

Texas Woman's University University Regulation and Procedure

Regulation and Procedure Name: Missing Student Notification

**Regulation and Procedure
Number: URP: 06.320**

Policy Owner: Student Life

POLICY STATEMENT

Texas Woman's University takes student safety very seriously. The purpose of this regulation is to promote the safety and welfare of members of the Texas Woman's University community through compliance with the requirements of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008. This protocol includes the official notification procedures for missing students who reside in on-campus or university managed properties by Texas Woman's University. Individuals who wish to report a missing student should contact the TWU Department of Public Safety.

It is understood that resident students will have opportunities during the academic year to take weekends away to visit family or friends. When students will be away from their on-campus residence, students should inform their roommate or Resident Assistant of their plans and expected date of return for emergency contact purposes. For purposes of this policy, a student may be considered to be a "missing student" if the person's absence is contrary to his or her usual pattern of behavior and unusual circumstances may have caused the absence. Such circumstances could include a reasonable or reliable report or suspicion that the missing student may be endangered. Examples include, but are not limited to, possible victim foul play, expression of suicidal thoughts, alcohol or drug abuse, a life-threatening situation, or recent contact with persons who may endanger the student's welfare.

All residential students will have the opportunity to designate a confidential contact to be notified by the University in the event that the student is determined to be missing. All reports of missing residential students shall be directed to the TWU Department of Public Safety, which shall forward the information to the Vice President for Student Life ("VPSL"). The VPSL or designee will investigate each report and make a determination whether the student is missing. NOTE: If a student who has been determined to be missing is under the age of 18, and is not emancipated, the University will contact the designated confidential contact, but is also required to contact the legal guardian or parent.

APPLICABILITY

This policy is applicable to TWU Students.

DEFINITIONS

1. “Designated Missing Person Contact/Emergency Contact” means the individual designated by the student to be contacted if the student goes missing.
2. “On-campus housing” means any building owned or controlled by the University that is used to house University students.
3. “Resident Student” means a student enrolled at Texas Woman’s University who lives in University owned or managed housing.

REGULATION AND PROCEDURE

I. Procedures for Designation of Emergency Contact Information

A. Students Age 18 and Above and Emancipated Minors

1. When applying for housing, students are required to designate an individual or individuals to be contacted by the University no more than 24 hours after the time that the student is determined to be missing in accordance with the procedure set forth below.
2. A designation will remain in effect until changed or revoked by the student and will be retained with their housing contract information. Students’ contact information is registered confidentially and is accessible only to authorized campus officials.
3. The student’s contact information will not be disclosed, except to law enforcement personnel or university administrators who have a reasonable need to know in furtherance of a missing person investigation. Students may change or revoke their emergency contact information through the University Housing and Dining Portal.

B. Students Under the Age of 18

In the event a student who is not emancipated is determined to be missing pursuant to the procedures set for the below, the University is required to notify a custodial parent or guardian in addition to contacting the designated missing person contact no more than 24 hours after the student is determined to be missing in accordance with the procedures set forth below.

II. Official Notification Procedures for Missing Students

- A. Any individual who has information that a student may be missing must notify the TWU Department of Public Safety immediately.
- B. TWU Department of Public Safety will work with campus offices, the reporting person(s), and the student's acquaintances to gather all essential information about the student (description, clothes last worn, where student might be, who student might be with, vehicle description, information about the student's physical and mental well-being, and up-to-date photograph, class schedule, etc.). Appropriate campus staff will be notified to aid in the search for the students.
- C. When a missing student report is made to the TWU Department of Public Safety, the Director of Public Safety will immediately notify the Vice President for Student Life.
- D. The Office of Student Life will contact the University Housing and appropriate administrators, faculty, and staff based on the student's residence hall assignment and academic schedule.
- E. Campus staff will take steps to try to locate the missing student, including but not limited to the following:
 - 1. Call the student's cell phone
 - 2. Send residence director, resident assistant or Associate Director for Residential Life & Business Affairs to the student's room.
 - 3. Contact roommate(s)
 - 4. Access student's vehicle information to locate and distribute to local authorities if necessary
 - 5. Access student's class schedule and seek information on last sighting or other contact information.
 - 6. Access reports to determine the last time the student used a meal card or accessed the residence hall.
 - 7. If student works on-campus contact supervisor for contact information

8. The Vice President of Student Life or her or his designee will call the student's home number
 9. Request information from Information Technology about students last electronic sign in to TWU's network systems
 10. Security may issue an ID picture to assist in identifying the missing student
 11. Security may search on campus public locations (library, cafeteria, etc.)
- F. If these actions are unsuccessful in locating the student or it is apparent immediately that the student may be endangered; the following persons will meet to determine if the student is missing:
1. Vice President of Student Life
 2. TWU Department of Public Safety Personnel
 3. Director of University Housing and Dining
 4. Local law enforcement (unless local law enforcement has made the determination)
 5. Other University officials who may be appropriate to the investigation
- G. No later than 24 hours after determining that a student is missing, the following will take place:
1. The TWU Department of Public Safety will contact the appropriate local law enforcement agency to report the student as a missing person and the local law enforcement agency with appropriate jurisdiction will take charge of the investigation. The TWU Department of Public Safety will assist external authorities with these investigations as requested.
 2. The Vice President of Student Life ("VPSL") or designee will contact the emergency contact person to report that the student is believed to be missing. The VPSL will document the contact, and any attempts to contact, and collect any information which can be used in the investigation. The VPSL or designee will also contact the parent or legal guardian (for students under the age of 18) that the student is believed to be missing.
 3. For missing students who are 18 years of age or older, and did not designate an individual to be contacted, the Vice President of

Student Life or designee, will act in accordance with FERPA guidelines with regard to contacting a parent or legal guardian.

III. Campus Communications About Missing Students

- A. In cases involving missing persons, law enforcement personnel are trained to provide information to the media in a manner designed to elicit public assistance in the search for the missing person. Therefore, all communications regarding missing students will be handled by outside law enforcement authorities who may consult with TWU's Marketing and Communications Department. Inquiries to the University regarding missing students will be referred to the Marketing and Communications Department. Individuals with information about the missing student will be directed to the TWU Department of Public Safety who shall refer inquiries and information to law enforcement authorities.
- B. Prior to providing the Texas Woman's University community with any information about a missing student, the Marketing and Communications Department shall consult with the TWU Department of Public Safety, Student Life, General Counsel and local law enforcement authorities to ensure that communications not only avoid hindering investigations but also that they comply with FERPA guidelines.

REVIEW

This policy will remain in effect and published until it is reviewed, updated, or archived. This policy is to be reviewed once every six years. Interim review may be required as a result of updates to federal and state law or regulations, Board of Regents policies, or internal processes or procedures.

REFERENCES

None

FORMS AND TOOLS

None

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