

Missing Student Policy/ 24 Hour Rule

As required by the Higher Education Opportunity Act and in an effort to ensure the safety of our students, Covenant College has established the following missing student protocol. This policy applies to students who reside in campus housing, including off-campus apartment units owned by the college for student residents. The policy may also be applied to students who reside off campus when appropriate.

For purposes of this policy, a student may be considered “missing” if the student’s absence is contrary to his/her usual pattern of behavior and unusual circumstances may have caused the absence. Such circumstances could include, but are not limited to, a report or suspicion of foul play, a reported expression of depression or suicidal thoughts, a suspected drug dependency, suspected involvement in a life-threatening situation or with persons who may have endangered the student’s welfare. Likewise, the absence may be entirely unexplained, yet inconsistent with established norms.

All Covenant College students who reside in on campus housing will be given an opportunity annually to select an individual or individuals to contact in the event they become missing. This individual may or may not be the same person designated as the student’s general emergency contact. The individuals designated as emergency contacts will remain so until changed or revoked by the student. This information will be registered confidentially, and will only be accessible by authorized campus officials.

In the event a student is determined to be missing from campus for 24 hours (or sooner), Covenant College will notify the designed contact person within 24 hours of this determination. (A determination that a student is missing may be made at any time based upon circumstances. It is not necessary to wait a full 24 hours to make this determination.)

If a student is under the age of 18, and is not an emancipated minor, the college must notify a custodial parent or guardian within 24 hours of the determination that the student is missing, IN ADDITION to the person designated by the student.

Further, the college must also notify local law enforcement within 24 hours of the determination that a student is missing, regardless of the student's age. This must occur even if the student elected NOT to provide a contact person in the event they became missing, and regardless of the status of the student.

Any member of the Covenant College community who has information that a residential student may have been missing for a 24 hour period must immediately make notification. (It is not necessary to wait for the full 24 hour period to elapse before making notification. Notification of a missing person may be made at any point it is determined necessary.) Notification of a missing person must be made to one of the following college officials:

- Director of Safety and Security @ 423 593-1403
- Dean of Students @ 706 419-1107
- Assistant Dean of Students for Residence Life @ 706 419-1108
- Resident Director on Duty @ 706 419-1176

In any event, information concerning missing students must also immediately be forwarded to the Safety and Security Department, phone 706 419-1229, or 423 593-1403.

Although not required by statute, all are encouraged to follow the same procedures when non-residential students are suspected of being missing. In order to avoid jurisdictional conflicts when an off-campus and/or commuter student is believed to be missing, the reporting person should also immediately notify local law enforcement authorities. The Safety and

Security Department will assist external authorities with these investigations to the greatest extent allowable.