

# Missing Person Policy

## Policy Statement

Every student who resides in on-campus housing shall have the option to identify a confidential individual to be contacted within 24 hours of the determination that the student is missing in accordance with the procedures outlined below. Only authorized campus officials and law enforcement officers in furtherance of a missing person investigation may have access to this information.

## Reason for Policy

In accordance with Section 485 of the Higher Education Act (HEA), every institution of higher education that provides on-campus housing must provide a missing student notification policy for those students residing in on-campus housing.

## Organizations or Persons to Whom a Report should be made

The organization or persons to which individuals should report a student as missing includes: residence hall directors, Residence Life, Housing and Dining Services, Office of Student Conduct, Dean of Students Office, Safety and Transportation, and the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

## Procedure for Informing Students

During the first floor meeting of the fall semester, RAs will cover confidential contact information with students. During the first week of the spring semester, the RA will meet with all new students to provide missing person policy information. Written information describing the process of submitting the confidential contact will be included along with the form for students to complete. Students can submit the form at the front desk of their residence hall at which time a date will be placed on the form. A file will be kept in each residence hall director's office until the beginning of the next academic year when the forms will be shredded. Students can change the information on their form at any time by asking for a new form at the front desk. The new form will be placed in the file, and the old form will be shredded.

## Procedure for Determining if a Student is Missing

If a student is reported missing to a Residence Life, Housing and Dining Services staff member, the staff member should be sure to obtain the reporting person's name, relationship to the student, and contact information where the reporting person can be reliably reached. The staff member should obtain local directory information about the missing student and immediately notify the missing student's residence hall director or the staff member on call.

The hall director should refer to the Reported Missing Student Checklist and contact the reporting person to obtain the additional information needed. **If the hall director determines at any point that there is a credible threat to the well-being of the student reported as missing, the hall director should call and request Springfield Police assistance and make a report to supervisory staff.** The hall director should then proceed to contact known student friends/relationships, beginning with roommates/suitemates, and the missing student's resident assistant. The hall director should also use direct and indirect methods of leaving messages for the student to make contact immediately. The purpose at this point is to determine if the student is truly missing or has simply failed to make the desired contact with the reporting person. If the

student is located or is determined not to be missing, the student should be advised to contact the reporting person. The hall director may also contact the reporting person and relay that the student is not missing and has been asked to contact the reporting person.

If pursuing known contacts has not yielded confirmation that the student is not missing, the hall director should contact an assistant director and the Dean of Students, reporting all obtained information, and follow verbal notification with an *Incident Report (IR)*. The assistant director or Dean of Students may then authorize one or more of the following measures to determine recent activity by the student reported as missing:

- Building card access report
- Meal plan utilization
- Mailbox activity
- Class attendance
- In-plain-sight examination of room to see signs of recent use or planned departure

If the results of these activity measures suggest that the student is indeed missing and unaccounted for, the Dean of Students or designee will immediately notify the Director of Safety and Transportation and request law enforcement investigation. All information obtained about the missing student through the Residence Life, Housing and Dining Services investigation should be shared with Safety and Transportation and law enforcement representatives. The Director of Safety and Transportation is responsible for notification of the missing student's identified contact if the student has been missing for 24 hours. If the student is under 18 years of age and not an emancipated individual (by court order, no longer under the control or responsibility of parents), the Director of Safety and Transportation shall immediately contact the custodial parent or guardian.

#### Procedure for Notification of Missing Student

If Safety and Transportation officials determine that a student for whom a missing person report has been filed has been missing for 24 hours, then within the next 24 hours, they must:

- Notify the individual identified by the student to be contacted in this circumstance,
- If the student is under 18 years old, notify a custodial parent/guardian and any other designated contact person, and
- Notify law enforcement.

The above procedures do not preclude University officials from making a determination that a student is missing before the student has been missing for a full 24 hours or initiating notification procedures as soon as it determines that the student is missing.

#### Entities Affected by this Policy

Vice President for Student Affairs, Dean of Students, Residence Life, Housing and Dining Services, Registrar, Safety and Transportation, and General Counsel

#### Line of Authority

Responsible Administrator and Office: Residence Life, Housing and Dining Services, Dean of Students, Safety and Transportation

Contact Person in that Office: Director of Residence Life, Housing and Dining Services, Associate Dean of Student, Director of Safety and Transportation