

Missing Student Notification Policy and Procedure

In compliance with the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 the College has established a policy regarding missing students and notification. Only students who are residing in “on-campus housing” shall be subject to these policies and procedures.

“*On-campus housing*” facilities include any student housing arrangement subject to a rental agreement with St. Petersburg College or one of its affiliated direct support organizations whereby the housing unit is managed or operated by, and is in proximity to, the College.

For the purposes of this policy a student may be considered to be a “*missing person*” if the person’s absence from campus is contrary to his/her usual pattern of behavior and unusual circumstances may have caused the absence. Such circumstances could include, but not be limited to, a report or suspicion that the person may be a victim of foul play, has expressed suicidal thoughts, is drug dependent, is in a life threatening situation, has been with persons who may endanger the student’s welfare, or is overdue to return to campus and is unheard from after giving a specific return time to friends or family.

Designation of emergency contact information

- a. As part of the college housing rental agreement students will be required to designate an individual for emergency contact purposes. That designation will remain in effect until changed or revoked by the student.
- b. Students under the age of 18
If a student under the age of 18 is determined to be missing, the college is required to notify a custodial parent or guardian no more than 24 hours after the student is determined to be missing. The General Counsel’s office, in consultation with the Director of College-wide Security, will determine if a student is to be considered missing based on the reasonable provision of concerning information and evidence.
- c. Student 18 years or older residing in college housing
If such student is determined to be missing, the college will notify the appropriate law enforcement agency, as deemed necessary, not later than 8 hours after the determination has been made by the General Counsel’s office and the Director of College-wide Security.

Missing Student Procedure

- a. Any individual on campus who has information that a student residing in college housing may be a missing person must notify the Office of College-wide Security immediately. Concerned individuals should call 791-2560.
- b. The College-wide Security Department, with assistance from the Associate Provost office at the site, will gather all essential information about the students from the reporting person, from the student’s acquaintances and from official college information sources.

Such information will include description, cellular phone number, clothes last worn, where the student might be, who the student might be with, vehicle description, information about the physical and emotional well being of the student, an up to date photograph, a class schedule, etc.

- c. Appropriate Student Services staff and other college personnel across campus will be notified to aid in the search and location of the student. Contact with the student will be attempted using known email addresses and cellular phone numbers.
- d. If search efforts are unsuccessful in locating the student in a reasonable amount of time as determined by the General Counsel's Office in concert with the College-wide Security Department OR it is apparent immediately that the student is a missing person (e.g. witnessed abduction), OR it has been determined that the student has been missing for more than 24 hours, College-wide Security will contact the authority having jurisdiction to report the student as a missing person. Law enforcement will take charge of the investigation and all college offices will assist the investigation as requested.
- e. After the on-campus investigation has determined that a student is missing, the Director of College-wide Security, or his or her designee, in concert with the General Counsel's Office, will notify the emergency contact previously identified by the student (for students 18 and over) or the custodial parent/guardian (for students under the age of 18) and advise that the student is believed to be missing.

Communications about missing students

- a. In accordance with established college emergency guidelines procedures, the Director of Institutional Advancement will be part of the college administrative response team and is the designated spokesperson to handle media inquiries concerning a missing student.
- b. The local law enforcement agency in charge of the investigation and the public information officer (PIO) will be consulted by the Director of Institutional Advancement prior to any information release from the college so as not to jeopardize any investigation.
- c. Information provided to the media to elicit public assistance in the search for the missing person will be handled by the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction.

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