

Northwestern State University Missing Student Notification Policy

Policy

In compliance with the Missing Student Procedures 20 USC 1092 (j) (Section 488 of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008), it is the policy of Northwestern State University Student Affairs and University Police to investigate any report of a missing student who resides on-campus at Northwestern State University. This policy, with its accompanying procedures, establishes a framework for cooperation among members of the University community aimed at locating and assisting students who are reported missing.

A student shall be deemed missing when he or she is reported absent from the University for more than 24 hours without any known reason. All reports of missing students shall be directed to Northwestern State University Police which shall investigate each report and make a determination whether the student is missing in accordance with this policy.

Each student living in an on-campus student housing facility has the option to identify an individual to be contacted by the university not later than 24 hours after the time that the student is determined missing in accordance with official notification procedures established by Northwestern State University.

Each student living in an on-campus student housing facility has the option to register confidential contact information in the event that the student is determined to be missing for a period of more than 24 hours. Only authorized campus officials and law enforcement officers in furtherance of a missing person investigation may have access to this information.

Each student over the age of 18 has the option of opting out of the Missing Student Policy as per the Missing Student Procedures 20 USC 1092 (j) (Section 488 of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008), through signing a waiver on the Missing Student Policy Form.

If a missing student is under 18 years of age, and not an emancipated individual, the university is required to notify a custodial parent or guardian of the missing student not later than 24 hours after the determination by University Police that the student is missing.

University Police may also notify the Natchitoches City Police and other law enforcement agencies no later than 24 hours after it determines that the student is missing, even if a student has not registered a contact person.

If Northwestern State University Police has been notified and makes a determination that a student who is the subject of a missing person report has been missing for more than 24 hours and has not returned to the campus, the institution will initiate the emergency contact procedures in accordance with the student's designation.

In keeping with trends across the nation, Northwestern State University Student Housing is configured for apartment style living and therefore may not adhere to regular or prescribed timelines for monitoring students. Student welfare and safety is paramount to the institution; however, the University recognizes and makes known its limitations in obtaining accurate and timely information on the whereabouts of students.

The Dean of Students shall have the responsibility to make the provisions of this policy and the procedures set forth below available to students.

Procedure

Notification:

- Any report of a missing student, from whatever source, should immediately be directed to Northwestern State University Police.
- When a student is reported missing University Police shall:
 - a. initiate an investigation to determine the validity of the missing person report;
 - b. contact the Dean of Students;
 - c. make a determination as to the status of the missing student.;
 - d. notify Natchitoches City Police or other appropriate law enforcement agencies within 24 hours after determining that the student is missing.
- When contacted by University Police, the Dean of Students shall:
 - a. notify the Director of Student Housing, the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, and the President's Office;
 - b. if, on investigation of the official report, University Police determines that the student is missing, the Dean of Students will notify the individual identified by the missing student as the emergency contact within 24 hours of making the determination that the student is missing;
 - c. if the missing student is under the age of 18, and not an emancipated individual, notify the student's custodial parent or guardian as contained in the records of the University within 24 hours of the determination that the student is missing .
- The Dean of Students shall initiate whatever action he or she deems appropriate under the circumstances in the best interest of the missing student.

Student Contact Information:

Students residing on-campus shall be given the opportunity to identify and register a confidential contact person(s) to be notified in the case that the student is determined to be missing. Only authorized campus officials and law enforcement officers in furtherance of a missing person investigation may have access to this information. If a resident is under 18 years of age, and not an emancipated individual, the custodial parent or guardian must be the contact person.

Students will complete the Contact Information Form (Form A) at Freshmen Connection or when they move into campus housing (University Place, University Columns, Varnado Hall and Non-Traditional Housing). This form must be completed at the beginning of each lease term. It is the responsibility of the student to update any changes to contact information.

Student Notification of This Policy:

- Included on NSU Housing and Dean of Students Website.
- Discussed during Freshmen Connection, Parent Connection and Student Orientation classes.
- Discussed during beginning semester, mandatory housing meetings.
- Included in the annual Campus Security Report.
- Notices sent out to all residents by Campus Housing.