

# Missing Persons

In accordance with the Higher Education Act of 2008, all students who reside in on-campus housing may identify an individual who will be contacted by University or law enforcement personnel after it has been determined that the student is missing. If campus officials determine that a student for whom a missing person report has been filed has been missing for more than 24 hours, then within the next 24 hours, they must: notify the individual identified by the student to be contacted in this circumstance; notify a parent or guardian if the student is under 18 years old; and notify law enforcement. If at any time foul play is suspected or suspicious circumstances are uncovered, the Director of Business and Support Services and law enforcement officials will be contacted immediately. The complete policy may be accessed on the web at: <http://wp.missouristate.edu/student-services/missing-person-policy.htm>.

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

The organization or persons to which individuals should report a student as missing includes: Resident Assistants, Coordinator of Student Life & Development, and the Director of Business and Support Services.

## Procedure for Informing Students

During the first floor meeting of the fall semester, Resident Assistants (RAs) will cover confidential contact information with students. During the first week of the spring semester, the RAs 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 to the RAs at which time a date will be placed on the form. A file will be kept in the Coordinator of Student Life & Development'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 from the RAs. 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, the person receiving the report 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 person receiving the report should obtain local directory information about the missing student and immediately notify the Coordinator of Student Life & Development.

The Coordinator of Student Life & Development should refer to the Reported Missing Student Checklist and contact the reporting person to obtain the additional information needed. If the Coordinator of Student Life & Development determines at any point that there is a credible threat to the well-being of the student reported as missing, the Coordinator of Student Life & Development should inform the Director of Business and Support Services who will, if deemed necessary, call and request West Plains Police assistance and also inform the Chancellor. The coordinator should then proceed to contact known student friends/relationships, beginning with roommates/suitemates and the missing student's resident assistant. The Coordinator of Student Life & Development 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 Coordinator of Student Life & Development 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 Coordinator of Student Life & Development should use one or more of the following measures to determine recent activity by the student reported as missing:

- 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 Director of Business and Support Services will immediately notify the West Plains Police Department and request law enforcement investigation. All information obtained about the missing student through the residence hall investigation should be shared with law enforcement representatives. The Coordinator of Student Life & Development 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 Coordinator of Student Life & Development shall immediately contact the custodial parent or guardian.

## Procedure for Notification of Missing Student

If University 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
- 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:**

Director of Business and Support Services, Dean of Student Services, Coordinator of Student Life & Development, Grizzly House RAs

**Line of Authority:**

Director of Business and Support Services, Cass Hall, 104, (417) 255-7260

Dean of Student Services, Lybyer Enhanced Technology Center, 207, (417) 255-7255

Coordinator of Student Life & Development, Putnam Student Center, (417) 255-7233

Resident Assistants, Grizzly House, (417) 255-8012/8022/8033

Revised policy adopted by the Missouri State University – West Plains Administrative Council on September 16, 2014.