temporary or permanent rehousing for affected individuals.

## **11. Support for Affected Students and Staff**

Students and staff impacted by the death of a peer or colleague will be provided with resources for support, including counseling services. For affected students, flexibility around study requirements may be offered. Staff support will include access to the Employee Assistance Program and other relevant services. The school recognizes that responses to grief vary, and individuals may require different types of support over time.

## **12. Death on School Premises or During School-Related Activities**

If a death occurs on school premises or during a school-related activity, the school's crisis management protocols will be implemented. The Pastoral and Wellbeing Teams, Principal, and relevant authorities will work together to manage the response, ensuring that all necessary steps are taken to protect the welfare of students, staff, and the school community.

By following this protocol, Dove Green Private School aims to ensure a compassionate, respectful, and organised response to the death of any student or staff member.

### ***Appendix:***

#### ***Guidelines for Senior Leaders When Phoning Next of Kin (NOK) of Deceased Students or Staff***

### **What to Expect**

- Recognise that you are reaching out to a family member during what may be one of the most challenging moments in their life.
- Responses may vary widely; some may display calm and pragmatism as they focus on practical arrangements, while others may feel numb, having little to say.
- If the NOK appears quiet, remember that simply making the call is a meaningful gesture. It may be helpful to offer them the opportunity to reach out at a later date if they wish.
- Emotions may range from sadness to guilt or anger, especially if the student had previously shared frustrations. Avoid taking a "corporate" stance and instead allow the family to feel heard, as this approach can alleviate the chance of further distress.
- Should the conversation turn to dissatisfaction or frustration, remember that the family's primary need is emotional support rather than immediate solutions to minor concerns.

### **Preparation**

- Brief yourself with enough information to speak about the student positively and authentically. Let the family know their loved one was valued.
- Be clear about your personal involvement or knowledge of the student, as attempting to overstate familiarity can be unhelpful.

- Plan for cases where the call may not be answered. Decide if leaving a message is appropriate, and if so, mention your intention to call again and specify a time if possible. Avoid leaving more than three messages.
- Reflect on the purpose of the call before dialing, as clearly stating this at the beginning of the conversation may help ease communication.
- Recognize your boundaries and prepare a strategy for sensitively disengaging if the conversation becomes too emotionally charged.

### **Conducting the Call**

- Avoid making promises unless you are certain they can be fulfilled. It is better to hold off on an offer than to risk an unfulfilled commitment.
- If strong emotions are expressed, consider gently inquiring if the family has a support network in place, rather than immediately suggesting external support options.
- If suitable, you may remind them of support resources such as CRUSE Bereavement Support.

### **Managing Personal Anxiety**

- It is natural to feel anxious before making a call of this nature. To remain grounded, make notes on the purpose of the call, key messages, and points of information. This can help keep you focused, even if emotions run high.
- Taking brief notes during the conversation can assist you with follow-ups and provide a helpful focus for your own feelings.

### **Looking After Yourself**

- Understand that speaking with someone recently bereaved, especially under tragic or unexpected circumstances, may trigger powerful emotions in yourself.
- Accept that feeling emotional during or after the call is natural and reflects the human side of Dove Green Private School's approach.
- After the conversation, allow yourself time to process your feelings. Be aware of both informal support options and more formal avenues available within the school should you need them.

These guidelines are designed to assist senior leaders in approaching difficult conversations with care, respect, and sensitivity, helping ensure that Dove Green Private School provides compassionate support to families during difficult times.

**Signed:**



**Print Name:** Christopher Seeley

**Designation:** Principal

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**Next Review:** September 2025