AMERICAN UNIVERSITY WASHINGTON, D.C.

University Policy: Missing Student Notification

Policy Category: Student Policy

Subject: Notification Procedure for Missing Resident Students

Office Responsible for Review of this Policy: Office of Campus Life, Office of Finance and Treasurer

Procedures: n/a

Related University Policies: n/a

I. SCOPE

This statement establishes the policy and procedures for the AU community regarding the reporting, investigation, and required emergency notification when a Residential Student is deemed to be missing. While the scope of policy is directed primarily to Residential Students and the staffs of Campus Life and Public Safety, all members of the AU community including students, faculty, and staff share the responsibility of reporting to designated university officials when they believe that a student is missing.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

The safety of students living on campus is of utmost priority for American University. To this end, this policy is established to assist in locating AU students living in on-campus housing who, based on the facts and circumstances known to AU, are determined to be missing. This policy is in compliance with the missing person provision of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Residential Student - A student who resides in on-campus housing under an AU licensing agreement and is currently enrolled at the university.

B. Missing - For purposes of this policy, a Residential Student is presumed missing if he or she is overdue in reaching home or campus for more than 24 hours past their expected arrival and a check of their residence supports that determination. A residential student may be considered missing if he or she is overdue in reaching home, campus or another specific location past their expected arrival, or any additional factors which lead university staff to believe he or she is missing, and a check of their residence supports that determination.

IV. POLICY

In General

American University will notify all Resident Students of the provisions of the Missing Student Notification Policy and will actively investigate or assist in the investigation of all missing student reports involving Resident Students. The missing person contact(s) (and custodial parent or guardian in the event a student is under age 18) will be notified within 24 hours of the student's determined to be missing.

Designation of Emergency Contact by Resident Students

On an annual basis, each resident student, upon applying/registering for campus housing and/or checking into his/her residence hall room, has the option to confidentially register an emergency contact ("missing person contact") for American University to notify, within 24 hours, of when the student has been determined to be missing. The missing person contact information will be registered confidentially and will be accessible only to authorized University officials and will not be disclosed, except to law enforcement personnel in furtherance of a missing person investigation.

The missing person contact may be in addition to the general purpose emergency contact provided during the residence hall check-in process.

If a missing person contact is not formally declared, the University will notify the general purpose emergency contact.

If a student is under age 18 and non-emancipated, the student's custodial parent or guardian (in addition to any designated missing person contact) will be notified in the event the student is deemed missing.

Procedures for Reporting and Notification Regarding Missing Students

Individuals who have reason to believe that a student is missing should immediately report their concerns to Public Safety. Public Safety will engage appropriate residence hall and other university staff in immediate efforts to locate the student. These efforts may include but are not limited to:

1. Contact the student via his or her telephone, email
2. Check student's residence hall room, determine if student has been in class, determine if ID card has been used, and make a reasonable attempt to locate the student's vehicle (if any)
3. Check with roommates, friends, members of the residential community and others who may have relevant information

If a student who has been reported missing is not located within 24 hours, as determined in consultation with Public Safety, the following will occur:

1. The Dean of Students or designee will notify the student's designated missing person contact, general purpose emergency contact, and/or the custodial parent or legal guardian,) as appropriate.
2. Public Safety will notify law enforcement agencies, including the DC Metropolitan Police Department, coordinate its investigation with outside law enforcement agencies and continue its efforts to locate the student.

If, in the course of this investigation, foul play is evident or strongly indicated or other compelling circumstances exist, law enforcement will be contacted immediately.

Notification of Policy

Notification of this Policy will be made directly to all student residents in campus housing annually through its inclusion in American University's Annual Security Report and through the residence hall registration process.

V. EFFECTIVE DATE(S)

This Policy is effective June 1, 2009. Revised July, 2010; October, 2014.

Frequency of review and update: This policy is reviewed biennially unless changes in laws or university business needs require a different review/revision schedule.

VI. SIGNATURE, TITLE AND DATE OF APPROVAL

This policy needs to be signed by the appropriate officer (listed below) before it is considered approved.

Approved:

_____
President

_____
Vice President of Campus Life

_____
Vice President of Finance & Treasurer

Date approved: