

St. Cloud State University - Missing Student Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for the University's response to reports of a missing student, as required by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.

This University policy applies to students who reside in University operated residence halls and apartments.

For purposes of this policy, a student may be considered to be a "*missing student*" if the person's absence is contrary to his/her usual pattern of behavior and unusual circumstances may have caused the absence. Such circumstances could include a reasonable/reliable report or suspicion that the missing student may be endangered. Examples include, but are not limited to, possible victim of foul play, expression of suicidal thoughts, alcohol or other drug abuse, a life-threatening situation, or recent contact with persons who may endanger the student's welfare.

I. Procedures for designation of emergency contact information

a. Students age 18 and above and emancipated minors.

Residential students will be given the opportunity upon check in to a University operated residence hall/apartment, to designate an individual or individuals to be contacted by the University no more than 24 hours after the time that the student is determined to be missing in accordance with the procedures set forth below. A designation will remain in effect until changed or revoked by the student.

b. Students under the age of 18.

In the event a student who is not emancipated is determined to be missing pursuant to the procedures set forth below, the University is required to notify a custodial parent or guardian no more than 24 hours after the student is determined to be missing in accordance with the procedures set forth below.

II. Official notification procedures for missing students

a. Any individual who has information that a student may be missing must notify the Public Safety Department as soon as possible. Note: In order to avoid jurisdictional conflicts, the Public Safety Department will immediately notify local law enforcement authorities. The Public Safety Department will assist external authorities with these investigations as requested.

b. The Public Safety Department will work with campus offices, the reporting person(s) and the student's acquaintances to gather all essential information about the student. (description, clothes last worn, where student might be, who student might be with, vehicle description, information about the student's physical and mental well being, an up-to-date photograph, class schedule, etc.). Appropriate campus staff will be notified to aid in the search for the student.

c. If the above actions are unsuccessful in locating the student or it is apparent

immediately that the student may be endangered (e.g., witnessed abduction), the Public Safety Department will contact the appropriate local law enforcement agency to report the student as a missing person and the local law enforcement agency will take charge of the investigation.

d. No later than 24 hours after determining that a student is missing, the Vice President for Student Life and Development, or designee, will notify the emergency contact (for students 18 and over) or the parent/guardian (for students under the age of 18) that the student is believed to be missing.

e. For missing students who are 18 years of age or older, and did not designate an individual to be contacted, the Dean of Students will act in accordance with FERPA and Minnesota Government Data Privacy guidelines with regard to contacting a parent/guardian.

III. Campus communications about missing students

In cases involving missing persons, law enforcement personnel are trained to provide information to the media in a manner designed to elicit public assistance in the search for a missing person. Therefore, all communications regarding missing students will be handled by outside law enforcement authorities, who may consult with the University Communications Office. All inquiries to the University regarding missing students, or information provided to any individual at the University about a missing student, shall be referred to the Public Safety Department, who shall refer such inquiries and information to law enforcement authorities.

Prior to providing the University community with any information about a missing student, the University Communications Office shall consult with the Public Safety Department, local law enforcement authorities, and the Office of Student Life and Development to ensure that communications comply with FERPA and Minnesota Government Data Privacy guidelines and do not hinder the investigation.

Adopted by President's Council, August 2009
Revised, June 2010