



## Policy on Student Written Excuse Notes

**Administered By:** Student Affairs/Center for Student Wellbeing

**Approved By:**

  
Dr. Jeff Gingerich, President

**Policy Effective Date:** December 9, 2025

**Policy Number:**

**New Policy   x   or Revision of Existing Policy**

### 1. Statement of Policy

- a. St. Bonaventure University's (SBU) Mission includes "endeavor[ing] to prepare our students for the challenges they will face in their professional careers and personal lives" as well as the Franciscan Values that "We are a COMMUNITY...Nurturing COMPASSION, Seeking WISDOM, Building INTEGRITY."
- b. The Center for Student Wellbeing (CSW) acknowledges routine illnesses, minor injuries, and increased mental stressors can be more common in college students. In accordance with SBU's Mission and Values, the Center for Student Wellbeing (CSW) encourages students in becoming independent adults involved in learning how to care for oneself when sick, deciding when to seek care, and making mature decisions when they are too sick to attend class, work, and/or sport activities.
- c. CSW will not provide students with written class, work, or sport excuse notes due to short-term illness or injury. This is consistent with many peer institutions as well as the American College Health Association recommendations on excuse notes. Moreover, if the student effectively and appropriately self-managed their symptoms, CSW may have no direct knowledge of the student's condition at the time of the absence.
- d. CSW recommends students who need to miss class or sport activities follow the notification instructions outlined in the course syllabus or provided by coaching staff. CSW encourages faculty and coaches to communicate with students to help them identify ways they can fulfill their academic/sport responsibilities without jeopardizing their health or that of others. CSW staff do not communicate directly with faculty or other staff on a student's behalf.

## 2. Scope

- a. Applies to CSW staff, SBU students, faculty, and coaches.

## 3. Definitions

- a. **Medicat:** Electronic medical records program.

## 4. Procedures

- a. Appointments
  - i. When scheduling, students should first attempt to schedule appointments that do not conflict with their scheduled classes, practices, or games.
  - ii. Students seen in the Health Services clinic may request a copy of the full visit note once locked by the care provider, which is typically within 24 hours of appointment. Students seen for Counseling Services may request documentation to verify visit attendance.
    1. This note will be sent by secure message to the patient's Medicat patient portal account.

NOTE: These documents are a part of the student's confidential treatment record and may contain sensitive health information. CSW is not responsible for any health disclosures made as a result of the student sharing or printing the note.

### b. Medical Provider Recommendations

- i. The CSW medical provider may give medical recommendations, based on patient diagnosis, written in the patient's visit note or in a progress note. Recommendations could include, e.g., not to attend class if febrile, or until afebrile for 24 hours without use of fever reducing medication, to wear a mask, follow supportive care measures.
  1. These recommendations are not excuse notes and should not be taken as such.
  2. Upon student request, recommendations can be sent by secure message to the patient's Medicat patient portal account.

### c. "Return to..." Notes

- i. CSW does not provide "return to work" or "return to class notes."
- ii. In limited circumstances and at their discretion, CSW Medical provider may provide return to sports notes.

## 5. References

- a. Andrew Guertler MD (2023) Policy for Notes to Professors, attachment RE: JMU Health Center Excuse Policy. ACHA Connect Open Forum. <https://community.acha.org/discussion/policy-for-notes-to-professors#bm5888926d-c53f-43b0-bea2-8ddf319033cf>
- b. Janet Corson-Rikert MD & William A. Christmas MD (2009) The Medical Excuse Game Revisited, Journal of American College Health, 57:5, 561-564, DOI: 10.3200/JACH.57.5.561-564
- c. St. Bonaventure University (2025) Office of Mission Integration: Mission & Values. <https://www.sbu.edu/about/values-mission>
- d. University of Texas at Austin & University Health Services (2025) Doctor's Notes: Director's Letter. <https://www.healthyhorns.utexas.edu/uhs/docs/Directors-Letter.pdf>
- e. William A. Christmas MD (1998) The Medical Excuse Game as It Is Played at Duke University, Journal of American College Health, 46:5, 235-237, DOI: 10.1080/07448489809600228

6. **Appendices**
  - a. None