

## **Medical Leave of Absence Policy**

Medical Leave is an authorized absence from the College for medical or psychological reasons. During medical leave, students cannot attend classes and are required to stay off campus. Students on medical leave are expected to focus on the evaluation, treatment and/or management of the illness or condition which necessitated the leave. Siena College Health Services coordinates all medical leaves for students under their care/purview and for any physical health related conditions. Siena College Counseling Center coordinates medical leaves for students who will be absent for mental health/psychological reasons. The two offices (Health Services or Counseling Center) will submit a recommendation to the Dean of Students Office and a medical leave will be initiated if the student will be absent for five (5) or more days. The Dean's Office will inform required faculty and administrators via email. Details of the absence are not released to faculty members or administrators in order to maintain confidentiality of the student's private medical information. Students are expected to contact their professors regarding any missed assignments.

This policy is intended to provide supportive intervention for students experiencing medical or psychological related issues. To the extent that a student's safety is at risk, efforts to safeguard the student takes precedence over maintaining the student's confidentiality during the event of an acute psychological or medical emergency. In these situations, information deemed relevant to a student's safety may be released to those who have a compelling reason to have the information because of the role they are playing in safeguarding the student. The response to student crises should be proportional to the risks posed to or by the individual. This may require a high-risk student to be evaluated at Samaritan Hospital (voluntary evaluations), the Capital District Psychiatric Center (CDPC) Crisis Unit (involuntary evaluations) or another medical/psychiatric facility when appropriate. In such cases, Siena College will work with the student, their family and provider to best support the student. Siena reserves the right to place the student on involuntary medical leave, or to take other action(s) as deemed necessary including, but not limited to, relocation, restriction(s) and/or suspension from housing.

### A. Voluntary Medical Leave:

1. A student may request voluntary medical leave if the student has a medical or psychological condition that necessitates their absence from the College.
2. The student must submit documentation of the nature of the medical condition to the health care professionals at Health Services or Counseling Center for review. Students may be required to sign a Release of Information Form to allow the appropriate College officials to speak to the treating physician or licensed mental health professional.
3. The case will be reviewed by the Director of Health Services or Director of the Counseling Center or designee and they will forward their recommendation for medical leave to the Dean of Students office.
4. The Dean of Students office will place the student on medical leave and notify the student's instructors, the Director of Community Living (if a residential student) and Academic Affairs that the student is on medical leave.
5. Students on medical leave may not attend any classes during the term of the medical leave. In addition, students on medical leave must leave campus and remain off-campus

until they are cleared to return by the Dean of Students, or their designee, in consultation with Siena College Health Services or Siena College Counseling Center.

6. If the student chooses not to return to the College, the Dean of Students or designee will inform the student of the withdrawal process for medical reasons and review the potential return requirements and timelines, with the student and/or family. Depending on the circumstances, the Dean's office may have to initiate the withdrawal process after discussions with the student and/or family.

B. Involuntary Medical Leave:

1. A determination of involuntary medical leave will be based upon an individualized assessment of safety or public health reasons, including communicable disease or when the student is at risk to self or to the community. The Director of Health Services or Director of the Counseling Center will determine if a student should be placed on involuntary medical leave and provide a recommendation to the Dean of Students office. The Dean of Students, or designee, will place a student on medical leave and notify the student's instructors, the Director of Community Living (if a residential student) and Academic Affairs that the student is on medical leave. A student may be placed on involuntary medical leave, including but not limited to, the following situations:
  - a. It has been determined by Health Services clinician (MD, PA or NP) that the student requires more intensive medical care than can be provided in an ambulatory setting.
  - b. The student has a medical condition that requires isolation from the College community for safety or public health reasons, such as a communicable disease or if the student is at risk to self or others.
  - c. The student refuses care or to follow reasonable guidelines for self-care, such that failure to do so places the student's life or others at risk.
  - d. The Director of the Counseling Center determines the student poses a risk of harm to themselves or others and/or is not able to care for themselves at the present time.
  - e. The student is admitted to a medical or psychiatric treatment facility. (see note below)
2. Siena College will place the student on medical leave, effective immediately, and the student's parent(s), guardian, or emergency contact will be notified of the student's situation.
3. Students on involuntary medical leave may not attend any classes or return to campus housing during the term of the medical leave.
  - a. Requirement to leave campus for medical reasons of health and safety: Students are required to comply with College policy to vacate their assigned on campus residential space on a temporary or permanent basis due to communicable illness or public health directive. In the instance of a medical situation requiring self-quarantine or self-isolation due to a communicable disease or in a medical situation where care cannot be managed safely within the College environment the student is required to leave campus. The student may not be permitted to continue to reside in their residential space or will be required to self-isolate at home or make alternative housing arrangements off campus for the period of time determined by the Health Services. All students will be required to be cleared for return to campus by the Health Services in order to return to campus.

- b. Students on involuntary medical leave must leave campus and remain off campus until they are cleared to return by the Dean of Students, or their designee, in consultation with Siena College Health Services or Siena College Counseling Center. The student is advised to contact their parents/guardians to arrange safe transportation home. If the student cannot get themselves home or if the parents or guardians themselves are unable to come to campus within a specified period, the student must make housing arrangements off campus in coordination with the Dean of Students Office. The student will be required to leave campus within a specified time frame that provides for the safety of the student in order to make transportation arrangements to travel to the location where they will complete the medical leave. The student must be cleared by Health Services and the Dean of Students Office for return.
4. If the student chooses not to return to the College, the Dean of Students or designee will withdraw the student for medical reasons and review this process, as well as potential return timelines, with the student and their family.

Note: A student, who is assessed at Samaritan Hospital, the CDC Crisis Intervention Unit or other medical/psychiatric facility due to a mental health crisis and released without hospitalization, will be placed on a medical leave effective immediately and parents/emergency contact will be responsible for taking them home. As part of the follow-up process, the student/family will be in communication with the Dean of Students or designee following the crisis to develop a continuity of care/support plan. During that meeting or communication, the student will be provided with recommendations aimed at best supporting the student and address any behaviors associated with the event that may have violated the student Code of Conduct. A common component for support includes a referral to the Counseling Center. Students are strongly encouraged to sign a release of information form with their treatment facility and the Counseling Center to facilitate continuity of care.

C. Process for Return/Readmission from Medical Leave:

When the leave is for medical reasons:

1. The Dean of Students or designee, in consultation with Health Services, will make the final decision as to whether the student will be permitted to return from medical leave.
2. The student may be required to submit documentation from their provider to Health Services in which the provider recommends that the student resume college studies and stating any other pertinent medical information, including specifying any accommodation requested of the College. If the student was admitted for inpatient treatment, they may be asked to submit to Health Services a copy of the discharge plan, as well as a signed release of information form to allow the appropriate College officials to speak to the primary provider.
3. The College will review the recommendations of the primary provider and determine if the recommendations regarding further care can be accommodated.
4. Under certain circumstances (e.g. an extended voluntary absence or any involuntary leave), a student may be required to meet with the Dean of Students or designee prior to being permitted to return to the College to discuss the terms of the student's return, and, if appropriate, discuss continuing treatment plan for the student. The Dean of Students or

designee may also address any behaviors associated with related incidents that may have violated the Student Code of Conduct.

5. It is the student's responsibility to contact their instructors to make arrangements for any missed class assignments or exams. Additionally, the student is highly encouraged to contact the Academic Success Center (ASC) so they can assist with academic support and coordination.
6. Students who fail to comply with this medical leave of absence policy, which includes leaving campus and not returning until their return is approved, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the College.

When the leave is for psychological reasons:

1. The Dean of Students or designee, in consultation with Counseling Center professionals, will make the final decision as to whether the student will be permitted to return from medical leave.
2. The student may be required to submit documentation from their provider in which the provider recommends that the student resume college studies and stating any other pertinent medical information, including specifying any accommodation requested of the College. If the student was admitted for inpatient treatment, they may be asked to submit to the Counseling Center a copy of the discharge plan, as well as a signed release of information form to allow the appropriate College officials to speak to the primary provider.
3. The College will review the recommendations of the primary provider and determine if the recommendations regarding further care can be accommodated.
4. The student will be required to meet with the Dean of Students or designee prior to being permitted to return to the College to discuss the terms of the student's return, and if appropriate, discuss continuing treatment plan for the student (e.g. a student admitted for inpatient treatment at medical or psychiatric treatment facility). The Dean of Students or designee may also address any behaviors associated with related incidents that may have violated the Student Code of Conduct.
5. It is the student's responsibility to contact their instructors to make arrangements for any missed class assignments or exams. Additionally, the student is highly encouraged to contact the Academic Success Center (ASC) so they can assist with academic support and coordination.
6. Students who fail to comply with this medical leave of absence policy, which includes leaving campus and not returning until their return is approved, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the College.

Student Health Services and Counseling Center *do not* notify professors or College offices regarding absences of four (4) days or less. Students will be expected to contact their professors directly about these brief periods of missed coursework.