IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Thielen Student Health Center
Ames, Iowa 50011-2260
515 294-5802
FAX 515 294-1190

August 2026

Joint Memo from the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost and Thielen Student Health Center

Subject: Class Absence Excuses

Class attendance is an individual student responsibility and a matter between you and your instructors. With limited exceptions, Thielen Student Health Center (TSHC) providers do not provide a "class absence excuse." If you will be absent due to illness, you are responsible for contacting your instructors as soon as possible to notify them of your illness, and to determine how best to make up the class time or missed assignments.

It is often the best course of action for persons with illnesses to remain at home and follow self-care guidelines until their symptoms lessen and they can return to school and/or work. This means, for example, staying out of classrooms and workplaces while acutely ill with a cold or influenza. It is rarely medically necessary to be seen by a health care professional in these instances. It's also not possible for Thielen Student Health clinical staff to verify the presence or severity of illnesses that have already resolved. Please do not ask for a "retroactive class absence excuse" from the health center in such instances.

In addition, please note that the Dean of Students Emergency Notification procedures are not intended for use in these types of non-emergency absences. Those procedures are intended to assist you with instructor notification when crisis or emergency circumstances make it difficult for you to contact instructors personally.

TSHC providers may recommend that you remain out of class in the following instances:

- **If you are diagnosed with a contagious illness that requires you to remain out of work or school per specific public health protocol.** Examples of illnesses that fall into this category include measles, mumps, or pertussis (whooping cough). In such instances, TSHC staff will work with community public health officials to ensure all health guidelines are followed. Return-to-class guidelines will be provided, and this will rarely involve a follow-up visit to the health center.
- **If you are diagnosed with an illness that will require you to be hospitalized, and/or to remain out of class for an extended period of time to recuperate.** In these cases, TSHC staff will provide documentation on a case-by-case basis and will work with the Dean of Students Office to assist in communication with your instructors. It remains your responsibility to make arrangements to make up missed course work, or to follow university guidelines for withdrawal from courses if that becomes necessary. Examples that may fall into this category include surgical recovery periods or recuperation from serious episodes of illness.

Again, we encourage you to proactively communicate with your instructors and work collaboratively to navigate your coursework.

Ann Marie VanDerZanden, PhD
Associate Provost for Academic Programs

Erin Baldwin, MHA, MPH
Associate Vice President, Student Health and Wellness
Director, Thielen Student Health Center

Academic Year 2026-2027