

# Missing Student Notification

## DSA.DS.600.001

### Definitions

- A. **Student:** For purposes of this policy, a student is any person currently enrolled on the Oxford campus.
- B. **Residential Student:** A student who resides in on-campus housing under a housing contract/lease and is currently enrolled at the University.
- C. **Fraternity/Sorority Residential Student:** A student who resides in an on-campus fraternity or sorority house.
- D. **Missing:** A student may be considered missing if she or he is overdue in reaching home, campus, or another specific location past the expected arrival, additional factors lead University staff to believe she or he is missing, and a check of the student's residence supports that determination.

### Notification to Students

Students will be given an opportunity during the fall term matriculation process to designate an individual to be contacted by the University if the student is determined to be missing. Returning and transfer students will be given an opportunity to provide this information during the fall term. The designation will remain in effect until changed or revoked by the student.

The form provided for designation will state the circumstances in which the designated individual will be contacted and will include a statement that the University is required by law to also notify the student's custodial parent or guardian if the student is under 18, and not an emancipated individual, at the time he or she is discovered to be missing. If a student is 18 years of age or older and has not designated an individual to be contacted in the event the student is missing, the University will contact the individual that the student listed as an "emergency contact" at the time of enrollment. When a student is missing and the student failed to designate an individual to be contacted under those circumstances, university officials, in their sole discretion, may contact any person whom they believe may have information about the student's whereabouts.

### Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Missing Students

- A. **Confirmed as a Student:** Any University employee or student who receives information that a student is missing, and believes she or he is a student, must immediately report the information or evidence to the University of Mississippi Police Department (UPD).
- B. **If the Person is a Student:** UPD will conduct a preliminary investigation to verify the situation and to determine the circumstances that exist relating to the reported missing student. If UPD determines that the student should be considered missing, an officer will

contact the Office of Leadership and Advocacy, the appropriate outside law enforcement agencies, and, if necessary, the Department of Student Housing to provide the relevant information. The Office of Leadership and Advocacy will relay pertinent information to the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

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 UPD determines that the student should be considered missing, the person making the initial report will be encouraged to make an official missing person report to local police.

C. **If the student is a “residential student” or a “fraternity/sorority residential student,”** the Department of Student Housing or the Office of Fraternal Leadership and Learning (fraternity/sorority residential student) will conduct a preliminary investigation 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 student via her or his telephone by using the number(s) provided.
2. If the student cannot be reached by telephone, a staff member will attempt to visit the on-campus room of the student in question to verify the student's whereabouts and/or wellness, and in some cases, deliver a message to contact a parent or family member who is searching for the student.
3. If the student is not at the room, but the room is occupied, an attempt will be made to gain information on the student's whereabouts and/or wellness from the occupants.
4. If there is no response to a knock on the door of the residence hall room or there are occupants who do not know of the student's whereabouts, a staff member will enter into the room in question, by key if necessary, to perform a health and safety inspection. The staff member 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 student has taken an extended trip or leave from the residence hall.
5. If the student is not found in the residence hall room or fraternity or sorority house, an attempt will be made to gain information on the student's whereabouts from roommates, other members of the residential community, or other friends.
6. Staff members, at any step in the process, will report immediately any suspicious findings to UPD.
7. If these steps provide an opportunity to speak with the missing student, verification of the student's state of health and intention of returning to campus should be made.

A referral, if needed, may be made to the University Counseling Center or other medical agency. Once the student is found, UPD will be contacted to apprise them of the student's state of health and well-being.

If all of these steps do not provide an opportunity to speak with the missing student or to learn her or his whereabouts, UPD will contact, within 24 hours of the student being reported missing, the designated contact person as outlined above.