
COLUMBUS STATE UNIVERSITY

Policy Name:	Missing Persons Policy
Policy Owner:	University Police, Student Affairs, & Risk Management
Responsible University Office:	University Police, Student Affairs, & Risk Management
Approval Date:	May 28, 2024
Effective Date:	May 28, 2024
Related Policies:	CSU Clery Policy

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy establishes guidelines and procedures for responding to reports of missing persons within Columbus State University's jurisdiction, in compliance with the Clery Act and applicable state laws.

II. DEFINITIONS

Missing Person: Any individual whose whereabouts are unknown and whose absence is contrary to their usual pattern of behavior and unusual circumstances may indicate that they may be at risk of harm.

Commuter Student: A person who is enrolled full-time or part-time at the University, who does not live on campus-owned property.

Residential Student: A person who is enrolled full-time or part-time at the University, who lives on campus-owned property.

Emergency Contact: A person designated by a University student to be notified in case of an emergency or critical situation. CSU students have the option to list this confidential contact person or persons with CSU Police, but it is not required.

Confidential Missing Persons Contact: A contact of the student's choosing that will be notified if a student is believed to be missing, this is not the same as a student's emergency contact. May be a person designated by the student in addition to the declared emergency contact.

III. POLICY STATEMENT

At Columbus State University ensuring the safety and well-being of our community members is of paramount importance. The University is committed to promptly and effectively responding to reports of missing persons in compliance with the Clery Act and applicable state laws. This policy establishes clear guidelines and procedures for initiating thorough investigations, coordinating with local law enforcement agencies, and notifying designated emergency contacts in the event of a missing person report. By adhering to this policy, we aim to uphold the highest standards of care and support for our students, employees, and visitors.

IV. PROCEDURES

Anyone who believes a residential student or other person affiliated with the University is missing should immediately report it to the University Police Department (“University PD”) at (706) 507-8911, Residence Life Office at (706) 507-8710, or the Dean of Students at (706) 507-8845. Reports may be made in person, by phone, or through any other available means of communication. Any report of a missing student not made to the CSU Police Department must be referred to them immediately for the purposes of conducting an investigation.

Residential students may register their confidential missing persons contact in the Housing Application when they apply for housing. This contact information will be registered confidentially, will only be accessible to authorized campus officials, and may not be disclosed except to law enforcement for the purpose of a missing person investigation.

A. Initial Response:

Upon receiving a report of a missing person, University PD will:

- Gather all relevant information about the missing person, including physical description, last known whereabouts, and any known associates;
- Initiate an immediate investigation, including checking the person's residence, known hangouts, and contacting known friends or family members; and
- Will notify local law enforcement agencies with primary jurisdiction for the surrounding community, the Columbus Police Department and Muscogee county Sheriff's Office, within 24 hours of when a residential student or other person affiliated with the University is determined to be missing unless it is the local law enforcement agency that made the determination and University PD will cooperate fully with any investigations.

B. Notification Process

If it is determined that a residential student is missing, the University Police will:

- Contact the President, Director of Residence Life, the Chief of University PD, and the Dean of Students or their designee.
- Notify the student's confidential missing persons contact, if they provided one,

- within 24 hours of the determination that the student is missing; and
- If the missing person is under 18 years of age and not emancipated, the University PD will notify a custodial parent or guardian within 24 hours of the determination that the student is missing.

C. Private and Confidentiality

All information related to a missing person investigation will be handled with sensitivity and discretion. Information will only be shared with authorized individuals as necessary to facilitate the investigation.

D. Follow-up Procedures

The University will continue to work with local law enforcement and other appropriate agencies until the missing person is located or the case is resolved. Updates will be provided to the campus community as appropriate, while respecting the privacy of the missing person and their family.

E. Training

All personnel involved in responding to reports of missing persons will receive training on the requirements of this policy, as well as procedures for handling such reports effectively and sensitively.

F. Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination or expulsion, as appropriate.

G. Contact Information

For questions or concerns regarding this policy, please contact the Risk Coordinator or University Police.

This policy is effective as of May 28, 2024 and supersedes any previous policies or guidelines related to missing persons.

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