COURTAULD

The Courtauld Institute of Art
Suicide Prevention Strategy 2026–27

Contents

1. Introduction....1
2. Scope and purpose....1
3. Principles....2
4. Prevention....2
5. Early identification and referral....3
6. Intervention and Support....4
7. Postvention....4
8. Governance and Oversight....5
9. Related Policies and Resources....5

1. Introduction

The Courtauld Institute of Art recognises the importance of suicide prevention as part of its commitment to promoting the health, wellbeing, and safety of all Courtauld students. Suicide is a complex and sensitive issue that affects individuals and communities and the Courtauld is committed to fostering a compassionate, supportive, and proactive environment to reduce suicide risk and intervene effectively when concerns arise.

This strategy sets out the Institute's approach to preventing suicide, identifying and supporting students at risk, and responding to serious incidents in a coordinated and caring manner. It operates alongside the Courtauld's Support to Study Policy, Wellbeing Service Framework, Safeguarding Policy, and Student Wellbeing Strategy.

2. Scope and purpose

This strategy applies to all students enrolled at the Courtauld (undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research), and can be extended to include students transitioning into (applicants) and out of (leavers) the institute as deemed appropriate.

The Courtauld recognises that suicidal thoughts can be common, especially among young people, and many factors can lead to a person feeling suicidal, but heightened risk is often short-term and brought on in relation to a specific situation. We recognise the part the Institute can play in both fostering a culture and environment which promotes positive mental health, and which minimises the likelihood that suicidal thinking can be brought about due to the stresses associated with studying. We also recognise that preventing suicide is the responsibility of the whole Institute and requires a coordinated effort from stakeholders across the Courtauld.

3. Principles

This strategy has been devised to meet the standards set out in the following initiatives:

- Universities UK suicide safe universities
- University UK stepchange: mentally healthy universities
- Student Minds – Mental health charter

The Courtauld recognises that many people who take their own life are unknown to mental health services and is therefore committed to taking a whole university approach to student mental health to reduce the risk of suicide. We believe that creating a supportive and inclusive culture that reduces stigma surrounding mental health and suicidal feelings, and encourages help-seeking behavior, alongside early identification of, and support for students experiencing suicidal feelings can help reduce the transition from suicidal thought to action.

We believe that steps can be taken to reduce the impact that institutional systems and structures can have on a student's mental health, that it is important to have clear processes to guide staff on how to intervene when concerns are raised, as well as having robust mechanisms for reacting quickly and effectively in the event of a suicide attempt or student death resulting from suicide.

Our strategy adopts the University UK's approach to preventing suicide by considering the following areas:

- Prevention
- Intervention
- Postvention

4. Prevention - Environment

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death among young people in the UK and it is a complex and nuanced topic with many factors leading to a person taking their own life.

We acknowledge that suicidal thoughts are common, often short-term, and occur in relation to specific circumstances. By considering the environmental factors which increase mental distress; acknowledging the situations and behaviors which increase risk; and recognising the groups most likely to experience thoughts of suicide, we can take steps to prevent the transition from suicidal thoughts, to creating a plan and attempting suicide. These steps include:

- Working towards a whole university approach to improving student mental health as described in Student Minds Mental Health Charter and UUKs Stepchange, Mentally Healthy Universities.

Steps will be taken via the following channels to continually review institutional systems and practices to both risk assess their potential impact on students' mental health and benchmark against the Mental Health Charter:

- Health, safety and wellbeing committee
- Teaching and learning committee & the associated assessment working group
- Review of student feedback via NSS, PRES & PTES and Student's Union

5. Prevention - Early identification and referral for at risk students

Early identification and support for students with mental health, academic and other wellbeing related difficulties can help reduce their distress and avoid suicidal thinking. Early signs of difficulty include:

- Drops in attendance
- Late or non-submission of coursework
- Unusual or concerning behavior
- Lack of engagement with other staff or students

To help tackle these, we will work towards:

- Developing regular Students of Concern meetings involving relevant stakeholders from across the institute, including Wellbeing, Programme Administration, Senior Tutors or other relevant faculty staff, accommodation.

- Ensuring student facing staff are trained to identify early signs of mental health difficulties and have a clear process through which concerns can be reported to Student Wellbeing or other relevant services.
- Ensuring students and staff are aware of the support available both within and outside The Courtauld, and how to access it.
- Supporting teaching staff to follow the Support to Study process where wellbeing concerns are present and consult with the Wellbeing Service for guidance when required

Where there is a known immediate risk, staff will follow the Supporting Students in Distress process and if required, contact emergency services on 999 and notify Wellbeing Manager immediately

6. Intervention and Support

When a student is identified as experiencing suicidal thoughts or is believed to be at risk, The Wellbeing Service will coordinate support from both internal departments, such as academic staff or Programme Administration, as well as external services, such as GPs, NHS mental health crisis support, or any other appropriate service. Support may include:

- Safety planning with the student and regular wellbeing check-ins
- Liaison with the GPs, NHS crisis teams or other appropriate professionals such as medical teams already engaged with the individual
- Academic adjustments via Summary of Reasonable Adjustments (SoRAs) to support with studies

Where necessary, the Support to Study policy may be invoked to ensure a supportive and structured approach to managing a student's ability to continue studying safely.

The level of risk will be monitored within the wellbeing service in consultation with the student, relevant staff members and external services, and amendments to the safety plan will made as required.

7. Postvention

In the event of a student death by suicide, The Courtauld will activate its major incident response. The response will be coordinated by the Academic Registrar in consultation with the student's family, Student Wellbeing Manager Senior Management Team, Head of People's Services, Head of Facilities, Head of Marketing and Communications, and relevant faculty staff.

Roles and responsibilities during the response are as follows:

Owner of response	Member of SMT as per Major Incident flowchart
Lead on overall response	Academic Registrar
Family liaison	Student Wellbeing Manager
Student liaison & support	Student Wellbeing Manager & relevant academic staff (Head of Department/Head of Programme/Senior Tutor) Supported by Head of Marketing & Communications
Staff liaison:	Head of Marketing & Communications, Peoples' Services & Head of Department • Academic staff • Student and Academic Support • Gallery • Accommodation
Reporting to relevant authorities and local health authorities	Student Wellbeing Manager
Media communications	Head of Marketing & Communications
Memorials and legacy of the deceased	Student Wellbeing Manager, Students' Union & Head of Department

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A serious incident review will be conducted in line with The Courtauld's serious incident procedure.

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8. Governance and Oversight

- A member of SMT will oversee the implementation and review of this strategy
- An annual suicide prevention report will be presented to the Health Safety and Wellbeing Committee
- The policy will be reviewed biennially or in response to serious incidents

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9. Related Policies and Resources

- Support to Study Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Student Wellbeing Framework
- Student Code of Conduct
- Office for Students (OfS) guidance on Suicide Prevention

- PAPYRUS HOPELINEUK (0800 068 4141)
- Samaritans (116 123)
- Shout Crisis Text Line (Text ‘SHOUT’ to 85258)

Approved by: Health Safety and Wellbeing Committee
Policy Owner: Student Wellbeing Manager
Review Date: May 2026