
Policy Number:	1.5.004
Title:	<i>Missing Student Policy</i>

Purpose

This policy establishes policy and procedures in compliance with Section 488 of the Higher Education Act of 2008 for the Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology (TSCT or College) community regarding the reporting, investigation, and required emergency notification when a residential student is deemed to be missing.

Scope

While the scope of this policy and these procedures are directed primarily to residential students and the staffs of the Division of Student Services and Security, all members of the academic community, students, faculty, staff, and administrators share the responsibility of reporting to designated College officials when they believe a student is missing.

Definitions

Student - any person enrolled in any class or program of the College.

Residential Student - A student who resides in any on-campus student housing facility that is owned or controlled by the College and is currently enrolled at the College.

Missing - Residential student will be considered missing if they are 24 hours overdue in reaching home, campus, or another specific location past the expected arrival, additional factors lead College staff to believe the student is missing, and a check of the student's residence supports that determination.

Emancipated Individual - A person less than 18 years of age who has been declared by a court to be independent of his or her parents.

Campus housing - All property owned or leased and designated by the College for student housing.

Policy Detail

Notification to Residential Students

- A. Students residing in on-campus housing have the option, in addition to providing an emergency contact, to identify confidentially an individual or individuals to be contacted by the institution in the event the student is determined missing for more than 24 hours. The missing person contact may, but does not have to be, the same person as the emergency contact. If the student has identified a missing person contact, the College will notify that individual no later than 24 hours after the student is determined to be missing. Students may provide the name and contact information when checking into their on-campus housing facility and are responsible for ensuring that the information is up-to-date and accurate.

- B. The missing person contact information will be considered confidential, will be maintained separately from other information, and will be accessible only to authorized campus officials. Housing and Residence Life officials may disclose the missing person contact information only to Security or local law enforcement only in furtherance of a missing person investigation.

Procedures for Reporting and for Investigating Missing Students

- A. Any member of the College community who receives a report that a student is missing, or has independent information that a student is missing for 24 hours, should immediately report the information to Security (717-391-7225, 1100 East Orange Street, Lancaster, PA 17602). A notification may also be made to Director of Residence Life (717-299-7681) or the Vice President of Student Services (717-299-7794) who will immediately report the information to Security.
- B. Any College employee who receives a missing person report should immediately notify Security so that an investigation can be initiated. Security will contact Residence Life to determine if the student is a Residential Student. If the student is not a Residential Student, Security will determine if additional action is needed.
- C. If the student is a Residential Student, the Residence Life staff will work with Security to conduct a preliminary investigation in order to verify the situation and to determine the circumstances relating to the reported missing student. This may include the following steps:
 1. A staff member will attempt to contact the student via the contact information listed in the official student record.
 2. If the student cannot be reached by telephone, Residence Life staff will contact Security to assist with a welfare check. Residence Life staff and Security will visit the room of the Residential Student in question to verify his/her whereabouts and/or wellness, and, in some cases, deliver a message for the student to contact a parent or family member who is searching for him/her.
 3. If the Residential Student is not in the room, but the room is occupied, Residence Life staff will attempt to gain information on the student's whereabouts and/or wellness by questioning the occupants.
 4. If there is no response when the staff knocks on the door of the room, or there are occupants who do not know of the subject student's whereabouts, Residence Life staff, along with Security as back-up, will enter into the room in question, by key if necessary, to perform a health and safety inspection. Residence Life staff, under the observation of Security, 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, Residence Life staff will attempt to gain information on the student's whereabouts from roommates, other members of the residential community, or other friends. Residence Life staff will also attempt to acquire additional phone numbers for the 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 Security.
 7. If all of these steps do not provide Residence Life staff with an opportunity to speak with the missing resident or to learn his/her whereabouts, Security will take over the investigation.

8. After investigating a missing person report, if it is determined that the student has been missing for 24 hours, Security will contact local police authorities unless it was local law enforcement that made the determination that the student is missing.
9. If the missing student is determined to be under the age of twenty-one (21), Security will follow the reporting requirements set forth by Suzanne's Law, 42 U.S.C. § 5779. This requirement provides that, in general, each Federal, State, and local law enforcement agency shall report each case of a missing person between the ages of eighteen (18) and twenty-one (21) reported to such agency to the National Crime Information Center of the Department of Justice.

If the missing student is determined to be under the age of eighteen (18), and not emancipated, Residence Life staff will notify Security who will contact the student's custodial parent or guardian within twenty-four (24) hours of being deemed missing. In all cases, Security will notify the student's designated confidential contact within twenty-four (24) hours after the student is determined to be missing.

10. If these steps provide Residence Life staff with an opportunity to speak with the missing Residential Student, Residence Life will inquire as to the student's state of health and intention of returning to campus. If needed, a referral will be made to the TSCT counselor. Security will be notified that contact has been made with the subject student.

References

Procedure to Update Missing Person Contact
 Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA)
 Suzanne's Law, 42 U.S.C. §5779.

<i>Audience</i>	<i>Students</i>
<i>Effective Date</i>	<i>7/18/2025</i>
<i>Date Revised</i>	
<i>Date Reviewed</i>	
<i>Owner</i>	<i>Director of Residence Life</i>