

# SOUTHWESTERN LAW SCHOOL

## L O S A N G E L E S

### **Missing Student Policy and Procedures**

**Administrative policy approved August 25, 2022. Effective immediately.**

**Revision history: None; new policy.**

**Related policies: Students Records Policy**

**Scheduled Review Date: August 2024 (Administrative Services Office)**

#### **A. Background**

The risk that a student might go missing is a concern for all higher education institutions. A report of a missing student can come from a variety of sources, including family, friends, or fellow students. Because of our concern for student safety, and in accordance with federal law, Southwestern Law School has established this missing student notification policy and procedures.

#### **B. Scope of Policy**

##### **1. Residential Students**

“Residential students” are students enrolled at Southwestern Law School and who reside in The Residences at 7th. This policy applies when Southwestern’s Dean of Students, based on facts and circumstances known to Southwestern, determines that a residential student is missing. For purposes of this policy, a student may be considered to be “missing” if the student’s absence is contrary to their usual pattern of behavior and unusual circumstances may have caused the absence. Such circumstances could include, but are not limited to, a report (a) of a student’s absence from multiple classes in which the student is enrolled, (b) that the student may be the victim of foul play, or (c) that the student has expressed suicidal thoughts, is drug dependent, is in a life-threatening situation, or has been with persons who may endanger the student’s welfare.

##### **2. Non-Residential Students**

Southwestern also is concerned about the safety of its non-residential students. Concerns about these students should be reported to the Dean of Students. But the Dean of Student’s scope of authority is limited to the campus and

Southwestern-owned property. Therefore, when a non-residential student is believed to be missing, the reporting person also should immediately notify local law enforcement authorities and then provide the information to the Dean of Students or, if after-hours or on the weekend, to Campus Security in case Southwestern is asked to assist external authorities with the investigation.

### **3. Study-Abroad Students**

Students who are traveling outside of the host city must provide written advanced written notice to the program director about the days they are traveling. The program director may also require students to provide other information, like other students with whom they are traveling, the cities or countries to be visited, and a cell phone number where the student might be reached when traveling. The program director will follow up in an attempt to locate any student who fails to timely return from planned trips or otherwise appears to have gone missing. The follow up will include contacting the U.S. Embassy and local law enforcement officials as necessary. For any study-abroad program, the program director must have an emergency contact list for all participating students.

### **4. Students Traveling for Southwestern Activities**

On occasion, students travel in connection with Southwestern-sponsored activities, such as competitions, professional organization activities, and the like. In those instances, the faculty member in charge of the trip is responsible for collecting confidential emergency information and enforcing procedures for monitoring the students' whereabouts. If a student appears to have gone missing, the faculty member will notify local law enforcement and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

## **C. Reporting Procedures**

Any individual who believes that a residential student is missing should immediately report that concern to Campus Security.

Any faculty or staff member who receives such a report should immediately contact Campus Security.

Campus Security, upon receiving the report, will coordinate with the Associate Dean for Risk Management and Operations and the Dean of Students. These officials will first check to see if the student completed a *Notice of Absence from Residence* form (discussed in more detail below). If the student's absence is not accounted for, or the duration of reported absence exceeds the time period stated in the *Notice*, Campus Security will obtain student information, including a photo and vehicle information, from the Administrative Services Office to conduct a quick but thorough search of campus buildings, exterior and common areas of the Residences, and campus parking lots. The Administrative Services Office will also check when the student's I.D. card was used, and

Campus Security will review surveillance footage. Campus Security and the Administrative Services Offices will share the results of their investigation with each other and the Dean of Students.

If the Dean of Students determines from the report that the student is a missing person, or when the search efforts described above do not locate the student, the Dean of Students will (i) contact the student's emergency contact and (ii) contact the appropriate local law enforcement agency to report the student as a missing person. Such contact will occur as soon as possible but and not later than 24 hours after determining that a student is missing. The local law enforcement agency will then take charge of the investigation. If the Dean of Students is not available, the Associate Dean for Risk Management and Operations, a Vice Dean, or the President and Dean may make these notifications.

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this policy, if foul play, suicide, or other exigent circumstances are suspected, the reporting person should immediately notify local law enforcement authorities and, thereafter, notify Campus Security.

#### **D. Possible Missing Student Outcomes**

Multiple outcomes are possible in the case of a missing student. The three most likely possibilities are:

##### **1. After a search, the student is safe and well**

In this situation, the Dean of Students will encourage the student to contact the individual who reported the student as missing to give the reporting person assurances that the student is well.

##### **2. After a search, the student is in difficulty**

The Dean of Students will obtain as much information as possible about the student's difficulty, offer assistance as appropriate, and refer the matter to the Student Support and Emergency Team (SSET) for further assessment and support. If the student is in any immediate danger, the Dean of Students, Associate Dean for Risk Management and Operations, or Campus Security will contact local law enforcement.

##### **3. After a search, the student does not respond**

If all efforts to contact a student have been exhausted and Southwestern has been unable to verify that the student is safe, the Dean of Students, Associate Dean for Risk Management and Operations, or Campus Security will notify local law enforcement and the student's emergency contact.

#### **E. Registration of Emergency Contact Information and Notices of Absences**

##### **1. Designation of Emergency Contact**

Incoming students submit emergency contact information through the registration process. Students can update this information through the Self

Service page on the portal at any time. In addition to the Southwestern student process, the housing application for students in The Residences asks each resident to designate an emergency contact. Residents can update their emergency contact information at any time on their Resident Portal. The designated individual(s) will be the emergency contact(s) under this policy.

This emergency contact information will be confidential and accessible only to authorized campus administrators. It may not be disclosed outside of Southwestern, except to law enforcement personnel in furtherance of a missing person investigation.

If the missing student is under 18 and is not emancipated, immediately after Campus Security determines the student has been missing for 24 hours, Southwestern will notify the student's parent or legal guardian, in addition to notifying any additional contact person designated by the student.

## **2. Annual Notifications to Residential Students**

When a student moves into The Residences, and thereafter on an annual basis, the property manager at The Residences will send a copy of this policy to each residential student.

## **3. Notice of Absence from Residence**

All residential students are expected to complete the *Notice of Absence from Residence* form when they plan to be away from The Residences housing for more than 14 calendar days when classes are in session.

# **F. Campus Communications**

## **1. In General**

In cases involving missing persons, law enforcement personnel are typically best suited to provide information to the media that is designed to elicit public assistance in the search. Therefore, unless otherwise approved by the President and Dean, communications regarding missing students generally will be handled by outside law enforcement authorities. Communications internal to Southwestern (other than Security Alerts issued by the Administrative Services Office) will generally be handled by the President and Dean or by the Chief Communications & Marketing Officer, with the President and Dean's approval.

## **2. Outside Inquiries**

All inquiries to Southwestern regarding missing students, or information provided to any individual at Southwestern about a missing student, will be referred to the Office of the President and Dean. The President and Dean, in collaboration with the Dean of Students and the Associate Dean for Risk Management and Operations, will determine whether to handle or refer to law enforcement any such inquiries and information. Before providing the Southwestern community with any information about a missing student, the President and Dean will

consult with the Dean of Students and Associate Dean for Risk Management and Operations, and local law enforcement authorities as needed to ensure that communications do not hinder the investigation.

**3. Responding to Other Students**

It is often possible that other students will be anxious about the student presumed to be missing. In such circumstances, the Dean of Students or Associate Dean for Risk Management and Operations, in collaboration with the Campus Security and the President and Dean, will coordinate communication to students about personal safety and, to the extent appropriate, what efforts are being made to locate the missing student, and provide emotional support and counseling referrals as warranted.