

Missing Students

MISSING STUDENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for the College's response to reports of a missing student, as required by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008. This college policy applies to students who reside in college 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 their 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:

- At the beginning of each fall semester, all Cloud County Community College students who will be residing in college owned residence life facilities will be notified of the opportunity to designate an individual or individuals to be contacted by the college 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 college 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 Vice President of Student Services or the Coordinator of Residence Life as soon as possible.

B. The Residence Life Coordinator and/or Vice President of Student Services 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. The campus staff will take steps to try to locate the missing student, including but not limited to the following:

- Call student's cell phone
- Send residence assistant, housing maintenance personnel, or housing coordinator to student's room
- Contact roommate(s)
- Look for student's car on campus
- Check student locator report for class schedule
- Access reports to determine the last time they used a meal card, library card, or fitness center
- Try to get student's work schedule
- Contact faculty regarding student's last date of attendance in class
- Call student's home number
- Request that Informational Technology Services check electronic logs to determine the student's last log into computer network systems

If the above actions are unsuccessful in locating the student or it is apparent immediately that the student may be endangered, the following personnel will meet to determine that the student is missing:

- Vice President for Administrative Services
- Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Vice President for Student Services
- Director of Auxiliary Services
- Coordinator of Residence Life
- Campus Security

D. No later than 24 hours after determining that a student is missing, the following will take place:

- The Vice President for Administrative Services 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. College personnel will assist external authorities with these investigations as requested.
- The Vice President for Academic Affairs, 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. For missing students who are 18 years of age or older, and did not designate an individual to be contacted, Vice President for Academic Affairs, or designee, will act in accordance with FERPA 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 College's Public Information Officer. All inquiries to the College regarding missing students shall be referred to the Public Information Officer. Any individual with information about the missing student shall be referred to the Vice President for Administrative Services, who shall refer such inquiries and information to law enforcement authorities.

Prior to providing the college community with any information about a missing student, the College's Public Information Officer shall consult with the Vice President for Administrative Services, local law enforcement authorities, and the Office of Residence Life to ensure that communications comply with FERPA guidelines and do not hinder the investigation.