



Wilce Student Health Center
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shs.osu.edu

Dear Faculty Member,

People often miss work or school when they feel unwell and miserable with different types of minor illness such as upper respiratory tract infections, the flu, a gastrointestinal “bug”, migraine headaches, asthma, menstrual disorders, etc. While feeling too ill to go to work or class, most do not seek in-person medical care, choosing to remain at home to rest and care for themselves. At the Wilce Student Health Center we encourage self-care for students with these types of minor maladies.

Student Health Services clinicians do not routinely provide written excuses for students who miss classes or assignments due to short-term illnesses or injuries. The vast majority of legitimate excuses for missing classes, exams or work (such as colds, headaches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, dizziness, etc.) do not lend themselves to retrospective objective confirmation. Problems arise when ill students feel they must come to SHS for an appointment just to provide documentation of the missed class assignment, exam, etc. It disadvantages the sick student who must leave their comfortable, self-care environment to come to SHS. It exposes other students, faculty and staff to potentially infectious agents. It also greatly reduces the number of available appointment times for those students who should be seeking healthcare.

We encourage students who need to miss class to notify their faculty that they are ill or injured and unable to attend, preferably before class or the missed assignment, and to follow the instructions provided by the course syllabus. We encourage faculty members to have a conversation with the student that allows them to discuss their personal situation and identify how they can fulfill their academic responsibilities while working around their illness.

Students are able to request a verification of visit document from their medical provider for an illness than can be used to begin a dialogue with you. This letter serves as verification that Student Health Services does not provide absence excuses. We hope this will promote both the philosophical and educational foundation of higher education; namely to model and nurture honesty, integrity, and citizenship in emerging adults.

Our policy is consistent with the policies of our peer institutions as well as the American College Health Association. It also reflects our commitment to maintaining patient confidentiality, teaching students how to use healthcare resources appropriately, and supporting meaningful dialogue between students and teachers.

Your assistance in working with students who are ill or injured but practicing self-care is greatly appreciated. As always Student Health Service will continue to assist students and faculty by helping with treatment and documentation of significant health problems. Should you have any questions about this policy please feel free to go to our website for references or you may contact me directly.

On behalf of our students, I thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gladys M. Gibbs, MD, MS
Director, Wilce Student Health Services
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