

## TEMPLATE LETTER FOR PRACTICES TO USE

Dear Head Teacher,

### **Re: Medical certificates**

I understand that the parents of ..... have recently been asked by your school to provide a medical certificate to validate their child's absence from school. The GP, Dr ....., was unable to oblige with this request.

In general GPs do not provide certificates for children; the school is generally satisfied by a parent's explanation of the absence.

GPs do not provide short term sickness certification for periods of less than 7 days and are unable to issue medical certificates for longer periods of sickness absence unless the patient was seen by the GP at the time of the illness. GPs are not responsible for issuing medical certificates for school children. A refusal to provide this certification is in accord with the Government policy to reduce GP paperwork and preserve GP time for clinical care. Please see;

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_4003147](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4003147)

When a child has missed an exam the examination boards do not require the GP to provide a certificate before special consideration of the case. Please see <http://www.jcq.org.uk/attachments/published/538/Final%20%20RAG%2007%2D08.pdf>

A case of a child with recurrent, short-term illnesses needs very sensitive and expert management by the school and the School's Health Service in consultation with the parents and the child. The school doctor should seek any additional medical information by directly contacting the GP with the consent of the parent, or of the child if competent to give legally valid consent.

In cases of more prolonged absence the problem needs very careful assessment by the school and School Health Service to determine how best to provide education for the child. Again the school doctor may, with appropriate consent, seek any additional medical information directly from the GP.

It is most important that the GP retains the full confidence of any child, but it is particularly important for those children that have problems resulting in poor school attendance where a trusted doctor-patient relationship may be critical for the child's ongoing care.

I hope you will understand therefore that it was not possible for the GP to issue a medical certificate as requested on this occasion.

Yours faithfully,