

Missing Student Policy

Policy number: 800-BA-12
Policy owner: Public Safety

Date of initial publication: Not available
Date of latest revision: March 21, 2023

SECTION I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish reporting requirements and notification procedures when a student is missing. This policy is developed in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations 34 CFR § 668.46 and contains the official notification procedures for the University of St. Thomas concerning missing students, including those who reside in on-campus housing.

SECTION II. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

The reporting expectations and procedures set forth in this policy apply to all St. Thomas students, faculty and staff. Other expectations apply to employees in Public Safety, Residence Life and related departments.

SECTION III. DEFINITIONS

When used in this policy, “Missing” means a person has not been seen or made any contact with another and the person’s absence is contrary to their usual pattern of behavior and/or unusual circumstances may have caused the absence.

SECTION IV. REPORTING MISSING STUDENTS

A. Reporting a Missing Student Who Resides On Campus

Any student, faculty or staff member shall immediately notify Public Safety if they have reason to believe that a student who resides in on-campus housing has been missing for 24 hours or has been missing for less than 24 hours under concerning circumstances, including but not limited to: the person’s medical condition, the location where the person was last seen, weather, possibility that the person is a potential victim of foul play, or reasons to believe the person may be a danger to themselves or others.

B. Reporting a Missing Student Who Resides Off Campus

Any student, faculty or staff member who has concerns that a student who resides off campus may be missing are strongly encouraged to immediately notify Public Safety and/or local police.

C. How to Make a Report

To report a missing person to St. Thomas, call the Public Safety emergency line: 651-962-5555.

A person making a report should try to provide as much information as possible about the missing student, including (if known) name, age, and address, date, time and location the missing person was last seen, medical condition, any physical or intellectual disabilities, any circumstances related to the person’s absence and a physical description.

SECTION V. OPTION TO DESIGNATE CONFIDENTIAL CONTACT PERSON(S)

Under federal law, the University of St. Thomas is required to give resident students the opportunity to provide confidentially the name and telephone number of person(s) that can be contacted should they be determined to be missing from campus. St. Thomas asks all students to provide this confidential contact information when registering for class, as part of the address verification process. In addition, resident students are also notified of this opportunity by the Department of Residence Life at the beginning of each semester.

Students can provide or change this information by logging into the Murphy Online Information System, visiting the “Personal Information” section and then adding or updating their “Missing Person Contact/s.”

The contact information provided pursuant to this section will be confidential, will be accessible only to authorized campus officials and may not be disclosed except to law enforcement personnel in the furtherance of a missing person investigation. The request for the confidential contact is different than the emergency contact request even though the names supplied by the student may be the same.

SECTION. VI. PUBLIC SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

Public Safety is the department primarily responsible for the investigation and response coordination for missing students who reside on campus. Public Safety is also the university’s liaison to assist the primary law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction for the investigation of missing students, regardless of whether the student lives on or off campus. As appropriate, Public Safety will consult and seek assistance from other university departments for law enforcement agencies in a missing student case. The Director of Public Safety and Dean of Students will confer and determine if and when the University Action and Response Team (UART) is notified in the case of a missing student.

SECTION VII. RESIDENCE LIFE RESPONSIBILITIES

In the event the Department of Residence Life is contacted concerning a resident student gone missing, Residence Life will gather preliminary information and notify Public Safety. Residence Life will ensure that all Residence Life staff are trained on their obligation to notify Public Safety of a missing student.

Appendix A to Missing Student Policy Procedures

Date of initial publication: N/A
Date of latest revision: March 21, 2023

SECTION I. PROCEDURES AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Public Safety Response and Investigation

1. When a report of a missing student is made to Public Safety, Public Safety will take a report and commence a reasonable search based on available information. A reasonable search will include, at a minimum:
 - Gathering information from the person who made the report
 - Attempting to contact the missing student via phone, text and email
 - For on-campus students, performing a health and welfare check in the student's room

Depending on the circumstances, a reasonable search may also include, but is not limited to, camera review, area search and/or speaking with roommates and/or others. Public Safety may engage other University offices, as appropriate, with respect to this investigation.

2. If a resident student cannot be located, the Director of Public Safety, Dean of Students, and Director of Residence Life will coordinate to notify the local police department and confidential contacts within 24 hours. Police and confidential contacts may be contacted sooner if there are concerning circumstances related to the student's disappearance. If the missing student is under the age of 18, Public Safety will also contact the student's custodial parent or legal guardian no later than 24 hours after the student is determined to be missing.
3. If the student lives off campus, Public Safety may contact police based on the investigation and will also direct the reporting party to contact the police department where the person was last seen or went missing from. Public Safety may also contact the student's confidential contacts.
4. In responding to reports of a missing student case originating from campus, Public Safety will implement the incident command system. The first responding officer will obtain available information about the incident and determine the resources that will be needed. The officer will also notify the supervisor on-duty. The on-duty supervisor will then contact the manager on-duty and update information. The manager on-duty will contact the Director of Public Safety if the person is a student, or the person is missing from campus. They will then coordinate the response and investigation.

5. Public Safety, with the support of Residence Life, will secure any vehicles, computers, residence hall rooms (including rekeying the room), or other personal belongings of a missing resident student that are located on campus.

B. Communication

1. The Director of Public Safety or designee(s) will coordinate the communication of a missing student to the Dean of Students and the chair(s) of UART, who will then facilitate communications to Marketing Insights and Communications (MIC), Academic Affairs or other appropriate department(s).
2. Any internal or external communication by the university regarding the missing student will be coordinated by Public Safety, MIC, and the local police department.
3. MIC or its designee shall serve as the spokesperson of the university to internal and external constituents on these cases.