

Missing Person Policy



Allen Community College is committed to maintaining a positive and safe learning and working environment. The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for the college's response to reports of missing students, as required by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008. This policy applies to students who reside in campus housing, including off-campus apartment units owned or leased by the college for student residents.

For purposes of this policy, a student may be considered to be a "*missing person*" if the person's absence 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 missing person may be the victim of foul play, has expressed suicidal thoughts, is drug dependent, is in a life-threatening situation or has been with persons who may endanger the student's welfare.

Designation of Emergency Contact information

- Students age 18 and above and emancipated minors will be given the opportunity each semester 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.
- If a student under the age of 18 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.

Official Notification for Missing Persons

Any individual on campus who has information that a residential student may be a missing person must notify the Vice President for Student Affairs and/or the Director of Student Life as soon as possible.

Note: In order to avoid jurisdictional conflicts when an off-campus and/or commuter student is believed to be missing, the reporting person should immediately notify local law enforcement authorities. The Vice President for Student Affairs and/or the Director of Student Life will assist external authorities with these investigations as requested.

The Vice President for Student Affairs and/or the Director of Student Life will gather all essential information about the residential student from the reporting person and from the student's acquaintances (description, clothes last worn, where student might be, who student might be with, vehicle description, information about the physical and mental well-being of the student, an up-to-date photograph, class schedule, etc.). Appropriate campus staff will be notified to aid in the search for the student.

Initial Search

- Verify student is not in the assigned residence hall room, in an academic class, and/or with an athletic or activity group
- If the student has a registered vehicle on campus, check all parking lots to determine if the vehicle is on campus

- Attempt to contact the student by both phone call and text
- If the student is an athletic or activity student, contact the coach or activity sponsor to identify last contact with the student
- Contact roommates to determine last contact with the student
- Contact instructors to determine last contact with the student
- Check any known social media accounts to look for the last update or use
- Conduct a quick but thorough campus search
- If the above actions are unsuccessful in locating the student or it is apparent immediately that the student is a missing person (e.g., witnessed abduction), the Vice President for Student Affairs and/or the Director of Student Life 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
- No later than 24 hours after determining that a residential student is missing, the Vice President for Student Affairs and/or the Director of Student Life 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.

Communications

In cases involving missing persons, law enforcement personnel are best situated to provide information to the media that is 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 Administration. All inquiries to the college regarding missing students, or information provided to any individual at the college about a missing student, shall be referred to the Vice President for Student Affairs and/or the Director of Student Life, who shall refer such inquiries and information to law enforcement authorities. Prior to providing the Allen community with any information about a missing student, the Vice President for Student Affairs and/or the Director of Student Life shall consult with the local law enforcement authorities to ensure that communications do not hinder the investigation.