

## Bereavement/Illness Notification Procedure

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Cornerstone University desires to proactively serve the members of our student community who may be facing seasons of serious illness, injury, emotional/psychological distress or bereavement. In these difficult situations our goals are to:

- Reflect biblical compassion as we “grieve with those who grieve,”
- Extend biblical comfort and concern to the student and their family,
- Facilitate effective communication among campus constituencies,
- Assess and implement ongoing care and support for the student’s physical, emotional, spiritual, and academic growth.

Effectively accomplishing these goals necessitates the input and involvement of numerous parties across the campus – Community Life staff, members of the faculty, coaches, campus employers, and others. Clear processes and a central communication/connection point for students will equip us to better serve the students and to ensure consistency in our care. This document serves to outline:

- Handbook and/or catalog copy (as a means of communicating the process to students)
- Our procedure, outlining roles and reporting responsibilities.

Handbook Copy:

### *Section 1 - Information – Emergency, Medical, and Bereavement Absences*

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Students dealing with illness, injury, bereavement, or other situations necessitating an extended absence from Cornerstone are encouraged to contact the Office of Spiritual Formation for assistance. A communication plan will be implemented, ensuring that various campus constituencies (faculty, health services, counseling services, community life personnel) are apprised of essential information regarding the student’s absence without compromising confidentiality. Additionally, the network accessed by Spiritual Formation will be equipped to address ongoing medical needs, counseling, and pastoral care as necessary.

Academic issues (including completion of missed assignments, tests, exams, and course material) must be coordinated by the student with their professors and instructors. The Director of Retention and the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education are available for assistance.

If the situation necessitates a withdrawal from the university students should contact the Director of Retention to coordinate the appropriate paperwork.

#### **For More Information/Contact Details:**

Spiritual Formation: 616/222-1423 or [spiritual.formation@cornerstone.edu](mailto:spiritual.formation@cornerstone.edu)

Counseling Services: 616/254-1650 (x1239) or [counseling.services@cornerstone.edu](mailto:counseling.services@cornerstone.edu)

Health Services: 616/254-1650 (x1441) or [health.services@cornerstone.edu](mailto:health.services@cornerstone.edu)

Associate Provost: 616/254-1650 (x1252) or [tim.detwiler@cornerstone.edu](mailto:tim.detwiler@cornerstone.edu)

Director of Retention: 616/254-1650 (x1402) or [kay.landrum@cornerstone.edu](mailto:kay.landrum@cornerstone.edu)

# Communication Model/Flowchart

1. Individual (faculty member, staff member, student) becomes aware of a student situation:

- Significant illness or injury to student
- Significant emotional trauma
- Bereavement issue (death in the student's family)



2. Individual provides immediate care, concern for the student.

- Personal comfort, encouragement
- Seek consultation with Spiritual Formation leadership for appropriate assessment and referral (Health Services, Counseling Services, pastoral care, logistical support)
- Information about communication process (let the student know that there's a process in place to serve them and to facilitate communication).



3. Individual contacts Spiritual Formation (SF) representative.

Key Values:

- Accuracy
- Discretion
- Confidentiality (HIPAA, FERPA)



4. SF representative contacts student, shares next steps.

- Lets the student know that they are willing to serve as the primary communication link (student is still welcome to be in direct contact with other campus stakeholders, but the intent is to help ease student communication concerns)
- Updates the student on verification steps (see below) and provides contact details
- Collects basic information on student plans/needs



4a. Medical Issue

- Health Services is collection point for medical records
- Health Services assesses ongoing care needs for the student
- Health Services provides info on "return to class" date



4b. Emotional/Psych Issue

- Counseling Services serves as collection point for records
- Counseling Services assesses ongoing care needs for the student
- Counseling Services provides info on "return to class" date



4c. Bereavement Issue

- Community Life/SF staff (or campus representative) gets info from the student
- Provides info on an estimated "return to class" date



5. SF representative provides confidential, basic update to campus constituencies.

- No information about medical, psychological diagnoses
- Anticipated return date for the student
- No statement of “excused/unexcused” absence – simply an informational update. Absence policies and implications are determined by instructors/professors and catalog policy.



5a. Faculty contact

- Student’s current professors and instructors
- Student’s academic advisor
- Associate Provost
- Director of Retention



5b. SF/Community Life staff

- Resident Director
- Community Life Coordinator
- Director of Residential Life
- Other staff as necessary for pastoral care



5c. Other Campus Reps as necessary

- Coaches
- Campus Employers
- Cabinet (if potential media involvement or if a “university-wide” response is appropriate)
- Center for Student Success (CSS)



6. Continued input provided to the SF representative.

- Updates from the student
- Updates from Health Center or Counseling Center (primarily just “return to campus” dates)
- Updates from other campus parties



7. Updates from the SF representative, referral to other campus parties for ongoing care.



7a. Academic Issues

- Profs/Instructors work w/ student for missed assignments and assessments.
- Director of Retention and/or CSS provide input
- Assoc. Provost assesses completion times



7b. Health/Wellness Issues

- Health Services implements plan for ongoing medical support
- Counseling Services implements plan for ongoing emotional support
- CARE teams used if necessary



7c. Community Issues

- Community Life team facilitates transition back into community
- SF representatives facilitate/implement ongoing pastoral care