



## Missing Residential Student Notification Policy

<b>Authority:</b>	Chancellor
<b>History:</b>	Revised August 7, 2009; established February 27, 2009
<b>Source of Authority:</b>	Higher Education Opportunity Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1092; 42 U.S.C. § 5779.
<b>Related Links:</b>	<a href="#">University Police</a> ; <a href="#">Housing and Residence Life</a>
<b>Responsible Office:</b>	University Police; Student Affairs

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### I. Purpose

To establish policy and procedures for the UNCW community regarding the reporting, investigation and required emergency notification when a Residential Student is deemed to be missing.

### II. Scope

While the scope of policy and procedures is directed primarily to Residential Students and the staffs of the Division of Student Affairs and the UNCW Police Department, all members of the academic community, students, faculty, staff, and administrators, share the responsibility of reporting to designated university officials when they believe that a student is missing.

### III. Definitions

- A. Residential Student – For purposes of this policy, a student who resides in on-campus housing under a housing contract 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, additional factors lead university staff to believe he or she is missing, and a check of their residence supports that determination.

#### **IV. Notification to Residential Students**

- A. Residential Students are to be informed that they have the option to identify an individual to be contacted by the institution not later than 24 hours after the time that the student is determined missing.
- B. Residential Students, who are under 18 years of age and not emancipated individuals, are to be informed that the university is required to notify a custodial parent or guardian not later than 24 hours after the time that the student is determined to be missing.
- C. Residential Students are to be informed that the university will notify the appropriate law enforcement agency within 24 hours after the time that the student is determined missing.
- D. Residential Students are to be informed that they have the option to confidentially identify an individual, and his or her telephone number(s), to be contacted by the institution not later than 24 hours after the time that the student is determined missing. The Office of Housing and Residence Life will collect and maintain the confidential contact information. The student is responsible for ensuring that the contact information is up-to-date and accurate.

#### **V. Procedures for Reporting and for Investigating Missing Students**

- A. Any university employee who receives a report that a student is missing, or has independent information that a student is missing, must immediately report the information or evidence to the UNCW Department of Housing and Residence Life or the UNCW Police Department. If the Police Department is initially contacted, they will notify the Department of Housing and Residence Life, whose staff will determine whether the student is a Residential Student.
- B. If the student is not a Residential Student, UNCW Police will conduct a preliminary investigation in order to verify the situation and to determine the circumstances which exist relating to the reported missing student. If UNCW Police determine that the student should be considered missing, it will contact the relevant outside law enforcement authority and provide the relevant information. All pertinent law enforcement agencies, including, if known, those operating in the student's normal routes of travel or hometown, will be notified and requested to render assistance; all law enforcement agencies involved will receive routine investigation status reports during the course of the investigation. If UNCW Police determine that student should be considered missing, the person making the initial report will be encouraged to make an official missing person report to local police. UNCW Police shall follow its General Order governing investigating missing/endangered persons.

- C. If the student is a Residential Student, the staff of the UNCW Department of Housing and Residence Life will conduct a preliminary investigation in order to verify the situation and to determine the circumstances which exist relating to the reported missing student.
1. A staff member will attempt to contact the subject student via his or her telephone, email and/or by other methods of communication.
  2. If the subject student cannot be reached, two staff members will visit the room of the Residential Student in question to verify their whereabouts and/or wellness, and, in some cases, deliver a message to contact a parent or family member who is searching for them.
  3. If the Residential Student is not at the room, but it is occupied, the residence life staff will attempt to gain information on the student's whereabouts and/or wellness from questioning the occupants.
  4. If there is no response when the staff members knock on the door of the room or there are occupants who do not know of the subject student's whereabouts, the residence life staff will enter into the room in question, by key if necessary, to perform a health and safety inspection. The staff members will take note of the condition of the room and look for visible personal property (wallet, keys, cell phone, clothing, etc.) which might provide clues as to whether the subject student has taken an extended trip or leave from the residence hall.
  5. If the student is not found in the room, the residence life staff will attempt to gain information on the student's whereabouts from roommates, other members of the residential community, or other friends. The residence life staff will also attempt to acquire additional phone numbers for the subject student (if not already on file) and use them to initiate contact.
  6. At any step in the process, staff members will immediately report any suspicious findings to UNCW Police.
  7. If all of these steps do not provide residential staff with an opportunity to speak with the missing resident or to learn his or her whereabouts, UNCW Police will be contacted to investigate further.
  8. If the missing student is determined to be under the age of eighteen, Housing and Residence Life staff will notify the Office of the Dean of Students so that contact will be made with the student's parents within 24 hours. If the missing student is determined to be over the age of eighteen, Housing and Residence Life staff will notify the Office of the Dean of Students so that contact will be made with the student's confidential contact within 24 hours.

9. If these steps provide residential staff with an opportunity to speak with the missing Residential Student, verification of the student's state of health and intention of returning to campus is made. If needed, a referral will be made to the UNCW Counseling Center. The Division of Student Affairs shall contact UNCW Police to document that a missing student investigation was begun and apprise them of the student's state of health and well-being.