

# Signposting Student Support: A Guide for University Staff



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**A quick guide for busy staff:  
signposting students to the  
right support at the right time.**

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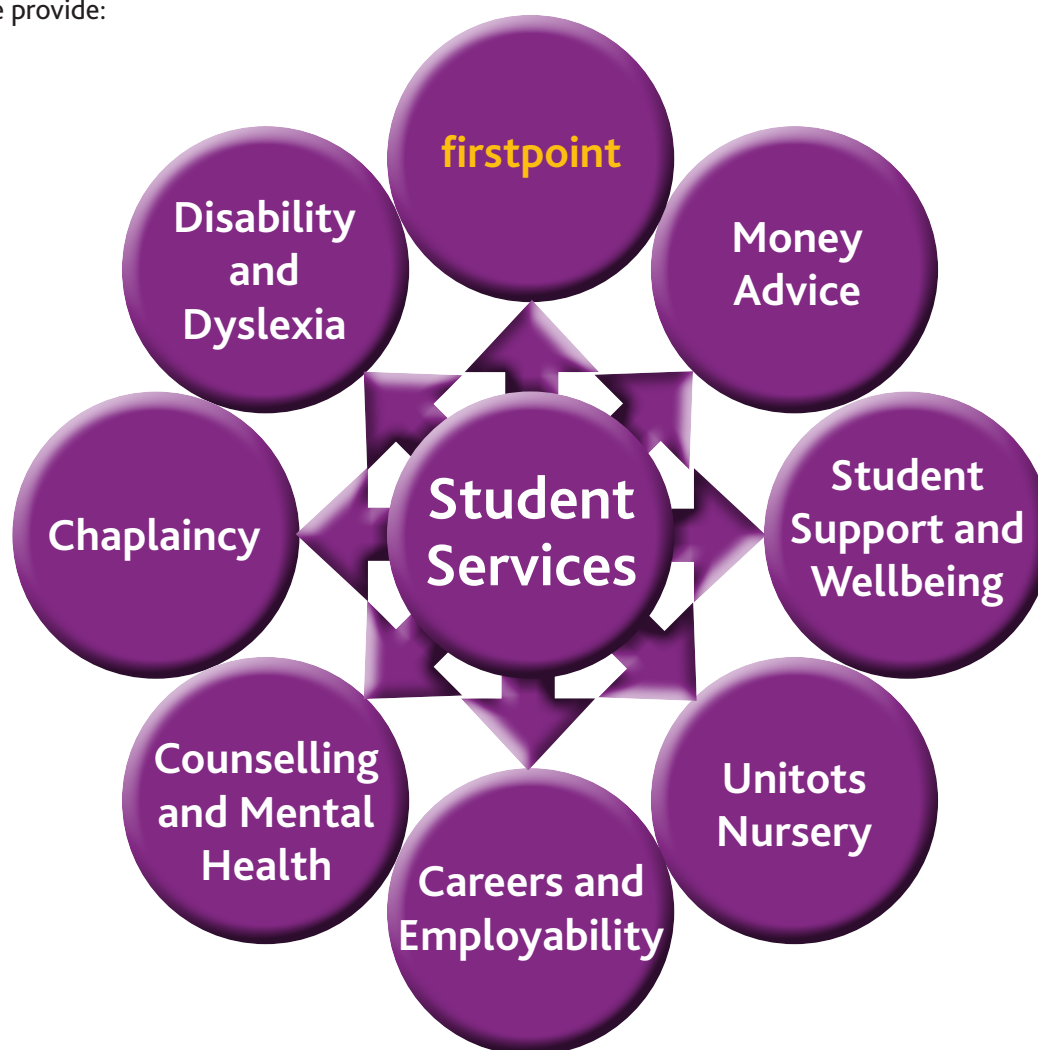
If you do not have permission from the student to share their name, your concerns and/or details of their confidential disclosure, you can contact **firstpoint** to ask for guidance without mentioning any specific details that would enable the identification of the student: [firstpoint4staff@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint4staff@worc.ac.uk)



# Introduction

Whatever your role at the University of Worcester – whether you are an academic tutor, or working in a professional services role, a student-facing service, or the Students' Union – this guide is for you. It is designed to ensure that you can, quickly and confidently, direct students to the advice and support they need, when they need it.

While students choose to study at the University of Worcester primarily to take advantage of the outstanding academic experience on offer, specialist advice and support is also fundamental to a truly excellent student experience. Student Services offers a range of support and advice on all aspects of student life, through the services we provide:



This guide covers a range of the support available from Student Services and other sources, focusing particularly on those services and situations we are most frequently asked about by colleagues. It outlines some of the key signs and behaviours to look out for to help you spot a student who may need additional support, provides practical guidance on what action you might need to take, and finally indicates what might happen once a referral is made.

We welcome your feedback about this guide. We know it does not cover everything, but hope it is a helpful starting point for sharing information on how we can work together to support our students to succeed. We will be reviewing and adding to it over time, so that it becomes your essential reference point for all the information you need to help students to access the right support. Contact us at [ssn@worc.ac.uk](mailto:ssn@worc.ac.uk) to let us know what you think about the guide, and what else you would like us to cover in the future.

This guide is available online at <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/documents/signposting-student-support-guide-for-university-staff.pdf> and on the staff home page <https://webengine-01.worc.ac.uk/staff/> under General Information. Check online for the latest guidance or contact [ssn@worc.ac.uk](mailto:ssn@worc.ac.uk) for alternative formats.

# How to refer a student

## What might you need to know?

Throughout this document you will find information about where to refer students if they encounter specific difficulties or challenges. In many cases students are keen to resolve the problems they are experiencing and raising the issue with a member of staff can be the first positive step towards getting things sorted out.

Some students however, may be reluctant to access help and support. They may find approaching a member of staff or contacting support services challenging for any number of reasons.

Remember that it is the students' right to choose who they talk to and what information can be shared, unless they are a risk to themselves or to others.

## What should you do?

### If a student needs support from professional services

Reassure them that Student Services are there to support them and encourage them to contact **firstpoint** where they can arrange access to a range of support. They can call in, or phone 01905 542551 during opening hours, email [firstpoint@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint@worc.ac.uk) or visit the web pages at: [www.worcester.ac.uk/firstpoint](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/firstpoint) where they can find comprehensive information on all the available services.

This guide may help you to identify which service(s) may be most relevant to the student's circumstances, but this may not always be possible or appropriate. **firstpoint** staff can provide support or help signpost students to the right service(s) once they have made contact.

### If a student is reluctant to make contact directly with **firstpoint**

Ask the student's permission to make contact on their behalf. Provided they have given consent, you will then be able to inform a colleague in Student Services either by phoning **firstpoint**: 01905 542551, or emailing: [firstpoint4staff@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint4staff@worc.ac.uk)

It is best for students to seek help independently, but sometimes you may feel that an intervention on their behalf, with their permission, is the best way forward.

### If a student does not want support but you are concerned

Contact **firstpoint** (as above) or the Student Support and Wellbeing Service by emailing: [studentlife@worc.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@worc.ac.uk). They will advise on the situation without reference to the student's name, and you can then decide how to proceed.

Outside **firstpoint** opening hours, you should contact University Security on their 24/7 emergency number: 01905 855495, or via main reception on 01905 855000, if you need advice quickly on a difficult situation. If you consider yourself or others to be at risk, leave the student and vacate the area as quickly and calmly as possible. Alert Security and if necessary, dial 999 and request further assistance. Inform Security if emergency services are attending.

## What happens next?

Students contacting **firstpoint** will be guided to the appropriate support or provided with relevant information and advice. If your contact is on behalf of a student, with their permission to share information, we will follow this up and encourage them to engage with support. We will not usually be able to update you on the support that has been provided, as this is confidential information, but you can contact us again if the situation does not improve.

# How to be a good supporter (and manage boundaries)

## What might you need to know?

Setting and maintaining professional boundaries with students is an important part of establishing a supportive relationship, where the limits of your role and responsibilities are clear, and emotional wellbeing is protected for both you and the students. Boundaries will vary depending on your role in a given situation; if for example, you are meeting a student as a [Personal Academic Tutor](#), then this role should inform the extent of support and guidance you offer. For some colleagues this may be quite different from the relationship they might develop as a practitioner in their own area of expertise.

## What should you do?

**If a student demands too much of your time**

Be clear at the start and towards the end of meeting with a student about how much time is available, and ensure it finishes on time.

With some students it may be helpful to give a 'count-down' during the meeting, so they know how much time they have left.

**If a student makes frequent requests for meetings and other forms of contact**

Suggest they talk to a [firstpoint](#) Adviser. They can do this by: phone: 01905 542551, email: [firstpoint@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint@worc.ac.uk) or by visiting the Peirson Study and Guidance Centre, St John's Campus during opening hours, Monday to Friday.

Make sure students know when and how they can contact you, and where they can find [out of hours support](#). Your working hours may vary, but it may be helpful to ensure that responses to student emails are sent out during standard office hours, to avoid any expectation that you will be available at other times. Never share your personal email or phone number with students.

**If a student contacts you outside of working hours**

If students make contact outside normal working hours, remind them of the usual ways in which they can arrange to speak to you. In an emergency, it is appropriate to briefly refer them to more suitable emergency services (University Security: 01905 855495; the police; their GP or A&E department).

Individual working hours may vary, but if you receive emails from students late at night, it may be helpful to delay delivery of any response until the next working day. It is University policy that you should never use a personal email account for conducting University business (please refer to the Information Security policy).

## What happens next?

If a student is recommended to seek guidance/support from Student Services, we will not be able to update you because of the confidential nature of our relationship with the students, but they will be offered personalised guidance and support as detailed throughout this guide.

If you need any further information about maintaining professional boundaries, please contact the Counselling and Mental Health Service by email: [cmh@worc.ac.uk](mailto:cmh@worc.ac.uk), or phone: 01905 542832.

# How to respond when a parent/guardian contacts you about a student

## What might you need to know?

Parents, relatives and other third parties often contact the University to ask for information about students. We have a duty under the Data Protection Act 2018 to protect the privacy of our students, we are therefore not permitted to disclose any information about them, even to their parents, without specific authorisation in advance from the student. This includes not being able to confirm whether the student is, or has been, studying with us. We can, however provide general information about support and services available to students.

## What should you do?

If a parent/guardian contacts you and asks about a student

Explain that we are not able to discuss individual students as they are independent adults and we have a duty to protect their privacy.

Keep any discussion general, referring to our policies, procedures and support systems but avoiding any reference to individual students, e.g.: "I can't talk about an individual student, but I can tell you that students are welcome to talk to me if they have any concerns about their studies".

If a parent/guardian is concerned about lack of contact from their child or about their wellbeing/mental health

Explain that students can be very busy and often contact home less frequently than their family might expect. Suggest they keep trying to get in touch, and if they are very worried, advise them to contact **firstpoint** by: phone: 01905 542551, or email: [firstpoint@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint@worc.ac.uk)

Tell them that we have plenty of support available for students which they can access through **firstpoint**.

If a parent/guardian is contacting you urgently outside normal working hours with their concerns

Explain that students often forget to phone home when they are settling in, and reassure them that students can access a variety of support through **firstpoint**.

Outside office hours, or at weekends, contact University Security on their 24/7 emergency number: 01905 855495, or via main reception on 01905 855000 if necessary.

If a parent/guardian is contacting you about their child's finances, living circumstances, course or other University matter

Advise them to contact **firstpoint** by: phone: 01905 542551, or email: [firstpoint@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint@worc.ac.uk)

You can also direct them to the relevant webpages:

- Money Advice
- Student Support & Wellbeing
- Accommodation
- Study Skills

## What happens next?

**firstpoint** (or Security, out of hours) will be able to provide reassurance about support that is available to students. Any reported concerns about wellbeing will normally be followed up by Student Support & Wellbeing (or Security), for example by a wellbeing check by phone, email or visit at the student's accommodation. The student will be offered support where necessary and encouraged to contact their parent/guardian, but we will not normally do this on their behalf unless they are a danger to themselves or others. We will not confirm that anyone is a student at the University to a third party, but we can tell parents/guardians that where concerns have been raised about students this will be taken seriously and followed up.

# When a student needs help with a careers enquiry

## What might you need to know?

Students may be offered a range of employability activities within their course, including work experience, professional development, job application skills and industry links.

Students may also look for more specific help with finding part time work, improving their employability, making decisions about career paths, and completing job applications. Our dedicated Careers and Employability Service is here to complement these embedded employability activities and support our students to develop the skills and abilities they will need for a successful and fulfilling career.

The Worcester Award is an employability award which allows students to record extra-curricular activities during their time with us, and gain an award, which they can show to employers.

Through myCareer students can find full and part time job vacancies and book appointments, workshops and events. They can also use the employability tools such as CV Builder or Career Planner, and explore careers information through the Careers Discovery feed.

## What should you do?

If a student is looking for a job, to book a careers appointment, workshop or event, or start the Worcester Award

Direct them to myCareer from the MyDay portal, where they can use the tabs at the top to 'search' for jobs, 'book' appointments and workshops, and 'Worcester Award' to get started.

Students should be able to navigate the portal easily, but if they have any issues they can contact **firstpoint**: [firstpoint@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint@worc.ac.uk) or email Careers: [careers@worc.ac.uk](mailto:careers@worc.ac.uk). Staff can also request a myCareer account by emailing [careers@worc.ac.uk](mailto:careers@worc.ac.uk)

If a student wants more information about careers applications or psychometric tests

Information is available in **firstpoint** or on the Careers Service webpage: [www.worc.ac.uk/careers](http://www.worc.ac.uk/careers)

Careers Advisers can run specific workshop and sessions within your modules. See [www2.worc.ac.uk/careers/universitystaff.html](http://www2.worc.ac.uk/careers/universitystaff.html) or contact us at [careers@worc.ac.uk](mailto:careers@worc.ac.uk)

If a student wants help quickly or can't make the appointment times available

Appointments can be offered by video or phone call, or face to face, as appropriate to the current situation.

Students can contact the team by email: [careers@worc.ac.uk](mailto:careers@worc.ac.uk)

## What happens next?

You can see more about how Careers and Employability can help you support your students with their employability in the PAT Employability guide [www2.worc.ac.uk/careers/documents/PAT\\_employability\\_guide.pdf](http://www2.worc.ac.uk/careers/documents/PAT_employability_guide.pdf)

Students may want to meet with Careers Advisers more than once as they progress through their course. University of Worcester graduates can use the Careers and Employability Service as a graduate for three years and beyond.



# When a student is a care leaver, carer, or estranged from their parents

## What might you need to know?

Students who have care experience or are estranged from their parents may not disclose this to you directly. They may imply this by suggesting that they do not have the traditional support network that other students have, or by being vague about their plans for holiday periods or occasions when other students might be returning to their family homes.

Students with caring responsibilities may sometimes miss lectures, or be unable to keep up with assignment deadlines. They may be combining caring with part-time work as well as their study, and could be struggling financially.

## What should you do?

If a student tells you that they are a care leaver, carer or estranged from their parents

Try to remain supportive but neutral, avoiding being overly sympathetic or offering additional support that may be inappropriate. Each student's situation will be different.

Make sure the student knows that this is a diverse community, and that there is a range of support available to all students, whatever their background or circumstances.

If a student wants to speak to someone or would like some support

Suggest that they contact the Student Support and Wellbeing Service. They can do this by email: [studentlife@worc.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@worc.ac.uk), or they can contact the team via [firstpoint](#).

There is information available at: [www.worcester.ac.uk/studentssupport](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/studentssupport). Financial information for Care Leavers and estranged students is also available from [www.worc.ac.uk/moneyadvice/careleavers](http://www.worc.ac.uk/moneyadvice/careleavers)

If a student says they do not have a home to return to during the summer break

Advise them to contact [firstpoint](#) by: phone: 01905 542551, email: [firstpoint@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint@worc.ac.uk) or by visiting the Peirson Study and Guidance Centre, St John's Campus during opening hours.

Summer Stay accommodation may be available. Advisers will be able to provide more information and liaise with Hospitality Services.

## What happens next?

A Student Support Adviser will be able to discuss with the student the level and type of support that they would like. This might be regular one-to-one meetings or may just be having a named contact should they need someone to talk to. Information on other services or people that the student may wish to refer to such as Counselling and Mental Health, Money Advice, and the Chaplaincy would also be given. The Chaplaincy arranges Christmas meals, with local church groups and families, for students who might otherwise be alone on Christmas day. The Access to Learning Fund is open to students who need extra financial support over the summer.

# When a student is experiencing conflict

## What might you need to know?

We all experience conflict in our lives at some point or another and with varying degrees of impact. For students conflict can arise in different ways and may affect how they interact with their peers, flat or housemates, friends, family and lecturers. Ongoing disputes can be stressful and tiring. Students experiencing persistent and ongoing conflict may disengage, withdrawing from contact with specific people on their course or avoiding working with specific groups. They may mention that they don't like to spend time at their accommodation or that they are spending increasing amount of time going home at the weekends.

## What should you do?

### If the student wants general advice

Direct the student to the Student Support web page for suggestions on how to manage conflict:  
[www.worc.ac.uk/studentsupport/communal-living](http://www.worc.ac.uk/studentsupport/communal-living)

In most cases, disputes can be easily resolved. Suggest that they talk this through with someone they trust, and reassure them that support is available if they need it.

### If the student wants support to resolve the conflict

Advise them to contact the Student Support and Wellbeing Service. They can do this by email: [studentlife@worc.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@worc.ac.uk), or they can contact the team via [firstpoint](#).

Formal and informal conflict resolution is available through the Student Support and Wellbeing team; including facilitated conversations and mediation.

## What happens next?

The Student Support & Wellbeing Service will explore the options with the student and, if appropriate, other students who may be involved. If the dispute or conflict is with a non-student, the student will be supported to explore different ways to manage and, hopefully, to resolve the issues they are experiencing. Students can also be supported by our Counselling and Mental Health Service if the conflict is causing particular anxiety or distress.

# When a student has committed a crime/is being investigated by the police

## What might you need to know?

A student may disclose to you that they have committed a crime that is either already being investigated by the Police or they may confide in you an act or conduct which constitutes a criminal offence. You may also become aware of this through social media or news reports. They may also refer to a crime which was committed before they came to University.

## What should you do?

### If the crime has not been reported to the Police

You may feel that the student poses an immediate threat to you or you may think it necessary to report this to the Police urgently. If you are still with the student, excuse yourself as calmly as you can and remove yourself from the situation. When you are safe, dial 999 asking for the Police. When you are able to, report this to University Security on 01905 855495 or main reception on 01905 855000, so they can provide assistance.

In non-emergency situations, you may need to consider whether you need to refer to the Safeguarding Policy or the Student with Criminal Records policy. You may wish to discuss the matter with the Director of Student Life, phone: 01905 855059, or with your line manager if there could be implications for a student on a professional course.

### If the crime is being investigated by the Police

Under the terms of the Student Disciplinary Process or the Fitness to Practise Procedures for their course, you may be required to refer the student through a 'Notice of Formal Complaint' sent to the student's Head of School. The Student Support and Wellbeing Service will be able to discuss the process with you. Contact them by email: [studentlife@worc.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@worc.ac.uk)

If the student wants support, advise them to contact the Student Support and Wellbeing Service by email: [studentlife@worc.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@worc.ac.uk) or the Counselling and Mental Health service by email: [cmh@worc.ac.uk](mailto:cmh@worc.ac.uk) or phone: 01905 542832.

## What happens next?

If the conduct which constitutes a criminal offence has taken place on University premises, affects other members of the University community or damages the reputation of the University then the Vice Chancellor/ Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor for Students will decide whether disciplinary action should be taken under the Student Disciplinary Process. The University will liaise with the Police where appropriate. The Director of Student Life will liaise with the Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor for Students and the Assistant Director of Estates for Security and Operations to ensure that the safety of students, staff and the University community is maintained. Any students affected, including the perpetrator where appropriate, will be offered support.

# When a student is a victim of crime

## What might you need to know?

Worcester is regularly reported as one of the safest cities to live in, but it is possible that at some point a student will approach you looking for support as a victim of crime. A student might, for example, share with you the fact that they were a victim recently and have not yet reported this to anyone, or they might tell you that they are finding it difficult to cope with the after-effects of a crime that happened some time ago. Even crimes experienced some time in the past can have a significant effect on a student's day-to-day life and studies.

## What should you do?

### If the student has not reported the crime

Advise them that help is available at **firstpoint**, during opening hours. Make sure that they have the contact number for **University Security: 01905 855495** or main reception: **01905 855000**, in case they feel unsafe at any time.

In most cases, when a person is a victim of crime, it is their decision whether or not to report that crime. This can be a difficult decision. Suggest that they talk this through with someone they trust, and reassure them that support is available if they need it.

### If the student wants support

Advise them to contact the Student Support and Wellbeing Service. They can do this by email: [studentlife@worc.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@worc.ac.uk), or they can contact the team via **firstpoint**.

Support can be provided whether or not they have reported the crime, and can sometimes help them decide what to do.

### If you are concerned about a student's wellbeing

Staff can contact the Counselling and Mental Health Service for advice on 01905 542832 or email [cmh@worc.ac.uk](mailto:cmh@worc.ac.uk) and a member of the team will call you back. We operate daily triage (STAR appointments) from 9am – 4pm every weekday book via **firstpoint** so students can be seen quickly.

If a student has revealed a crime to you which you believe involves ongoing risk to the student or others, contact **firstpoint** for advice, or if necessary contact **University Security: 01905 855495** or main reception on **01905 855000**. You can ask for advice without breaking confidentiality.

## What happens next?

What happens next will depend on the circumstances of the case in question. The University's Security team and Police Community Support Officers are experienced in responding to serious crimes and liaising with the emergency services. Referring students to Student Support and Wellbeing for ongoing support will ensure that the student receives the help they need. In more serious cases, the University will liaise with local Police where appropriate. The student's right to confidentiality will be respected as far as our duty of care allows; in circumstances where we are required to share information because of the risk of harm to the student or others, this will normally be explained to the student in advance.



# When a student dies

## What might you need to know?

Thankfully this is a relatively rare occurrence, but with a large population, sadly it is inevitable that there will occasionally be a student death. A death within the student community can have a very emotional impact on all those who knew the student, and the timing and circumstances can sometimes increase the impact on anyone affected.

It is important that the University treats any student death with sensitivity, and that we do not add to the unavoidable distress for the family, friends and anyone else affected. Communications need to be carefully and consistently handled so that we can ensure everyone is aware of the support they can access.

## What should you do?

### If you are notified of a student death

The University would normally be notified of a student death either by the next of kin or by the Emergency services (usually the Police). If you are informed, or become aware, by another route, please report this to the Director of Student Life on: 01905 855059, the Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor for Students on: 01905 542955, or the Academic Registrar on: 01905 857536.

Please do not share any information more widely with colleagues or students at this point: we have a responsibility to maintain the privacy of the student and family involved, and to support the wellbeing of all the members of our community who are affected.

If you knew the student it will be helpful if you can provide any details you are aware of, such as their course, cohort, current/recent placements etc. when making the notification.

This may be a distressing experience, so be aware of your own support needs, and make any others affected aware of the availability of support (see below).

## What happens next?

The Director of Student Life or Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor for Students will verify the details and ensure that all appropriate colleagues and students are notified. They will also arrange for support to be offered to the students and staff affected.

The Counselling and Mental Health Service will provide priority access to STAR triage appointments for students, and offer group sessions, which can allow friendship groups or cohorts to come together to reflect and share their thoughts, feelings and memories in a supported setting. Ongoing support will be arranged according to the students' needs. Those students who are directly affected will usually be contacted by email with a tailored offer of support, but students are also welcome to request support through firstpoint, or by contacting Counselling and Mental Health by phone: 01905 542832 or email: [cmh@worc.ac.uk](mailto:cmh@worc.ac.uk)

Staff have access to confidential support through [PAM Assist](#), the University's Employee Assistance Programme. They can also seek advice from the Counselling and Mental Health Service.

A senior member of the University will normally send a letter of condolence to the next of kin, and a University representative will attend the funeral if appropriate.

# When a student has a disability, dyslexia, a long-term medical condition, or a temporary disability

## What might you need to know?

The University of Worcester prides itself on providing excellent support to students with disabilities. Nearly 20% of our student population discloses a disability. This includes mobility difficulties, sensory impairments, specific learning difficulties (like dyslexia or dyspraxia), mental health conditions, Autism, or long-term medical conditions. Some students may not yet have a diagnosis; others may become disabled during their time at university; and some students don't consider themselves to be disabled but may need support. Many students find that previous coping strategies they used at school or college do not work as well at university. Look out for students who have poor attendance, regularly submit work late, who seem to struggle with written elements of their course, display perfectionist tendencies, or frustration at the marks they are receiving, as they could potentially benefit from some extra support.

## What should you do?

If a student says that they have a disability but they have not formally disclosed it

Encourage them to make contact with the Disability and Dyslexia Service. They can do this by: phone: 01905 542551, email: [firstpoint@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint@worc.ac.uk) or by visiting **firstpoint** in the Peirson Study and Guidance Centre, St John's Campus during opening hours.

We would recommend students contact **firstpoint** as soon as possible, rather than waiting until they encounter difficulties. We respect some students' preference not to seek support, but it is important that they understand the implications of this choice. For example, they may miss out on support at exam time, or may not achieve the marks they are capable of.

If a student thinks they may have a disability and wants support

Suggest that they contact **firstpoint** as soon as possible.

It can take some time to assess and set up appropriate support, but there may also be advice and support that we can put in place quickly while the process gets underway.

## What happens next?

**firstpoint** can offer some initial advice to students and then book them in to meet with a Disability Adviser for more in depth advice and guidance if needed. Disability Advisers can provide information about: dyslexia screening and assessment or applying for Disabled Students Allowances and they can also implement a support package. This might include: adaptations to accommodation, specialist support, or adjustments to learning, teaching and assessment. If the student gives consent, relevant information will be made available to tutors via the module lists on SOLE. For further information or guidance on inclusive practice and reasonable adjustments, contact the Disability and Dyslexia Service by email: [disability@worc.ac.uk](mailto:disability@worc.ac.uk) or phone: 01905 855531; or visit the Information and Resources pages at [www2.worc.ac.uk/disabilityanddyslexia/staff-resources-and-information.html](http://www2.worc.ac.uk/disabilityanddyslexia/staff-resources-and-information.html)

# When a student makes a disclosure of abuse or neglect

## What might you need to know?

It might be very difficult to tell that a student has been a victim of abuse or neglect. People manage their emotions in very different ways. Some may become disengaged and lose interest in things whilst others may become angry and aggressive to those around them.

If you develop a trusting relationship with a student they may feel comfortable to open up to you, or they may disclose to you unexpectedly during the course of a conversation.

## What should you do?

### If a student makes a disclosure of abuse or neglect

Listen carefully, stay calm and remain non-judgemental. Ensure that you do not interview the student, however you may seek to clarify using open questions. Reassure the student by confirming they have done the right thing. Signpost to the appropriate information and services and encourage the student to seek specialist support.

Make a detailed note of the date, time, place, what the student said and did and the questions asked of the student.

Encourage the student to contact the Counselling and Mental Health Service by email: [cmh@worc.ac.uk](mailto:cmh@worc.ac.uk), phone 01905 542832 or via [firstpoint](#) for an urgent appointment.

### If you have a suspicion that someone is being abused

Contact [firstpoint](#) by phone: 01905 542551 or by visiting the Peirson Study and Guidance Centre, St John's Campus during opening hours or contact the Student Support and Wellbeing Service by emailing: [studentlife@worc.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@worc.ac.uk). They will be able to advise on the situation without reference to the student's name and you can then decide how to proceed.

If you are concerned that the student is a vulnerable adult and/or there are children involved, you should refer to the [University's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy](#) and seek advice from the relevant Contact Officer. This should be done immediately without waiting for confirmation of your concerns.

### If you need further guidance on supporting students

Contact [firstpoint4staff@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint4staff@worc.ac.uk)

Refer to the [firstpoint](#) webpages; [www.worcester.ac.uk/firstpoint](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/firstpoint)

## What happens next?

The Counselling and Mental Health Service will meet with the student as soon as possible. They will provide support, referring the student to other internal or external services as necessary. Unless there is an immediate risk to the student or others, they will be supported to make their own decision about whether to report any incident(s) to the Police. If they decide to do so, they will be supported throughout the process, and the Counsellors and Mental Health Advisers can provide expert evidence if required. We will discuss with the student types of services, both internally and externally (including Police, Local Authorities etc.) that they may wish to access. Liaison with Accommodation and Money Advice may also be appropriate.

If the Contact Officer is involved, they will review the information available and decide whether to refer to the relevant Local Authority body, or the Police.

# When a student makes a disclosure of a sexual assault, rape or domestic violence

## What might you need to know?

It may be very difficult to tell that a student has been a victim of a sexual assault or domestic violence. People manage their emotions in very different ways. Some may become disengaged and lose interest in things whilst others may become angry and aggressive to those around them.

If you develop a trusting relationship with a student they may feel comfortable to open up to you, or they may disclose to you unexpectedly during the course of a conversation.

## What should you do?

### If a student makes a disclosure

Take any disclosure seriously: remain calm and non-judgmental. Avoid asking probing questions that will encourage the student to provide you with too much information, or that will make the student think that you are doubting them.

The student will need expert support and guidance: aim to listen, rather than to provide specific advice. Signpost to appropriate information and services and encourage the student to seek specialist support.

Maintain confidentiality unless there is cause for concern about the immediate safety of the student, or of others.

Encourage the student to report the incident through the [University's Sexual Misconduct Reporting Portal](#). This gives an option to request support, but they may also wish to contact the Counselling and Mental Health Service by email: [cmh@worc.ac.uk](mailto:cmh@worc.ac.uk), phone 01905 542832 or via [firstpoint](#) for an urgent appointment.

Make a record of the conversation as accurately as possible. Keep this secure and confidential. If the student does decide to report it to the Police then these notes may be required as evidence, which is why it is important to reflect the student's words and not to use leading questions.

### If a student discloses a very recent assault on campus, or there may be a risk to the student or others

If the student discloses an incident that has occurred very recently, or feels that they, or others, are at risk, then, with the student's permission, contact the University Security team on 01905 855495, main reception on 01905 855000, the University PCSOs on 01905 542629 or the Police on their non-emergency number 101, or on 999 if necessary.

If you feel that there is an immediate risk to others, but the student does not give permission to share, you should inform them that it is necessary to break confidentiality, and contact either the Director of Student Life, 01905 855059, the Assistant Director of Student Life: 01905 855430, University Security: 01905 855495 or main reception on 01905 855000.

## What happens next?

The Counselling and Mental Health Service will meet with the student as soon as possible. They will provide support, referring the student to other internal or external services as necessary. Unless there is an immediate risk to the student or others, they will be supported to make their own decision about whether to report any incident(s) to the Police. If they decide to do so, they will be supported throughout the process, and the Counsellors and Mental Health Advisers can provide expert evidence if required.



# When a student reports discrimination, victimisation or harassment

## What might you need to know?

Whilst universities are, by their very nature, liberal and inclusive environments, there is always a risk that a student may feel they have been discriminated against. Discriminatory behaviour can have a serious negative impact on the individual, as well as being morally and legally unacceptable. The University is committed to equality and inclusion and takes allegations of discrimination, victimisation or harassment very seriously. People being discriminated against often feel worried about coming forward, so look out for signs of withdrawal, fall-off in academic performance or lecture attendance, lack of interaction with a group as a whole or with particular individuals, and avoidance of certain situations.

## What should you do?

### If a student reports discrimination or victimisation

Advise them to contact the Student Support and Wellbeing Service. They can do this by email: [studentlife@worc.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@worc.ac.uk), or they can contact the team via [firstpoint](#).

Reassure the student that the University takes a strong stance against any discrimination or victimisation, and that their concerns will be listened to and taken seriously. Assure them that no student will be treated less favourably for raising such concerns.

### If a student reports harassment

Advise them to contact the Student Support and Wellbeing Service or to contact an Initial Harassment Adviser. Initial Harassment Advisers are listed, with a mini-biography, under the Diversity and Equality section on this page: [www2.worc.ac.uk/personnel/](http://www2.worc.ac.uk/personnel/)

The University has a number of Initial Harassment Advisers. Appointed and trained by the University, these Advisers can provide a first line response for anyone who considers they may be experiencing harassment.

## What happens next?

As well as ensuring that the student is offered any support they might require, the Student Support Advisers will be able to signpost the student to any relevant complaints procedure or to the Students' Union, as appropriate. Where necessary (and respecting confidentiality), they will also discreetly contact any other students they believe may be involved or affected and in need of support.

If you, as a member of staff, would like advice on any aspect of good practice in relation to equality and diversity issues as they relate to students, the Student Support and Wellbeing Service can assist via email: [studentlife@worc.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@worc.ac.uk).

# When a student is experiencing distress

## What might you need to know?

Most people experience some level of emotional distress at various points in their lives, and of course, university life may bring some additional challenges. Usually any difficulties can be resolved by the student talking them through with their family and friends, or in the case of academic concerns, with their Personal Academic Tutor.

If you are faced with a student who is distressed, making time to listen and take them seriously may be enough to help them to feel better and start to work out what course of action they might take. On most occasions, while the situation may be distressing for the student, it will not be an urgent matter.

Be aware of your own limits and boundaries relating to your role in the University. You are not solely responsible for the student's emotional state, and you are not expected to provide support beyond your expertise, training and resources.

## What should you do?

### If a distressed student asks to talk to you

Acknowledge the student's distress and reassure them that you want to support them. Find a quiet space to meet them. If the student phones you, try to get them to confirm where they are and who they are with. Consider helping them to start an action plan to tackle what is distressing them.

Listen objectively and take their concerns seriously. Give them space to explain what is going on. Set a timeframe for the meeting and explain that your discussion will be kept private unless you believe that anyone is in danger. Agree a time to follow up with the student or make a note to check on them later to see how they are and if they need further support.

### If the issue is outside your expertise and/or needs specialist intervention

Use this guide to identify appropriate support services and signpost clearly. If possible, encourage the student to make contact for themselves, but if necessary, provide support, such as offering to phone for an appointment while the student is with you.

Explain clearly to the student that the situation is outside your area of expertise, but that specialist help is available. Students have a right to refuse support or accept it and then later change their mind. Unless there is a significant risk of harm to the student or others, it is their responsibility to take the next step, but do encourage them.

### If the student is very distressed

It is important that you remain calm and continue to maintain professional boundaries. When appropriate, remind the student of the available support highlighted in this Guide, and encourage them to seek help.

If it appears that the student is at immediate risk of harm, contact **University Security** on their 24/7 emergency number: **01905 855495** or main reception on **01905 855000**. Advise them of your location, your name, the name of the student and the nature of the situation. If necessary, dial 999 and request further assistance. Inform Security if emergency services are attending.

## What happens next?

You may wish to talk to a line manager or colleague after a difficult conversation. It may also be helpful to make a note of what was said so that you can refer back to it later if necessary (store notes securely). If some specific guidance would be helpful, make a STAR appointment with the **Counselling and Mental Health Team** via **firstpoint** or contact Student Support and Wellbeing by email: [studentlife@worc.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@worc.ac.uk).

# When a student is not engaging in their studies

## What might you need to know?

Students may have poor or no attendance at lectures, missed appointments with their Personal Academic Tutor or limited engagement with online resources/course requirements (see [Student Attendance Policy](#)). Additionally they may have failed to submit one or more pieces of assessed work. They may also have lower levels of involvement than usual with the Students' Union, social events or fellow students. They may be in their room more than usual, or absent from their accommodation for long periods. Any of these behaviours may give cause for concern about the student's wellbeing or their likelihood of success.

Students who have missed lectures or have not submitted assessed work may be very anxious about whether they can re-engage with their course. Reassure them that there are usually plenty of options, and that support is available to help them find a way forward.

## What should you do?

**If a student is experiencing academic issues that are preventing their engagement with their studies**

Suggest they contact their Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) to discuss any challenges they may be experiencing. They can find the name of their PAT on the SOLE page. The PAT can also advise them on their options if assessed work has not been submitted or has been failed.

Programme Advisers can provide guidance on modules, pathways and changing courses. Contact [advisers@worc.ac.uk](mailto:advisers@worc.ac.uk)

If they need information on improving their study skills, please refer them to [www.worcester.ac.uk/studyskills](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/studyskills)

Help with general writing skills is available from the Writers in Residence [www.worcester.ac.uk/your-home/academic-writers-in-residence.html](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/your-home/academic-writers-in-residence.html)

**If a student is experiencing personal issues that are preventing their engagement with their studies**

Encourage them to speak to a **firstpoint** Adviser who can refer them to the appropriate service for support. They can do this by visiting the Peirson Study and Guidance Centre, St John's Campus during opening hours, calling: 01905 542551, or emailing: [firstpoint@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint@worc.ac.uk)

Depending on the student's situation, you might also consider suggesting that they self-refer to the Counselling and Mental Health Service by contacting firstpoint to request a STAR appointment or contacting the Student Support and Wellbeing Service, by emailing: [studentlife@worc.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@worc.ac.uk)

## What happens next?

Where possible, students will be supported to re-engage with their studies, with appropriate support to keep them on track. Sometimes they may need help with applying for mitigating circumstances, or asking for a temporary withdrawal until they are ready to pick up their studies again. Occasionally it is best for the student to withdraw from the University, but this is still better done in a supported process to maintain the student's wellbeing as well as ensuring that they are not subject to any more financial commitment than necessary, and fully understand the implications and their options for the future.

# When a student has a query relating to faith, belief or religion

## What might you need to know?

Coming to university is an exciting time for students and brings with it greater freedom to question the world around them and their place in it. For many this may mean exploring issues of faith, perhaps questioning their own beliefs, or exploring new ideas and possibilities. As a University, we also need to be aware of our responsibilities for responding to practical issues of faith observance on campus and requests from students for adjustments. Students may come to you with a variety of questions about faith.

## What should you do?

If a student wants to talk to someone about faith, belief or religion, bereavement or spiritual support

Suggest that they contact the Chaplaincy. They can do this by emailing: [chaplaincy@worc.ac.uk](mailto:chaplaincy@worc.ac.uk), by contacting **firstpoint** on 01905 542551, or by visiting the Peirson Study and Guidance Centre, St John's Campus during opening hours.

The Chaplaincy is able to provide introductions to churches and faith communities locally, and offers support to students of all faiths and none.

If a student wants information about prayer or quiet spaces at the University

Advise them that on St John's Campus there is a Prayer and Quiet Room (BB179) with adjacent washing facilities, and a mown labyrinth behind Car Park C, adjacent to the Woodbury Building.

Further information is available from the Chaplaincy and Faith Advice webpage: [www.worcester.ac.uk/student-services/chaplaincy](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/student-services/chaplaincy)

At City Campus there is a Prayer and Quiet Room in the Charles Hastings Building (CHLG033) with adjacent washing facilities. The Jenny Lind Chapel in Charles Hastings is also available for prayer and quiet reflection when not in other use.

## What happens next?

The Chaplaincy offers a range of faith services to support students, whether they are a member of a faith group or belong to no faith tradition. The Chaplaincy Service can offer information on local places of worship including churches, gurdwaras, mosques and synagogues, and can signpost to other Student Services, such as Counselling and Mental Health and Student Support and Wellbeing where appropriate.



# When a student is undergoing gender transition

## What might you need to know?

The number of trans and non-binary students who seek help with gender transition, or who are questioning their gender, has increased at the University in line with the national trend. Not all students who identify as transgender will ask for the same level of support, however the University is able to offer services that are beneficial to anyone questioning their gender identity or in the process of gender reassignment.

## What should you do?

**If a student approaches you to discuss gender transition**

Remain neutral in your response. Listen to the person; a non-judgemental ear will help considerably. Respect their boundaries regarding any questions which might be considered personal.

Refer students to the [firstpoint Guide for Transgender Students](#).

Encourage them to speak to a **firstpoint** Adviser who can advise on support available. Students may wish to directly access confidential support from the Student Support and Wellbeing Service: [studentlife@worc.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@worc.ac.uk) or the Counselling and Mental Health Service: [cmh@worc.ac.uk](mailto:cmh@worc.ac.uk) 01905 542832.

**If a student discloses that they are considering gender reassignment or have started the process**

It will help to ask what support they may need - including using their preferred name and pronoun. This may change as the individual progresses, so staff should be prepared for these preferences to be amended over time. Gender reassignment is one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and the protection begins from the time that they indicate their intention to start the process.

Some students will wish to keep their circumstances private, or restrict those who know about them; others may wish to disclose. There is no right way for this to happen and it is best to discuss with the student and agree a plan that suits them.

If a student undergoes treatment or experiences circumstances which affect their studies, they can seek confidential advice from a **firstpoint** Adviser.

**If a student has partly or fully transitioned**

Think of the student as being the gender that they want you to think of them as and use their preferred name and pronoun. Respect their privacy and don't tell others about their trans status without their express permission, and for a legitimate purpose.

At an appropriate point, records may be amended to reflect the student's current name and gender. This may include replacing old records to remove reference to their birth gender. **firstpoint** can advise on the process for updating central records. Staff can email: [firstpoint4staff@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint4staff@worc.ac.uk) or students can e-mail: [firstpoint@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint@worc.ac.uk) or phone: 01905 542551.

## What happens next?

Students referred for advice will be offered support to suit their needs, which may change over time. Please refer to the [Signposting Information for Transgender Students](#) document for more information.

# When a student is homeless

## What might you need to know?

Homelessness can take many forms. The definition provided by the charity Shelter defines homelessness as occurring when someone is living in unsuitable housing, has no rights to stay where they are or is sleeping rough. Students can encounter many different issues with their accommodation that can be compounded by their personal circumstances and complex life events. It is possible that a student facing or experiencing homelessness is also experiencing other challenges (e.g. financial, relationship breakdown, family estrangement) which means there are significant pressures on them.

You may notice they are not as focused, more tired in classes and possibly taking less care with their appearance. They may disengage with their studies. A student may even tell you they are sleeping on a friend's floor, that they are "sofa surfing" or sleeping in their car.

## What should you do?

**If the student tells you that they are homeless or at risk of being homeless**

Suggest that they contact **firstpoint** as soon as possible. They can do this by email: [firstpoint@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint@worc.ac.uk) or phone: 01905 542551, or call in during opening hours.

Reassure them that help is available, and that they will still be able to continue their studies, with the right support in place. Advise them that a range of options may be available, including help with finance (for accommodation and/or for food, clothing and toiletries) if needed.

If the student is reluctant to make contact with **firstpoint**, try to remain neutral and supportive. It is their choice who they tell, and they may be feeling very vulnerable at this point. Remind them that Student Services' staff are here to help them, and that this is something we have dealt with for other students before. Make sure they have **firstpoint's** number in case they want to phone later.

If they choose not to engage with internal support services straight away, suggest that they might want to approach Worcester Housing and Benefits Advice Centre by phone: 0808 278 7891 or email: [advice@citaworcester.org.uk](mailto:advice@citaworcester.org.uk) providing a telephone number for a call back (this will register as an unknown number when the call comes through).

## What happens next?

Student Services will arrange for the student to talk to an Adviser. They will identify the support that the student needs (such as Accommodation, Money Advice, Counselling and Mental Health) and help the student to liaise with the relevant services. Depending on the circumstances, we may be able to help the student to find short-term emergency accommodation, and to provide for their immediate needs, such as food, toiletries, bedding, and help with their rent. They can then help the student to plan ahead, and refer to external agencies if necessary.

# When a student reports an infectious disease

## What might you need to know?

Students, especially when living in halls of residence or shared accommodation, can be particularly susceptible to infectious diseases. Some, like seasonal colds and flu, are common and difficult to avoid; others are more serious, or can be avoided with some simple measures. A few infectious diseases, including meningitis and mumps, for example, have to be notified to UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) for recording, treatment or to prevent further spread.

## What should you do?

**If a student informs you that they have an infectious disease other than a common cold or seasonal flu**

It is important that you notify Student Services as soon as possible unless the student has already done so. Please contact **firstpoint**: [firstpoint4staff@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint4staff@worc.ac.uk) or 01905 542551. Student Services will then liaise with UKHSA to ensure that the University is following the correct protocols.

Advise the student that you will need to contact Student Services and share their details. Ask them not to attend any lectures in person until this has been agreed with Student Services or a medical professional. They can contact **firstpoint** directly by email: [firstpoint@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint@worc.ac.uk) or phone : 01905 542551, but should NOT visit in person.

**If a third party discloses that a student has an infectious disease**

Take as much information as possible from the person informing you; their name, the organisation they work for, their relationship to the student, contact details such as phone number etc. Relay this information to **firstpoint**: [firstpoint4staff@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint4staff@worc.ac.uk) or 01905 542551, and Student Services will investigate further.

If the student requires urgent medical attention and is on University premises, contact **University Security** on their 24/7 emergency number: 01905 855495, or via main reception on 01905 855000. Advise them of your location, your name, the name of the student and the nature of the situation. If necessary, dial 999 and request further assistance. Inform Security if emergency services are attending.

## What happens next?

Student Services will liaise directly with UKHSA. Action taken might include ascertaining who the student has come into contact with both in lectures/seminars, housemates, social encounters etc. and contacting them to alert them to the risk of infection. They will also ensure that the student receives the correct support in regards to missed lectures, assignment deadlines and returning to study once fit and well.

# When a student needs mental health or emotional support

## What might you need to know?

According to the National Union of Students, 20% of students consider themselves to have a mental health condition, which aligns with the incidence for young adults (16-24 years) in the general population. Becoming a student and navigating student life can be an added challenge for anyone living with a mental health condition, and can bring up feelings of anxiety, low mood, or worries about not fitting in. While these kinds of worries affect us all from time to time, for some students they can become overwhelming. For others, it is a life event such as a bereavement or other traumatic experience which can have a serious impact on their studies and day-to-day life. For any student who is struggling like this, the Counselling and Mental Health Service can provide expert support and guidance on managing their mental health and succeeding in their studies.

## What should you do?

When a student requires support, but is not at immediate risk

Suggest they book at STAR (Support Triage Advice Refer) via [firstpoint](#), available every weekday from 9am-4pm. The Service can also be accessed by email: [cmh@worc.ac.uk](mailto:cmh@worc.ac.uk) or phone: 01905 542832.

Advise the student that they can also access support through their GP, and that if they don't feel they can keep themselves safe at any time they should dial 999 or go to an A&E department.

If a student is not able, or willing, to engage with the Counselling and Mental Health Service STAR system, and you need advice on how to proceed

Staff can email [cmh@worc.ac.uk](mailto:cmh@worc.ac.uk) for advice, and a team member will contact you.

Outside 8.30am-4.30pm, or at weekends, you should contact University Security on their 24/7 emergency number: 01905 855495, or via main reception on 01905 855000, if you need advice quickly on a difficult situation.

If, at any time, you become aware of a student who is at imminent risk of harming themselves or others

Contact University Security on their 24/7 emergency number: 01905 855495 or main reception on 01905 855000. Advise them of your location, your name, the name of the student and the nature of the situation. If necessary, dial 999 and request further assistance. Inform Security if emergency services are attending.

If you consider yourself or others to be at risk, leave the student and vacate the area as quickly and calmly as possible. Alert Security and if necessary, dial 999 and request further assistance. Inform Security if emergency services are attending.

## What happens next?

In the STAR appointment, the student's support needs will be assessed. At this point; appropriate advice, referrals to other services, or counselling and/or mental health support will be offered. The support offered may vary depending on what types of issues the student is experiencing.

STAR appointments are usually available within 2 working days, if students can be flexible on times. There may then be a wait for a follow-up appointment, depending on what is needed, but the student will be provided with an interim plan (including helplines if necessary), and advised that they can book another STAR appointment if anything changes while they wait.

# When a student is missing

## What might you need to know?

There are lots of reasons why students may miss lectures, or be away from their accommodation, as they are independent adults, and many will have external commitments and responsibilities. The [Student Attendance Policy](#) sets out expectations for students, and the ways in which attendance will be recorded and monitored by teaching staff. This covers the processes for academic non-attendance. However, there may be circumstances where you are concerned that a student's absence may indicate a risk to their wellbeing and/or safety. These concerns may arise over a period of time (for example, if a student stops attending lectures after intermittent attendance when they have appeared sometimes unkempt or unusually distracted, and then fails to respond to any communications), or immediately (such as when classmates advise you that the student has shared disturbing messages on Whatsapp or social media, and can't be contacted). If you feel that there is genuine cause for concern over the student's welfare, this page provides guidance on what to do.

## What should you do?

If the student is not in attendance, and you have reason to be concerned but no apparent cause for immediate alarm

Email and/or phone the student. Leave a message if necessary – students may not pick up the call if they don't know the number. Advise them to contact **firstpoint** if they need any help.

Remember that most 'missing' students are quickly located, and found to be safe and well, but if in doubt contact **firstpoint** for advice.

If the student is not in attendance, and you remain concerned after you have tried and failed to contact them, but there is no apparent cause for immediate alarm

Contact **firstpoint** by phone 01905 542551

Be prepared to provide any information you have on the situation: student's name, student number, time and date of last known contact, dates and methods you used to try to get in touch

If the student is considered or reported to be missing, and there is cause for immediate concern

Contact **firstpoint** by phone 01905 542551, or Security out of hours: 01905 855495.

Be prepared to provide any information you have on the situation: student's name, student number, time and date of last known contact, any context provided by friends or housemates on possible locations etc.

If the student is thought to be at immediate risk of harm, or a threat to others

Phone Security: 01905 855495 or phone 999 and ask for Police.

If you phone for the Police, let Security know.

## What happens next?

Colleagues from Student Services, PCSOs or Security will try to contact the student. Where appropriate we may visit their accommodation or check other records and contacts. In most cases, students are found safe and well, and if any additional support is needed we will be able to put this in place for them. In a very small number of cases, it may be necessary for us to liaise with the Police. If so, we will follow their guidance and provide all the relevant information and support needed. Concerned housemates, classmates or friends of the missing student will be supported by Student Services, in liaison with Tutors and Professional Support Staff (such as Accommodation) where appropriate.



# When a student needs money advice or help with a finance enquiry

## What might you need to know?

Money is a concern for many students and can have a big impact on their academic performance and general wellbeing. The beginning and end of semesters can be particularly stressful as loans might not have been received, or money may have run out. Look out for signs of worry, a drop in performance, missed academic commitments, or even talk of leaving university, as possible clues that one of your students is struggling financially.

## What should you do?

If a student is seeking general financial information

Direct them to the Money Advice webpage: [www.worcester.ac.uk/moneyadvice](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/moneyadvice) or to [www.gov.uk/studentfinance](http://www.gov.uk/studentfinance) which is the main national website for information on loans and support with living costs.

Avoid offering financial advice yourself as rules, regulations and assistance change regularly.

If a student wants some more specific money advice

Suggest they talk to a **firstpoint** Adviser. They can do this by: phone: 01905 542551, email: [firstpoint@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint@worc.ac.uk) or by visiting the Peirson Study and Guidance Centre, St John's Campus during opening hours.

If there are specific concerns that the student wants to discuss, such as a late student loan, or outstanding debts, suggest that they bring the documents or evidence with them.

If a student has no money

Advise them to contact **firstpoint** as soon as possible. We strongly discourage students from accessing Payday loans or 'loan sharks' which can attract exorbitant interest rates and lead to a cycle of debt.

There may be a number of ways in which we can help, but be aware that emergency loans are only available in exceptional cases.

If a student is experiencing financial hardship

As long as they are a Home or EU student paying fees directly to the University, suggest that they apply for help from the University's Access to Learning ('Hardship') Fund. More details are available from **firstpoint** or from the web page, where you can also find the online application form: [www.worc.ac.uk/moneyadvice/accesstolearningfund.htm](http://www.worc.ac.uk/moneyadvice/accesstolearningfund.htm)

The fund can help undergraduate, postgraduate, part-time or full-time students studying in Worcester or at a partner college (where fees are paid to the University), and even students who have taken a temporary withdrawal from their course. Awards are based on a full assessment of the student's circumstances, and can help with unavoidable shortfalls, unexpected costs or even the cost of IT equipment for online learning.

## What happens next?

A **firstpoint** Adviser will ask the student for details of the enquiry, and provide a response where they can. However, should the student or the Adviser feel that specialist advice is required, an appointment with a Money Adviser will be made. If required, Money Advisers will liaise with external agencies such as Student Finance and benefits agencies, and can also offer students advice and information on how to budget. The student will be advised of any financial support that they may be eligible for, including the Access to Learning Fund, and help them with the application process if necessary.

# When a student is pregnant

## What might you need to know?

For many of our students, pregnancy might be part of their planned future, but for some it may be an unplanned event. They may appear distracted and anxious, they may have trouble concentrating, or their academic performance may be affected. They may also need to take frequent breaks or may find it uncomfortable to be in environments that are either very hot or cold, or around particular food or drinks. Pregnant students may also be concerned about finishing their course, and/or whether they can take a break from their studies.

## What should you do?

If a student tells you that they are pregnant

Try to remain neutral in your language and gauge how the student is feeling about the pregnancy rather than expressing your own judgement of the situation.

Be aware that, if a student is confused about how this will affect them, congratulating them or expressing empathy might influence their own decision process, or cause distress.

If a student has questions about their pregnancy and what they may need to do

There is a list of FAQs on the Student Support and Wellbeing webpage that you can refer the student to: [Information for students who are pregnant](#).

Student pregnancy and maternity: guidance for staff is available from: [Students who are pregnant - Guidance for staff](#).

If a student wants advice or support

Suggest that they contact the Student Support and Wellbeing Service. They can do this by email: [studentlife@worc.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@worc.ac.uk), or they can contact the team via [firstpoint](#) by phone: 01905 542551, email: [firstpoint@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint@worc.ac.uk) or by visiting the Peirson Study and Guidance Centre, St John's Campus during opening hours.

Some students may also want to consider additional support through the Counselling and Mental Health Service. Suggest they book a STAR appointment via [firstpoint](#), available every weekday from 9am-4pm. The Service can also be accessed by email: [cmh@worc.ac.uk](mailto:cmh@worc.ac.uk)

## What happens next?

Student Support Advisers can discuss a support plan and complete a risk assessment. They can also assist the student in accessing other support services such as the Counselling and Mental Health Service, Money Advice and the Registry Programme Advisers so that they are fully informed of their options, and the impact on their studies. Student Support Advisers can offer ongoing support throughout the period of pregnancy, ensure that all of the required risk assessments are kept up to date and provide the student with information on health and wellbeing. They can also provide advice and support for students returning to their studies and put them in touch with the Unitots Nursery if childcare is required.

# When a student needs help with their academic development or study skills

## What might you need to know?

It is not unusual for students to struggle with their studies and assignments, whether they are joining University from school or returning to study after some time. Look out for students who would benefit from skills development to achieve their academic potential. Alternatively, students may be failing assessments, struggling to complete work on time or receiving low marks or feedback, suggesting that they should seek some additional support with their academic/study skills.

## What should you do?

If a student needs help with their academic development

Suggest they contact their Personal Academic Tutor. They can find the name of their PAT on the SOLE page.

The Personal Academic Tutor role includes helping students to understand their course's approach to learning, skills development and assessment, and to reflect on their progress, identify learning needs and develop useful study strategies.

If a student is looking for 1:1 support with their academic writing

The Language Centre offers 1:1 support to all students to discuss how to improve their use of academic English in essays, reports or presentations. For more details & how to book a session, visit: [www.worcester.ac.uk/your-home/language-support](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/your-home/language-support)

The Writers in Residence support students with their writing; they can give practical, one-to-one advice on academic writing skills and/or general writing techniques. Appointments can be made via email: [rlfwriterinresidence@worc.ac.uk](mailto:rlfwriterinresidence@worc.ac.uk) or for more details visit their webpage: [www.worcester.ac.uk/your-home/academic-writers-in-residence](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/your-home/academic-writers-in-residence)

If a student is looking for study skills resources

Advise them to visit the Study Skills website: [www.worcester.ac.uk/studyskills](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/studyskills) where they can find help with reading for assignments; academic writing; managing time and workloads; online learning; stats and data; and preparing for exams.

Suggest that students take the [Quick Skills Check](#) to see what extra help they may need. The traffic lights results page includes links to help fill any gaps.

If the student has specific study needs relating to a disability, such as dyslexia

Specialist support is available for study skills needs relating to Specific Learning Difficulties (such as dyslexia or dyspraxia), autistic spectrum disorders and other disabilities.

Advise the student to contact the Disability and Dyslexia Service by phone: 01905 542551, email: [firstpoint@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint@worc.ac.uk) or by visiting [firstpoint](#).

## What happens next?

All students can access study skills support and resources throughout their period of study, at a time that is most relevant to their needs. Students needing disability related support will be offered specialist 1:1 appointments where appropriate.

# When a student is considering withdrawing from the university

## What might you need to know?

Students considering withdrawing from the university may appear anxious and distracted, less engaged with their course or peers, and may be absent from class, or miss other university commitments.

Students who say that they would like to withdraw from the university may change their mind after talking through their concerns with a Tutor or **firstpoint** Adviser. Whatever the reason for wanting to leave, and regardless of what they decide to do; it is important to ensure that they are fully informed of all of the options, implications, and available support, so they can make an informed decision that feels right for them.

## What should you do?

### If a student wants to speak to someone about their options and next steps

If possible, encourage them to talk to their Personal Academic Tutor so that any concerns about their academic programme or progress can be addressed.

Alternatively, suggest that they contact a **firstpoint** Adviser. They can do this by: phone: 01905 542551 email: [firstpoint@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint@worc.ac.uk) or by visiting the Peirson Study and Guidance Centre, St John's Campus during opening hours.

A **firstpoint** Adviser will help the student to explore any underlying issues, and provide information and support for the student to make the right decision for their circumstances. They can liaise with other services if necessary to ensure that, where possible, concerns and support needs are addressed to enable the student to continue studying.

### If a student wants to withdraw immediately

Inform them that they must complete a *Withdrawal From Study Form* online, but do remind them that support is available.

This is available from their SOLE page under the Course Change Documents tab.

## What happens next?

The **firstpoint** Adviser will listen to their reasons for wanting to leave, and suggest alternative options such as changing mode of study from full to part time, changing course, or withdrawing temporarily. They will also discuss any support needs and make referrals to other services such as **Counselling and Mental Health**, the **Chaplaincy**, or the **Student Support and Wellbeing Service** if the student says that they want to stay, but are struggling to cope. If finance is the reason for wanting to leave, a referral to **Money Advice** might be made. Money Advisers can check that the student is in receipt of all available income, can signpost to trust funds and bursaries and will advise of their eligibility for the Access to Learning ('Hardship') Fund: a non-repayable grant available to students experiencing financial difficulty. Students may also be referred to **Careers and Employability** to discuss the career implication of their course change, or if they have been struggling to find part-time work to support their studies.

If a student completes the online Withdrawal from Study form on their SOLE page, the Course Leader will be notified, and **firstpoint** will send details of the full range of support that is available.

If, after considering all their options, the student does decide to leave, **firstpoint** Advisers will confirm the decision to Registry Student Records, and the student will be asked to hand in their ID card, and room key if living in University accommodation, to **firstpoint**. They will be advised of any implications for accommodation costs, future study or funding.

# When a student needs other help, advice or support

## What might you need to know?

This Guide will be extended over time to include a range of other ways in which students are advised and supported. You may come across any number of other situations which aren't specifically covered here, but most situations can be addressed through an initial referral to **firstpoint**. Staff or students may also find it helpful to refer to the **firstpoint** webpages: [www.worcester.ac.uk/firstpoint](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/firstpoint)

## What should you do?

If a student has a general enquiry, needs support or guidance, or needs to access central services, including finance and accommodation

Advise them to contact **firstpoint** by: phone: 01905 542551, email: [firstpoint@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint@worc.ac.uk) or by visiting the Peirson Study and Guidance Centre, St John's Campus during opening hours.

Students can also get information from this web page: [www.worc.ac.uk/firstpoint/](http://www.worc.ac.uk/firstpoint/)

If a student needs medical attention

They will need to make an appointment with their GP. We recommend that students register as soon as they arrive at university, but GPs will usually provide urgent appointments if necessary. For emergencies they will need to attend A&E in Newtown Road or dial 999.

A list of local GPs can be found at: [Medical Services in Worcester pdf](#) or by visiting **firstpoint**.

Where students and/or staff are at immediate risk of harm

Contact University security on their 24/7 emergency number: 01905 855495 or main reception on 01905 855000. Advise them of your location, your name, the name of the student and the nature of the situation. If necessary, dial 999 and request further assistance. Inform Security if emergency services are attending.

If you consider yourself or others to be at risk, leave the area as quickly and calmly as possible, ensuring that others leave the area if it is safe for you to do so. Alert Security and if necessary, dial 999 and request further assistance. Inform Security if emergency services are attending.

If you need further guidance on supporting students

Contact: [firstpoint4staff@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint4staff@worc.ac.uk)

Refer to the **firstpoint** webpages: [www.worcester.ac.uk/firstpoint](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/firstpoint)



# Prevent Duty

## What might you need to know?

The Prevent Duty places a number of obligations on Universities and other educational establishments, relating to the need to '...prevent people from being drawn into terrorism...' (Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, Section 26) while upholding the principles of Academic Freedom and freedom of speech (Section 31). As an organisation, we are already proactive in supporting the wellbeing of others and raising concerns. Under this Duty we also share a responsibility to promote tolerance and positive values, and to look out for signs of potential radicalisation

To comply with Prevent duty HE providers need to (a) assess the risk associated with the Prevent Duty and draw up a plan to mitigate these (b) have effective welfare support systems, linking to DfE Prevent co-ordinators, local authorities or the police if necessary (c) have systems for assessing and mitigating risks around external speakers and events on campus, while maintaining the existing duty to promote freedom of speech (d) arrange ongoing Prevent Duty training for relevant staff (e) have an IT usage policy, and where appropriate a research policy, which cover the Prevent Duty and (f) engage with students and ensure that students' unions and societies are aware of policies concerning activities on campus.

## What should you do?

### If you are organising an event

If you are organising an event, including lectures, to which someone from outside the University is invited to speak, you need to review the proposed event and speaker against the itemised list at para 4.3 of the University's Code of Practice for the Freedom of Speech. If any of these specific items or situations are possible then the matter should be raised as set out in the code.

This can be found on the University of Worcester website, under policies: [www.worcester.ac.uk/documents/CODE\\_OF\\_PRACTICE\\_ON\\_FREEDOM\\_OF\\_SPEECH\\_-\\_final.pdf](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/documents/CODE_OF_PRACTICE_ON_FREEDOM_OF_SPEECH_-_final.pdf)

### If you have concerns about a student

Contact **firstpoint** or the Student Support and Wellbeing Service by emailing: [studentlife@worc.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@worc.ac.uk). They will be able to advise on the situation without reference to the student's name and you can then decide how to proceed.

If the concern is urgent, it should be raised with Tom Taylor, Assistant Director – Security & Operations (01905 855135 or [t.taylor@worc.ac.uk](mailto:t.taylor@worc.ac.uk)).

## What happens next?

The matter will be investigated and, if appropriate, referred to other appropriate external organisations.

# Useful Contacts

Counselling and  
Mental Health  
Service

Email: [cmh@worc.ac.uk](mailto:cmh@worc.ac.uk)

Phone: 01905 542832

Disability and  
Dyslexia Service

Email: [disability@worc.ac.uk](mailto:disability@worc.ac.uk)

Phone: 01905 855531

**firstpoint**

Peirson Study and Guidance Centre, St  
John's Campus: Open Monday to Friday  
Email (students): [firstpoint@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint@worc.ac.uk)  
Email (staff): [firstpoint4staff@worc.ac.uk](mailto:firstpoint4staff@worc.ac.uk)

Phone: 01905 542551

HOPELINEUK  
(Papyrus)

Email: [pat@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org)

Phone: 0800 068 4141

NHS

Phone: 111 (non-emergency)  
Phone: 999 (emergency)

Police

Phone: 101 (non-emergency)  
Phone: 999 (emergency)

Samaritans

Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

Phone: 01905 21121  
Or: 116 123 (free)

Student Support and  
Wellbeing Service

Email: [studentlife@worc.ac.uk](mailto:studentlife@worc.ac.uk)

University Security  
24/7

Email: [security@worc.ac.uk](mailto:security@worc.ac.uk)

Phone: 01905 855495 or main  
reception on 01905 855000

Wellbeing Support

[www2.worc.ac.uk/student-services/  
wellbeing-support.html](http://www2.worc.ac.uk/student-services/wellbeing-support.html)

Support options for students,  
24/7

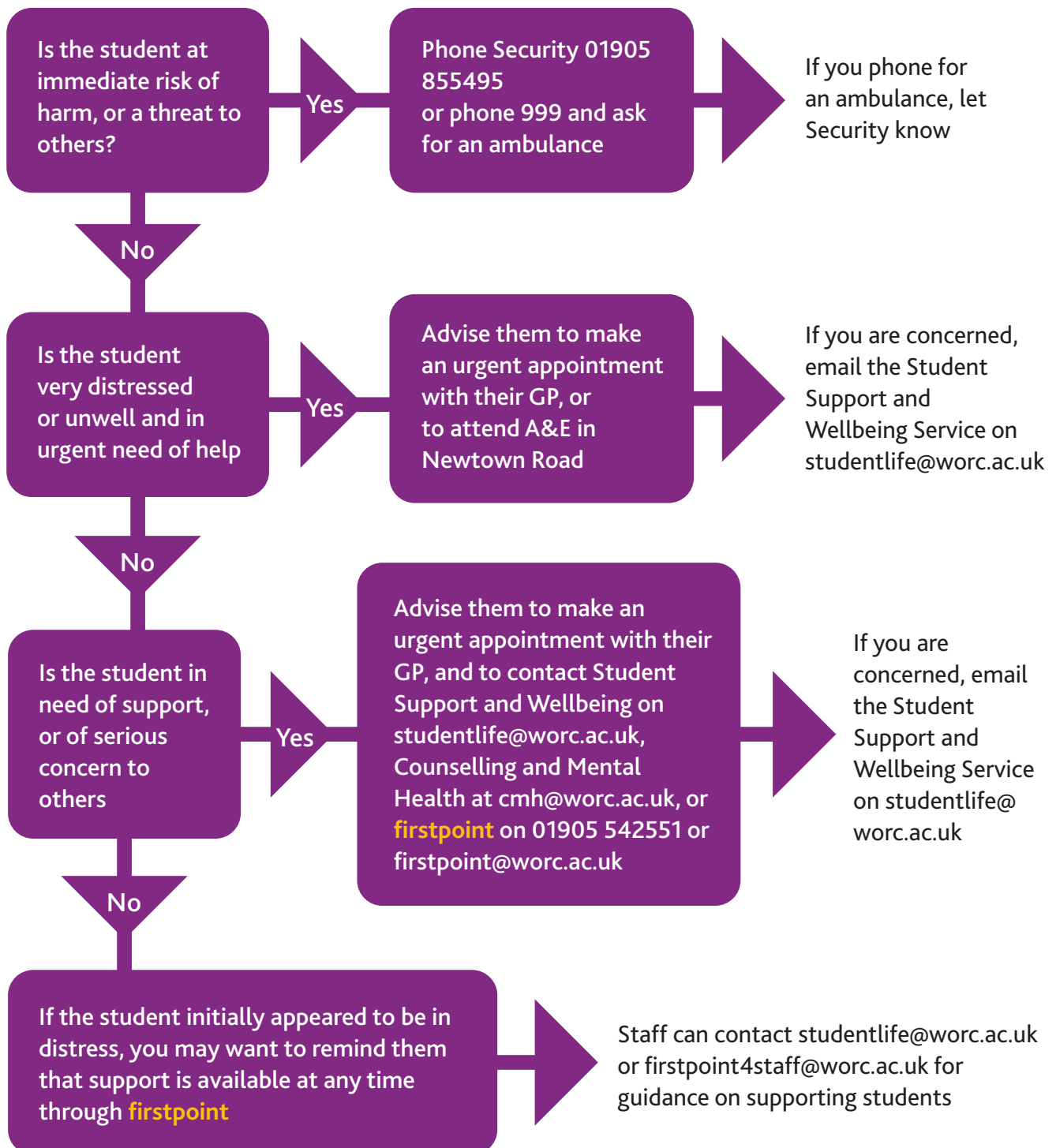
# Supporting students in distress - flowchart

## DO:

- Remain calm
- Put your safety first
- Encourage the student to access support
- Remember the boundaries of your role

## DON'T:

- Promise confidentiality - you may have to alert others in order to keep the student safe
- Take responsibility for the student's wellbeing: they have a right to make their own decisions, within a supportive environment



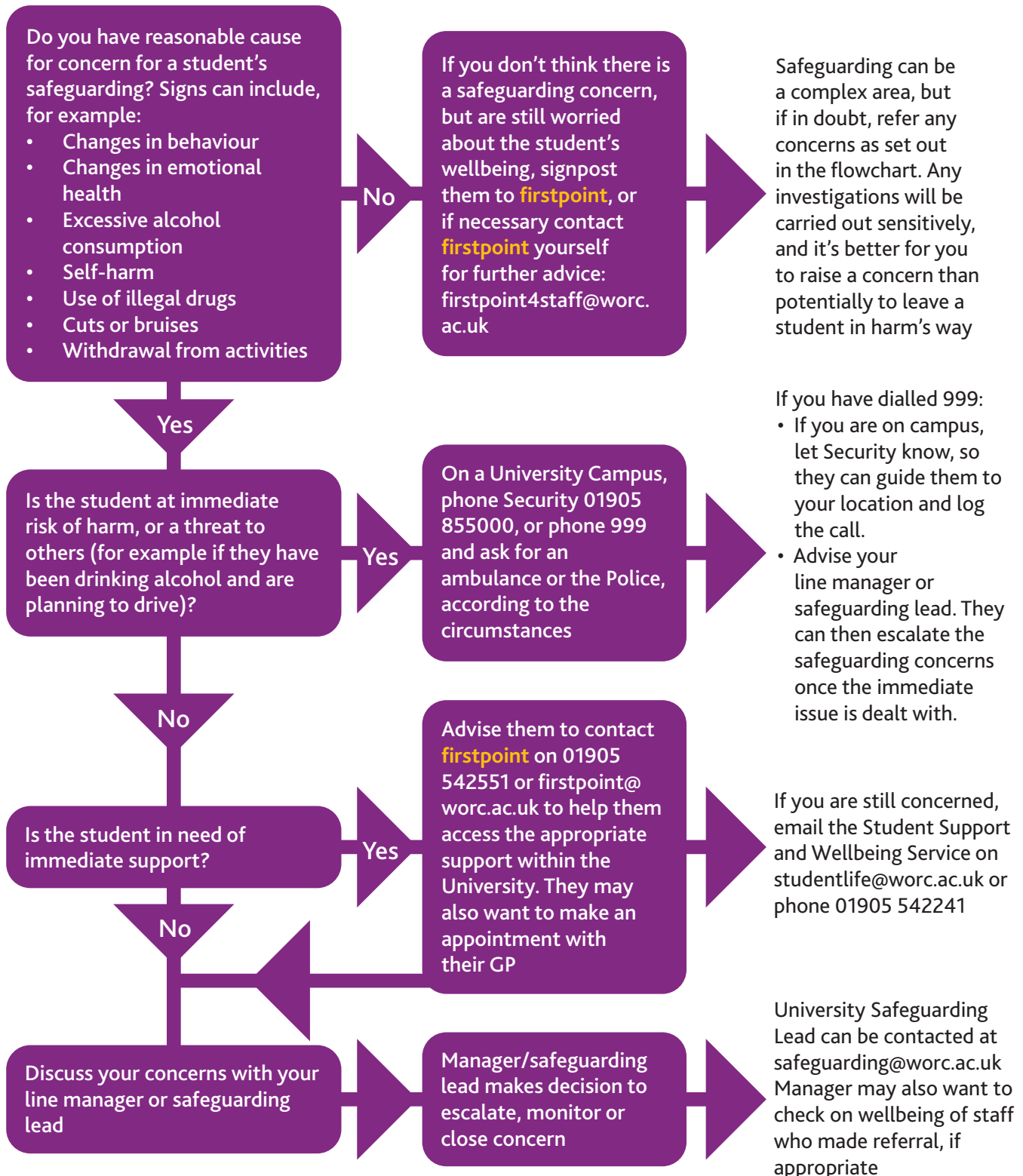
# Safeguarding students - flowchart

## DO:

- Remain calm
- Put your safety first
- Ask for advice or escalate concerns where necessary
- Familiarise yourself with the Safeguarding Policy [www.worcester.ac.uk/documents/policies/SGPOLICY.pdf](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/documents/policies/SGPOLICY.pdf)

## DON'T:

- Promise confidentiality – you may have to alert others in order to keep the student safe
- Assume that the signs below always point to a safeguarding concern: take the whole situation into account



# Support for Staff

## What might you need to know?

In order to support our students, we must all take care of our own mental health and wellbeing. Whatever your role in the University, you may be called on to offer emotional support to a student, or to listen to their problem, concern or emergency. On occasion, this can be challenging and distressing, so please take time to look after yourself and ensure that you keep your internal batteries charged!

## What should you do?

### To take care of yourself

Familiarise yourself with the Services, support and referral options summarised in this Guide, and set yourself some clear boundaries which are appropriate for your role. Be aware of how you are feeling day to day, and build in some strategies to maintain your balance. Maybe you need to stop for a coffee, walk the University Mile at lunchtime, or have a conversation with a colleague? Take a look at the wellbeing information on the University's website for more tools, techniques and tips.

These links may be useful:

Health and Wellbeing:

[www.worcester.ac.uk/life/help-and-support/health-and-wellbeing/](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/life/help-and-support/health-and-wellbeing/)

Sustainability - Health and Wellbeing:

[www.worcester.ac.uk/about/sustainability/what-we-do/health-and-wellbeing.aspx](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/about/sustainability/what-we-do/health-and-wellbeing.aspx)

### To ask for help from others

It is important to ask for help if you need it. You may feel able to talk to a colleague initially, or ask for support from your line manager. There are also external organisations and resources that may help. In addition, the University provides an option for you to self-refer to our Employee Assistance Programme, PAM Assist. This is a free and confidential support service available 24/7 through the website or by phone. The service provides advice and assistance on any issue that is troubling you, and counselling is available if appropriate.

Signposting to external resources is available here:

<https://www2.worc.ac.uk/personnel/959.htm>

the PAM Assist website is:

[www.pamassist.co.uk](http://www.pamassist.co.uk)

and you can log in with the generic details:

Username: uniofworc1

Password: staff

or you can access support by phone:

0800 882 4102

You don't need to give your name - just say you are employed by the University of Worcester to access the service.

## What happens next?

Self-referrals to PAM Assist are confidential. You can access the service whenever you need it.



Internal use only - Guide for University of Worcester staff

Available online at:

<https://www.worcester.ac.uk/documents/signposting-student-support-guide-for-university-staff.pdf>



University  
of Worcester

Student Services