

# SOUTHWESTERN

## LAW SCHOOL Los Angeles, CA

### Missing Student Policy and Procedures

Administrative policy approved August 25, 2022. Effective immediately.

Revision history: Technical edits made in January 2025.

Related policies and forms: Students Records Policy — FERPA; Notice of Absence from Residence form

Scheduled Review Date: August 2026 (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. Students living in The Residences

This policy applies when Southwestern's Associate Dean for Student Services, Director of Campus Safety and Security, Chief Operating Officer, or Campus Security Supervisor on duty determines that a student who lives in The Residences is missing. For purposes of this policy, Southwestern considers a student to be missing if the student's absence is contrary to their usual pattern of behavior or unusual circumstances may have caused the absence.

Circumstances that could lead Southwestern to consider a student to be missing 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 involved in an accident, 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. Students not living in The Residences

Southwestern also is concerned about the safety of its students who do not reside in The Residences. Concerns about these students should be reported to Campus Security. When a student who does not live in The Residences is

believed to be missing, the reporting person should also immediately notify local law enforcement authorities and then provide the information to Campus Security in case Southwestern is asked to assist external authorities with the investigation.

### **3. Study-abroad students**

Students traveling outside of the host city must provide 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 promptly attempt to locate any student who fails to return from a planned trip 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, Campus Security, and the Associate Dean for Student Services.

## **C. Reporting Procedures**

Any individual who believes that a student who lives in The Residences 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 Director of Campus Safety and Security and the Associate Dean for Student Services. 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 Associate Dean for Student Services.

If Southwestern cannot locate the student following a reasonable search effort, or if Southwestern believes the student is a missing person, Southwestern 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. This contact will occur as soon as possible but not later than 24 hours after determining that a student is missing. The local law enforcement agency will then take charge of the investigation. These notifications may be made by the Associate Dean for Student Services, Director of Campus Safety and Security, Chief Operations Officer, a Vice Dean, or the President and Dean.

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 then notify Campus Security.

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

Multiple outcomes are possible when a student is reported missing. The three most likely possibilities are:

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

In this situation, the Associate Dean for Student Services 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 located but in distress**

The Associate Dean for Student Services will obtain as much information as possible about the student's circumstances, offer assistance as appropriate, and refer the matter to the Student Support and Emergency Team (SSET) for further assessment and support. An appropriate campus official will contact local law enforcement if the student is in immediate danger.

##### **3. After a search, the student is not located or 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 Associate Dean for Student Services, Director of Campus Safety and Security, 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 and notify any additional contact person designated by the student.

**2. Annual notifications to students living at The Residences**

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 student living at The Residences.

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

All students living at The Residences 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, outside law enforcement authorities will generally handle communications regarding missing students. 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 Associate Dean for Student Services and the Director of Campus Safety and Security, 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

Associate Dean for Student Services, the Director of Campus Safety and Security, 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 Associate Dean for Student Services or the Director of Campus Safety and Security, in collaboration with the President and Dean, will coordinate communication with 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.

**G. Policy Revisions**

Southwestern reserves the right to change or modify any aspect of this Policy at any time, with or without prior notice.