



EXCUSE NOTES

SUBJECT: "Excuse" Notes for Absences for Class or Work

POLICY: Washington University Student Health Center Danforth Campus **does not** provide written notes for missed classes, examinations, extracurricular activities, or employment. Whenever possible, students should schedule visits to the Student Health Center so that there is no conflict with a class/work obligation.

PURPOSE: In general, the intent of this policy is to place responsibility for class/work attendance and achievement upon the student. Many other colleges and universities have adopted similar policies.

RATIONALE: Course requirements and class attendance are administrative matters between the student and faculty member. Student Health Center staff do not have the power to excuse students from their classes or jobs; only instructors and employers can do this.

It is very difficult to judge objectively whether a student can attend class or get to work; and it is impossible to assess the seriousness of a past condition when there are no longer any signs or symptoms. In the event a student has a contagious illness that might endanger the welfare of others, a note would be provided.

The practice of issuing medical excuses places the Student Health Center in a parental role and denies the student the opportunity to function as a responsible adult. In the Washington University Community, we respect the student's role in notifying instructors and employers.

PROCEDURES

1. Each student who comes to the Student Health Center – Danforth Campus for services is required to “sign in.” At the conclusion of the visit, the student may request a "walk out note" which has verification of the date of the visit to the Student Health Center. If the student needs to provide confirmation of a visit to an instructor or employer, this form may be used for that purpose and should be adequate documentation that medical/nursing care was actually sought. Diagnosis and treatment are not indicated on the form, following HIPAA federal laws.
2. Contents of health records are strictly confidential. If a student wishes that the Student Health Center provide diagnosis/treatment of information to the instructor or employer, an ***authorization for release of information must be signed and placed in the chart. The person authorized to receive this information may then call the Student Health Center at 935-6666 to request additional details of the visit.*** All such communications will serve **only** to verify an illness or injury and should **not** be interpreted as excusing an absence.
3. In the event of illness or injury, requiring hospitalization or extended absence from classes, Student Health Center – Danforth Campus will notify the appropriate dean if the student has given us permission. The dean will determine on a need-to-know basis when to share such information with whom.

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