

Student Policy – Missing Person Policy

Policy:

This policy applies to students who reside in campus housing and in response to reports of missing students as required by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008. Bismarck State College recognizes the importance of safety for our on campus living community. This policy assists with procedures based on facts and circumstances known to Bismarck State College campus that a student has been determined to be a “missing person.”

Definition:

Bismarck State College will define a student as a “missing person” if the person’s absence is contrary to the usual pattern of behavior of the student and unusual circumstances may have caused the absence of the student. Circumstances can include, but are not limited to, a report or suspicion that the missing person 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.

Procedures:

A. Emergency Contact Information Designation

1. Students age 18 and over or emancipated minors will be given the opportunity during each semester to designate an individual or individuals to be contacted by the college no more than 24 hours after the time that the student is determined to be missing in accordance with procedures in this policy. A designation will remain in effect until changed or revoked by the student.
2. In the event a student is under the age of 18 that is not emancipated and determined to be missing pursuant to the procedures listed below, the College is required to notify a custodial parent or guardian no more than 24 hours after the student is determined to be missing in accordance with the procedures.

B. Official Notification Procedures for Missing Persons

1. Any individual on campus who has information that a residential student may be a missing person must notify the Student and Residence Life Office (45464 or 45465) or Security Office (45489 or 9 for an outside line and 527-1972) as soon as possible.
2. The Security Office will gather all essential information about the residential student from the reporting person and from the student's acquaintances (description, clothes last worn, where student might be, who student might be with, vehicle description, information about the physical and mental well being of the student, an up-to-date photograph, class schedule, etc.) Appropriate campus staff will be notified to aid in the search for the student.
3. If the above actions are unsuccessful in locating the student or it is apparent immediately that the student is a missing person (i.e. a witnessed abduction), the Security Office will contact the appropriate local law enforcement agency to report the student as a missing person and the local law enforcement agency will take charge of the investigation.
4. No later than 24 hours after determining that a residential student is missing, the Student and Residence Life Office will notify the emergency contact (for students 18 and over) or the parent/guardian (for students under the age of 18) that the student is believed to be missing.

C. Campus Communication Regarding Missing Students

1. In cases involving missing persons, law enforcement personnel are best situated to provide information to the media that is designed to elicit public assistance in the search for a missing person. Therefore, all communications regarding missing students will be handled by outside law enforcement authorities, who may consult with the college's Communications Office. All inquiries to the college regarding missing students, or information provided to any individual at the college about a missing student, shall be referred to the Security Office, who shall refer inquiries and information to law enforcement authorities.
2. Prior to providing the Bismarck-Mandan community with any information about a missing student, the Communications Office shall consult with the Security Office and with local law enforcement authorities to ensure that communications do not hinder the investigation.

Reference:

Portions of this policy are drawn from the policy developed by Goucher College and Farleigh Dickinson University.

History of This Policy:

First policy draft reviewed by the Operations Council on August 4, 2009 and approved by the Executive Council on August 5, 2009.