

MISSING STUDENT PROCEDURE

The purpose of this procedure 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 procedure applies to students who reside in University operated residence halls and apartments.

For purposes of this procedure, a student may be considered to be a "missing student" if the student'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 possible victim of foul play
- Expression of suicidal thoughts
- A documented, current pattern of continued substance abuse
- A life-threatening situation
- Recent contact with persons who may endanger the student's welfare

Procedures for Designation of Emergency Contact Information

1. 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 within 24 hours of the time 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.
2. 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.
3. All information in parts a. and b. above will be treated in accordance with applicable data privacy laws.

Official Notification Procedures for Missing Students

1. A person who has information that a student may be missing is expected to notify the SMSU Department of Public Safety as soon as possible. SMSU Staff and Faculty are required to notify the SMSU Department of Public Safety of a missing student as soon possible.
2. The SMSU Department of Public Safety will work with campus offices, the reporting person(s) and the student's acquaintances to gather all essential information about the student (for example: 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.
3. 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 SMSU Department of Public Safety 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. The SMSU Department of Public Safety will assist external authorities with these investigations as requested.

4. No later than 24 hours after determining that a student is missing, the Dean of Students, 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.
5. 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 family members.

Campus Communications About Missing Students

Before any information regarding a missing student is disseminated, the University Relations Office shall consult with the SMSU Department of Public Safety, local law enforcement authorities, and the Dean of Students to ensure that communications comply with FERPA and Minnesota Government Data Privacy guidelines and do not hinder the investigation.

Once a student is determined to be missing and local law enforcement authorities have been notified, all communications regarding missing students will be handled by outside law enforcement authorities, who may consult with the University Relations Office.