Missing Person Notification Policy

Policy Statement

This policy contains the official notification procedures of the College of Coastal Georgia for missing students who reside in campus housing, in accordance with the requirements of Section 485(j) of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA).

Students will be informed each academic year that each student has the option to identify a person designated as a confidential contact to be contacted by the College not later than twenty-four (24) hours after the time the student is determined to be missing.

Students who are under age eighteen (18) and are not emancipated will be informed each academic year that the institution is required to notify the custodial parent not later than twenty-four (24) hours after the time the student is determined to be missing.

Reason for Policy

The purpose of this policy is to promote the safety and welfare of the campus community through ensuring compliance with the requirements of Section 488(j) of the Higher Education Opportunity Act regarding the establishment of a missing student notification policy for students who reside in on-campus housing.

Entities Affected By This Policy

All faculty, staff and students at the College are covered by this policy.

Who Should Read This Policy

All faculty, staff, and students at the College should read and be familiar with this policy.

Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>E-Mail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director of Public Safety</td>
<td>(912) 279-5819</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bsipe@ccga.edu">bsipe@ccga.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Website Address for This Policy

www.cCGA.edu/policies/hr

Related Documents/Resources

None

Definitions

These definitions apply to these terms as they are used in this policy:

- **Residential Student**: A student who resides in on-campus housing under a housing contract and is currently enrolled at CCGA.

- **Emancipated**: The term “emancipated” refers to a student, under the age of eighteen (18) years old, that is treated as an adult based upon demonstrated financial independence and a domicile independent of his or her parents.

- **Missing Person**: As used in this policy, the term “missing person” refers to any students whose absence is contrary to the usual pattern of behavior of the student and unusual circumstances may have caused the absence of the student. These “unusual circumstances” may include, but are not limited to, any report or suspicion that the student:
  - May be the victim of foul play;
  - Has expressed suicidal thoughts;
  - Is drug dependent;
  - Is in a life-threatening situation; or
  - Has been with, or is in the company of, persons who may endanger the student’s welfare.

Overview

The College of Coastal Georgia recognizes the importance of safety for our on-campus living community.
I. **Emergency Contact Information**

Pursuant to Title 20, United States Code § 1092(j)(1)(A), all students residing in on-campus housing will be advised that he or she has the option to identify an individual to be contacted by the College not later than twenty-four (24) hours after the time that the student is determined missing.

In the case of students under the age of eighteen (18), and not emancipated, the College is required to notify a custodial parent or guardian not later than twenty-four (24) hours after the time that the student is determined to be missing.

II. **Designation is Voluntary**

The decision to designate an emergency contact is voluntary, but all students are strongly encouraged to do so. A student’s emergency contact designation will remain in effect until changed or revoked by the student.

III. **Confidentiality**

The emergency contact information provided by the student is confidential, and will only be used by College officials to aid in locating a student who has been reported missing or where disclosure is legally required by a search warrant, subpoena, or other valid legal process.

IV. **Notification of Policy**

All students who register for on-campus housing will be advised of this policy at the time of registration and / or upon housing check-in. During the registration process, specific emergency contact information will be captured. At that time, students will have the opportunity to provide separate missing person contact information as well, if they choose to do so.

V. **Reporting a Student as Missing**

In the event that a member of the campus community has reason to believe that a student who resides in an on-campus housing facility is missing, he or she should immediately notify the College’s Public Safety Department.

a. **How to Make a Report.** Any individual wishing to report a student as missing may do so either in person or telephonically.
• Missing person reports may be made in person at the following locations:
  □ Brunswick Campus: Campus Police Department, Central Plant Building, One College Drive, Brunswick, Georgia 31520.
  □ Camden Campus: Campus Police Department (Room 131-F), 8001 Lakes Boulevard, Kingsland, Georgia 31548.

• Missing person reports may be made telephonically by calling the following numbers:
  □ Brunswick Campus: To file a report telephonically during regular business hours (8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday), call (912) 279-5820. For all other times, please call (912) 258-3133.
  □ Camden Campus: To file a report telephonically during regular business hours (8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, call (912) 510-3306. For all other times, please call (912) 552-5277.

b. Taking the Report. When receiving a report of a possible missing student, the Director of Public Safety will ensure the following information is obtained, if possible, from the individual making the report:

• Name and contact information (e.g., address, telephone number, cellular phone number) of the individual making the missing person report;

• Name and vital information of the student reported missing. This should include, if possible, all of the following:
  □ Approximate height and weight;
  □ Hair and eye color;
  □ Scars, tattoos, glasses, hair style or any other defining physical characteristics;
  □ A description of the clothing the student was wearing when last seen, including any accessories;
  □ A description of the student’s vehicle;
Any known medical conditions and medications that the student relies upon (e.g., insulin for diabetes);

Any locations that the individual making the reports knows the missing student commonly frequents;

The names of any other individual who may have information regarding the student’s whereabouts;

A recent photograph, if available; and

A description, in as much detail as possible, as to the circumstances under which the student was last observed.

VI. Investigation Upon Receiving a Report

Upon receiving a report of a missing person, an investigation will be initiated to determine the validity and credibility of that report.

a. Notification. Upon receipt of a missing person report, the Director of Public Safety will immediately notify the Vice President for Student Affairs and initiate an investigation into the student’s absence through designation of an Investigating Officer.

b. Investigation. The Director of Public Safety will initiate an investigation to try to determine the student’s whereabouts. Campus law enforcement personnel will make every reasonable effort to locate the student on campus. At a minimum, the investigation shall consist of the following actions:

- Calling the missing student’s cell phone and sending a text message to the number;

- Conduct a welfare check into the student’s resident hall room;

- Interviewing the student’s roommates, suitemates and known friends;

- Examining social networking sites to determine whether any recent activity has occurred;

- Checking the residence hall to determine the last time the student’s access key was utilized;
• Checking the dining facility to determine the last time the student’s identification card was used;

• Checking with faculty members to determine whether the student was in class or in contact;

• Attempting to locate the student’s vehicle on campus; and

• Contacting area hospitals and law enforcement to determine whether they can provide information regarding the student’s whereabouts.

• Contact employers, if that information is known.

c. Report of Investigation. If the listed actions prove to be unsuccessful in locating the missing student, the Investigating Officer will document his or her findings in an incident report. That report shall include the following information:

● The name and contact information of the individual making the missing person report;

● Name and vital information of the student reported missing;

● Nature of the circumstances supporting the determination that the student is missing, including the results of all inquiries made pursuant to subsection (b), above;

● The date and time the missing person report was received; and

● The date and time the inquiry was completed and a determination the student was missing was made.

VII. Determining Whether a Student is Missing

It is expected that some, if not most, missing person reports at the College will result simply from a student changing his or her routine without informing friends or family of the change.

Nonetheless, if a member of the College community has reason to believe that a student is missing without any known reason, or which may be contrary to the student’s usual patterns of behavior, all efforts will be made immediately to locate the student to determine his or her state of health and well-being.
Accordingly, a student at the College will be determined to be missing when a report is made to the Public Safety Department and the report is determined to be credible. The credibility of any such report may be established if any of the following circumstances are verified:

a. **No Contact.** First, a report may be considered credible if no one has been able to contact the student in the last twenty-four (24) hours, even though reasonable efforts have been made by phone, e-mail, and in-person attempts to do so.

b. **Evidence of Criminal Activity.** Next, evidence that indicates a criminal act may have occurred will establish the credibility of a report. If this occurs, the twenty-four (24) hours waiting period will be discarded.

c. **Reliable Information.** Further, a report may be determined credible if, based upon a reliable source, information exists that the student is in danger due to physical issues, mental illness, or consumption of drugs or alcohol. Again, if this occurs, the twenty-four (24) hours waiting period will be discarded.

d. **Suicidal Concerns.** Finally a report may be considered credible if information exists that the person may be suicidal. If this occurs, the twenty-four (24) hour waiting period will be discarded.

**VIII. Initiation of Notification Procedures**

If the Director of Public Safety determines that a student who is the subject of a missing person report has been missing for more than twenty-four (24) hours and has not returned to the campus, the College shall initiate emergency contact procedures, in accordance with the student’s designation.

In the event the student is under eighteen (18) years of age and not emancipated, the College shall immediately make notification to the custodial parent or guardian of the missing student.

**IX. Notification to Law Enforcement**

Additionally, pursuant to subsection 1902(j)(1)(A)(iv), the Director of Public Safety shall notify the surrounding law enforcement agencies not later than twenty-four (24) hours after the time that a student is determined to be missing under this policy.
X. Community or Press Inquiries

All community or press inquiries surrounding a missing person at the College shall be immediately referred to the Director of Marketing and Public Relations.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities each party has in connection with this missing person notification policy are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director of Public Safety</td>
<td>Ensure compliance with the mandates of this policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Residence Life and Housing</td>
<td>Ensure compliance with the mandates of this policy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Forms

None

Appendices

None