SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE
LOCAL MEDICAL COMMITTEE

'Suite 5b' Anson Court, Horninglow Street, Burton on Trent, Staffs DE14 1NG
Tel: 01283 534384 Fax: 01283 562824
Email: enquiry@sslmc.co.uk
Website: www.sslmc.co.uk

Dear Head Teacher

Re: **Medical Certificates**

South Staffordshire LMC exists by government statute to advise and support GPs.

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.

I have to draw your attention to the fact that 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. In general GPs do not provide certificates for children as the parent's explanation of the absence is generally sufficient for the purposes of the school.
Provision of medical certificates for school children is not part of a GP's responsibility and a refusal to provide this certification is in accord with the Government policy to reduce GP paperwork and preserve valuable GP time for clinical care. Please see:
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

In cases where a child has recurrent short term illnesses this is a matter for 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 the child if competent to give legally valid consent.
In cases where there is 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
Dr David Dickson
LMC Secretary

Chairman: Dr Malcolm MacKinnon Secretary: Dr David Dickson
Treasurer/Vice Chairman: Dr Charles Pidsley