

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Procedures for Handling Student Emergencies or Critical Incidents

I. Background

1. The Chinese University of Hong Kong is committed to nurturing students and ensuring they receive adequate and timely support to promote academic success, enhance overall well-being, and foster a diverse and inclusive environment.
2. The ***Procedures on Handling Emergency Situations for Students*** were last revised in 2008 and presented at the second meeting of the Committee on Student Affairs (2008-09). As the student population continues to grow, it is crucial to regularly review and update these procedures to align with available resources and infrastructure capabilities, incorporate lessons learned from past incidents, and enhance future response efforts. These procedures apply to all students, regardless of their mode of study, who are currently admitted to award or non-award-bearing programmes at the University.
3. These procedures apply to all emergencies or critical incidents involving students, whether occurring on or off the university campus, including outside of Hong Kong.

II. Definition of Student Emergencies or Critical Incidents

4. A student emergency or critical incident refers to an event, situation, or imminent risk that causes significant harm, fear, injury, or trauma to a student. Such incidents may include but are not limited to: -
 - a. A student who has been missing and out of contact for seven consecutive days during normal teaching days.
 - b. Alleged indictable offenses, including acts of physical or sexual violence.
 - c. Death.
 - d. Instances of serious injury, life-threatening illness, self-harm.
 - e. Reports of drugs or psychoactive substances overdose.
 - f. Significant mental health issues that pose a threat to the safety or well-being of a student or others.
5. While these procedures primarily focus on imminent threats to the safety and well-being of students, incidents that are not deemed emergencies or critical can still impact the overall student experience and may require support. Students and members of the University community should seek assistance from various university offices depending on the nature of the incident. These offices include but are not limited to Colleges, Faculties and Departments, Estate Management Office, Graduate School, Human Resources Office, Office of Academic Links, Office of Student Affairs, and University Security Office. These offices can provide specific

assistance and support tailored to different types of non-emergency or non-critical incidents, where appropriate.

6. The list of the University's useful contacts is outlined in **Attachment 1** to this paper.

III. Response to Student Emergencies or Critical Incidents

7. In the event of a student emergency or critical incident occurring on the University campus that results in significant injury or harm, or involves imminent risk, it is essential to report it to:
 - a. University Security Office (24 Hours Hotline: 3943 7999)
 - b. Hong Kong Police Force and/or Fire Services Department (Tel. 999)
8. As standard practice, the University Security Office will contact the Hong Kong Police Force and, depending on the severity or complexity of the incident, inform the relevant Colleges, Faculties, Departments, and other Professional Units. However, in situations where there is an imminent threat to safety or circumstances that warrant it, the person at the scene or reporting party must call the police immediately.
9. Individuals who witness or become aware of an incident and initiate a report should remain calm and provide the necessary information, including the nature of the incident, location, imminent threats or injuries, students involved, and their names and contact details. This allows the University Security Office to assess the situation and take necessary actions to support the affected students effectively.
10. In the case of student emergencies or critical incidents occurring outside of the University campus, including outside of Hong Kong, these incidents should be reported to the Director of Student Affairs, as appropriate, based on the circumstances.

IV. Action for Student Emergencies or Critical Incidents

11. Upon receiving a report of a student emergency or critical incident from the University Security Office, the designated staff member, such as the College Dean of Students, University Dean of Students, Director of Student Affairs, or their authorized representative, will notify the following individuals and offices:
 - a. Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) and the Office of the Vice Chancellor.
 - b. Respective officers of Colleges.
 - c. Communication and Public Relations Office, to coordinate communication efforts, such as handling media inquiries and disseminating accurate information to the public, ensuring a coordinated and consistent message.

- d. Faculty/Department/Programme, for student information gathering, providing academic advice or guidance, and assisting students with any academic-related concerns arising from the incident.
 - e. Graduate School, if the incident involves postgraduate students, to provide specific support and assistance tailored to their needs.
 - f. Office of Admissions and Financial Aid, if the incident involves full-time undergraduate students who are recipients of scholarship or government financial assistance.
 - g. Office of Academic Links, if the incident involves exchange and study abroad students.
 - h. Office of Student Affairs, for assisting affected students and their family members, including counselling services.
 - i. Postgraduate Halls, if the incident involves postgraduate students residing at Postgraduate Halls, to provide appropriate support and assistance.
 - j. Registry, for post-incident guidance and support regarding university regulations.
 - k. University Health Services, for any required medical treatments and post-incident follow-up.
12. The College Dean of Students, University Dean of Students, or Director of Student Affairs will designate a staff member as the Case Manager, who will be the key University contact for the student's emergency contact and provide necessary support, where possible.

V. Role of the Case Manager

13. The Case Manager will assess each case carefully and provide necessary support for affected students and their family members. This support may include, but is not limited to:
- a. Notify the student's emergency contact or family;
 - b. Provide travel support to families of non-local students who require assistance;
 - c. Organize emergency accommodation for family members who require assistance;
 - d. Arrange counselling support and consultations;
 - e. Assist with funeral arrangements and/or offer information on legal and administrative matters, wherever appropriate; and
 - f. Seek senior management's approval for financial assistance required.
14. The Case Manager will maintain regular communication with the students and their families throughout the incident and recovery process, providing updates, addressing concerns, and offering guidance and resources as needed. They will also ensure that appropriate measures are taken to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the students and their families.
15. The standard operation process for handling student emergencies or critical incidents is suggested in **Attachment 2** of this paper.

VI. Confidentiality

16. All members of the university community need to familiarize themselves with these procedures to ensure they can respond swiftly and appropriately during student emergencies and critical incidents. Acting in accordance with established protocols can help minimize risks, provide timely assistance, and mitigate potential harm.
17. While it is important to disclose private and personal information if necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent risk to the life or health of the affected student, it is also crucial to comply with the Hong Kong Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance and Regulations. For general guidelines on what information should and should not be disclosed during student emergencies and critical incidents, please refer to **Attachment 3** for further guidance.

VII. Review following Student Emergencies or Critical Incidents

18. Following a student emergency or critical incident, the Director of Student Affairs, in collaboration with the case manager and other staff members involved in managing the incident, will conduct a comprehensive review to evaluate how the incident was handled and to identify any areas where improvements can be made to the existing procedures.
19. Through this continuous improvement process, the University aims to provide a safe and supportive environment for its students, where they can receive prompt and effective assistance in times of emergencies or critical incidents.

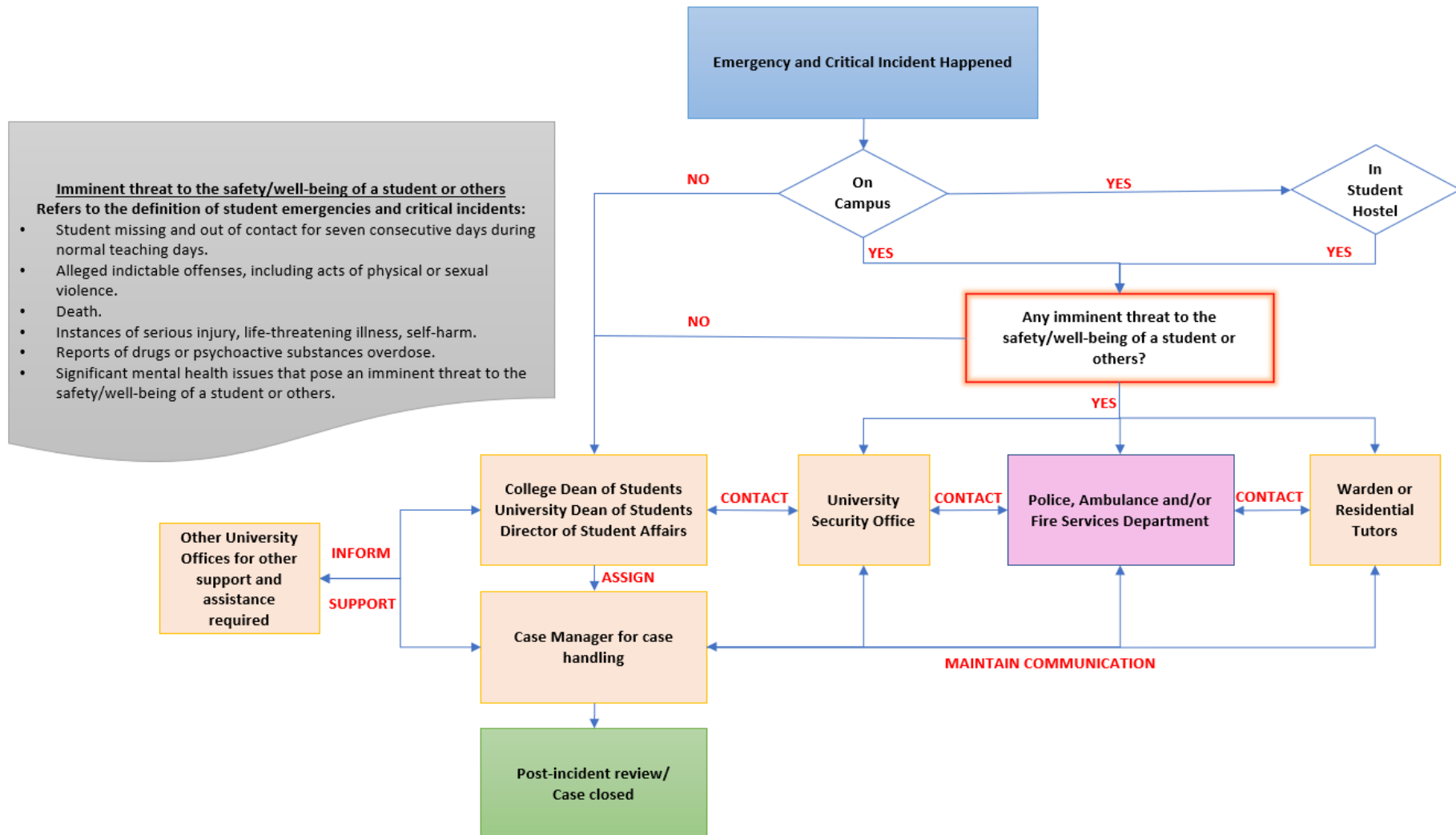
Office of Student Affairs

April 2024

Attachment 1 – University’s Useful Contacts

University Security Office (SCU)	24 Hours Hotline Tel. 3943 7999
University Medical Service Office (UMSO)	Tel. 3943 6422
Colleges - Chung Chi College - New Asia College - United College - Shaw College - Morningside College - S.H. Ho College - C.W. Chu College - Wu Yee Sun College - Lee Woo Sing College Student Hostels - International House - Postgraduate Halls o PGH 1 o PGH 2-3 o PGH 4-6	 Tel: 3943 6451 Tel: 3943 7609 Tel: 3943 7575 Tel. 3943 7363 Tel. 3943 1406 Tel. 3943 1441 Tel. 3943 1801 Tel. 3943 3941 Tel. 3943 1504 Tel. 3943 5598 Tel. 3943 3000 Tel. 3943 0652 Tel. 3943 5000
Office of Admissions and Financial Aid (OAFA)	Tel: 3943 1737
Office of Academic Links (OAL)	Tel. 3943 7597
Office of Student Affairs (OSA)	Tel. 3943 3733
Registry - Academic and Quality Section (AQS) - Registration and Examinations Section (RES)	Tel. 3943 8992 / 3943 8956 Tel. 3943 9888
Estate Management Office (EMO)	Tel. 3943 6172
Human Resources Office (HRO)	Tel. 3943 7335

Attachment 2 – Standard Operation Process for Handling Student Emergencies or Critical Incidents



Attachment 3: General Guidelines for Student Information Disclosure

Student emergencies or critical incidents may occasionally require the disclosure of private and personal information to prioritize the safety and well-being of affected students. It is crucial to handle such situations with utmost care and carefully assess the urgency and severity of the circumstances before divulging any private and personal information. The objective of this approach is to ensure that the disclosure is appropriate and aligns with the best interests of the affected students. Here are some suggested guidelines to follow:

Do's:

1. **Assess the urgency:** Determine if the situation poses an imminent risk to the student's life or health. If there is a genuine emergency, you may need to disclose necessary personal information to ensure their safety.
2. **Prioritize vital information:** Only release the minimum amount of personal information required to address the emergency. Provide relevant details such as the student's name, location, physical description of the emergency or critical incident, and any pertinent medical conditions that are directly related to student safety and well-being.
3. **Share with authorized personnel on Need-to-Know basis:** Limit the disclosure of personal information to authorized individuals who are directly involved in responding to the student emergency and critical incident. This may include the personnel from the Hong Kong Police Force, Ambulance and Fire Services Department, University Security Office, College Dean of Students, University Dean of Students, or Director of Student Affairs.
4. **Document the disclosure:** Maintain accurate records of the personal information released, including the reason for release, individuals involved, and the date and time.
5. **Obtain Appropriate Consent:** Whenever possible, communicate sensitively and compassionately with the affected students or their legal guardians, and endeavor to obtain appropriate consent in accordance with applicable privacy laws and regulations. However, in acute emergencies where there is an imminent safety risk, the need to take prompt action may take precedence over the usual norms for obtaining consent. In such cases, document the rationale for proceeding without consent, as the overarching principle should be to balance the ethical obligation to respect autonomy and privacy with the imperative to safeguard the well-being and security of those impacted.
6. **Maintain confidentiality:** Ensure that personal information shared during emergencies or critical incidents is treated with the utmost confidentiality. Take appropriate measures to protect the information from unauthorized access or misuse.

Don'ts:

1. **Avoid unnecessary sharing:** Do not disclose any personal information that is irrelevant to the emergency and critical incident. Stick to sharing information that is directly related to the imminent safety and well-being of the affected student.

2. **Limit access to personal information:** Avoid sharing personal information with individuals who do not have a legitimate need to know. Restrict access to personal information only to those directly involved in responding to the emergency and critical incident.
3. **Avoid sharing speculative information:** Refrain from sharing unconfirmed or speculative information that may cause unnecessary panic or confusion. Only share verified information that is essential for the management of the emergency or critical incident.