

Policies and Procedures

Policy Title	AUBH Code Orange & Code Red : Mental Health Crisis Response & High-Risk Incident Reporting Policy	Policy Number	131
Section	Governance, Organization, General Information	Approval Date	8 June 2026
Subsection	General Policies (Campus wide)	Authorizing Entity	Board of Trustees
Responsible Office	Student Affairs	Effective Date	9 June 2026
Distributed To	All Employees	Next Review Date	After 2 years

1.0 Purpose

To ensure proactive and timely intervention when a student expresses intent to harm themselves or others. The goal is to reduce risk, provide support, and ensure safety within 24 hours, while respecting ethical responsibilities and confidentiality standards.

2.0 Scope & Applicability

This policy applies to all AUBH staff and faculty who become aware of a student expressing self-harm thoughts or thoughts to harm others. It governs the reporting and response process for:

- **Code Red** – *Imminent Risk*: Student is in immediate danger of acting on self-harm or harm to others.
- **Code Orange** – *High Risk, Non-Imminent*: Student expresses intent to harm themselves or somebody else but denies immediate plan or action.

The AUBH Counseling Center operates under NHRA's (National Health Regulatory Authority) Incidents/Adverse Events Reporting Policy (2018) for clinical safety and documentation standards.

3.0 Regulatory and Ethical Basis

While AUBH is not a licensed healthcare facility under NHRA, this policy draws upon NHRA's *Incidents/Adverse Events Reporting Policy (2018)* and international mental-health professional ethics standards to ensure safe, ethical, and coordinated crisis response.

Licensed practitioners at AUBH remain individually accountable to NHRA standards in their professional conduct, documentation, and incident management.

4.0 Definitions

Code **Red** – Imminent Risk

Declared when a student is at immediate risk of possibly acting on homicidal or suicidal thoughts (e.g., has a plan, intent, and means to act).

Immediate actions include contacting emergency services (999) and the university's Health & Safety Team.

Code **Orange** – High Risk, Non-Imminent

Declared when a student expresses thoughts of harming themselves or others, but denies immediate intent or plan to act abruptly, and is judged to be at elevated but not imminent risk.

Requires rapid intervention and follow-up within 24 hours to assess and mitigate risk.

5.0 Initial Response

1. **Stay Calm & Listen**

- Validate the concern, avoid judgment, and keep the student engaged.
- Do not make promises of absolute confidentiality — explain that you may need to involve professionals if safety is at risk.

2. **Ensure Safety**

- Confirm that the student is not left alone if they are emotionally unstable.
- Remove access to unsafe materials if present.
- If at any point the student indicates intent, means, or a plan to act imminently, the situation is automatically escalated to Code Red and emergency services (999) are contacted immediately.

3. **Refer Immediately**

- Contact the **AUBH Counseling Center** or **Dean of Students** immediately after identifying a Code Orange or Code Red situation.
- If the risk escalates and seems immediate (Code Red), also notify the Health & Safety Team (campus security) of the concern.

Additional Safety Consideration (Threats Toward Others):

If a student expresses thoughts or plans to harm a specific individual or group, immediate steps must be

taken to assess and protect the safety of the identified party. This includes notifying the **Dean of Students** and **Health & Safety Team** without delay, coordinating protective measures as appropriate, reaching out to the student(s) to check in, and escalating to Code Red and emergency services if the risk becomes imminent.

6.0 Reporting Protocol (Within 24 Hours)

1. **Staff/Faculty Identifying Concern:** Inform Student Affairs of the case.
2. **Counseling Center:** Initiate outreach and check-in within 24 hours (phone call, email, or in-person attempt).
 - If student responds, conduct a **risk assessment**.
 - If student does not respond, document the attempt, repeat outreach within the same 24-hour window, and notify appropriate reporting channels.
 - If the student lives alone, attempt immediate contact (within 24 hours) and notify authorities
3. **Dean of Students:** Notify university President.
4. **Follow-Up:** Counselor initiates ongoing support, monitoring, and referrals as needed.

If needed, faculty and staff will receive appropriate training to ensure preparedness on recognizing warning signs of psychological distress, appropriate referral procedures, and the ethical handling of disclosures - particularly on balancing confidentiality with the duty to protect. Clear referral pathways and response procedures will be outlined in university faculty/staff manuals through their respective Handbooks as quick-reference guides to ensure consistency and preparedness in managing Code Orange and Code Red cases.

7.0 Reporting Channels

For Code Orange and Code Red cases, escalation may involve the following, depending on severity and immediacy:

1. **Internal University Channels:**
 - AUBH Counseling Center
 - Dean of Students
 - Health & Safety Team
 - President (for high-risk or unresolved cases)
2. **External / Regulatory Channels (as appropriate):**
 - Emergency Services (999) for imminent risk (Code Red)
 - National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA) — for licensed practitioners and serious incidents
 - Child Protection Directorate (for minors at significant risk)
 - External mental health professionals or crisis hotlines (with student consent if adult)

Staff should use judgment in determining the appropriate channel, considering the student's age, risk level, and legal obligations.

8.0 Check-In Initiation Model

- **Initial Contact:**
"We heard you may be going through a difficult time. We'd like to check in to see how we can support you. Please let us know a time that works for you."
- **Multiple Attempts:**
 At least two outreach attempts (different formats if possible: email, phone, text if permissible).
- **Escalation if Silence Persists:**
 - If no response within 24 hours, report to appropriate channels.
 - Depending on the student's age and situation, options include contacting external mental health professionals, family (if legally/ethically permissible), or relevant authority.

9.0 Age-Specific Response Considerations

- **Students 21 or over:**
 - Considered adults for consent purposes. Outreach, counseling, and safety planning occur directly with the student.
 - Family/guardian notification is optional, only pursued with student consent unless required by law or imminent risk.
 - External reporting (if required) is done to mental health authorities or emergency services, not family, unless escalation is necessary.
- **Students under 21:**
 - Considered minors. Parental/guardian involvement is generally required for risk management and safety planning.
 - Counseling sessions and outreach are coordinated with parent/guardian when appropriate and legally permitted.
 - External reporting may include authorities such as the mental health authorities, emergency services (999) or Child Protection Directorate (998) - depending on severity.

10.0 Intervention & Safety Measures

- **Counseling Response:**
 - Comprehensive risk assessment covering intent, means, and protective factors.
 - Develop a written safety plan or agreement with the student.
 - Schedule follow-up counseling sessions.
- **Family/Guardian Notification:** If appropriate and legally/ethically permitted.
- **Academic & Social Support:**

- Temporary academic flexibility if stress contributes to risk or vice versa. The student's faculty members and the Dean of the College they are enrolled in will be contacted to coordinate necessary academic accommodation and ensure the student's continued progress and safety.
- Link to peer support, tutoring, or external mental health professionals as appropriate.

Ethics & Confidentiality

- The university has a primary ethical duty to protect life and prevent harm.
- Confidentiality will be maintained except when disclosure is required to protect the student or others from serious harm.
- Only those directly involved in the response (Counselor, Dean of Students, Security, Health & Safety, designated leadership) will be informed.
- Faculty and peers are not to be informed unless essential to safety.
- Students will be informed whenever possible about what information will be shared, with whom, and why.
- Sensitive details will not be included in broader leadership reports — only risk level and actions taken.
- Students will be treated with dignity; interventions will avoid labeling, punitive measures, or stigma.
- The student has the right to decline services, but the university has a duty of care to attempt reasonable follow-up.
- Outreach should frame counseling as supportive, not disciplinary.
- Confidentiality remains in effect even when students do not respond; information must be handled with discretion. Escalation is permitted only through official health and safety channels when risk cannot be determined.

Documentation & Accountability

- All incidents must be logged.
- **Documentation includes:**
 - Student statements (direct quotes if possible).
 - Staff response and referral steps.
 - Counseling assessment outcomes.
 - Safety plan details.
- **Confidential Record Management:**
All Code Orange and Code Red documentation must be stored securely, consistent with NHRA record-keeping standards. Records are retained and reviewed only by authorized personnel.
- **Annual Review:**
AUBH Health & Safety team and President's Council may review cases and policy every two years, while the University Council will review them annually. For quality improvement purposes, findings from the annual review aim to ensure intervention consistency and ethical handling.

POLICY HISTORY			
Date of Last Action	Action Taken/Changes	Authorizing Entity	Effective Date
8 June 2026	The first version of the Report was approved	BoT	9 June 2026