WALLASEY MEDICAL CENTRE

1 Wallasey Crescent, Ickenham, Middlesex UB10 8SA

Tel (surgery): 01895 674156 Fax: 01895 623334

Dr Kitur P Patel

Practice Code: E86619

To head teacher of the school

2016

Dear Sir/Madam

I have been asked to provide a note regarding a pupil of your school, ……..., for the purpose of examination mitigation:

When a child misses an examination
GMS GPs are not contractually obliged to provide a sick note for pupils who are off sick from school. They are also not obliged to provide sickness certification for students that miss an exam or believe their performance was affected due to illness. Unfortunately; many GPs still receive requests for the latter.

The BMA's General Practitioners Committee (GPC) therefore wrote to the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Ofqual) about this, and has received the attached response in Appendix 1, which highlights that medical proof should not be required.

Thank you for your assistance.

Kind regards

Wallasey Medical Centre
1 Wallasey Crescent
Ickenham
Middlesex
UB10 8SA

Appendix 1 Letter from the General Practitioners Committee (GPC) to Ofqual and their reply:

BMA House, Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9JP

E CScott@bma.org.uk

Andrew Hall
Chief Executive
Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency
83 Piccadilly
London
W1J 8QA

General Practitioners Committee
Contracts & Performance subcommittee

9 September 2009

Dear Andrew

Examinations and sickness certification

Every year, the General Practitioners Committee receive a significant number of queries relating to examinations and the provision of sickness certification by GPs. It has become apparent that the majority of these queries are the result of a widespread misunderstanding about the kind of certification that GPs provide. I write to you in the hope that our organisations can work together to negate these misconceptions and help to provide candidates with accurate information in the event that they have to miss an examination through illness.

GPs do not provide sick notes for schoolchildren. When children are absent from school owing to illness, schools may request a letter from a parent or guardian, and this is no different during an exam period. However, children who have missed exams due to illness are frequently told by schools that a note from a doctor is required; but this cannot be provided by a GP. Aside from the fact that parents/guardians are responsible for excusing their children from school, GPs cannot provide retrospective sickness certification. When a child suffers from a long-term condition, any certification will be provided by the responsible specialist.

It is not clear whether the misconceptions are the result of information provided by exam boards or whether they develop within the institutions, but I believe that it would be the benefit of all concerned for these misunderstandings to be corrected via the provision of accurate information to education institutions. In 2002 in it's 'Making A Difference – general practitioners report', the Regulatory Impact Unit's public sector team estimated that a potential 47,000 appointments could be saved by correcting misconceptions on the role of GPs in examination sickness certification.

I hope that you will agree that this is an issue that should be addressed and I will be happy to meet with you to discuss further.

Dr John Canning
Chairman of the GPC Contracts & Performance subcommittee

Isabel Nisbet
Acting Chief Executive

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27 JAN 2010

Ofqual

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and Examinations Regulator
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25 January 2010

Dr John Canning
Chairman of the GPC Contracts & Performance Subcommittee
General Practitioners Committee
BMA House
Tavistock Square
London
WC1H 9JP

Our ref: RS2031

Dear Dr Canning,

Thank you for your letter of 9 September 2009, addressed to Andrew Hall, which, following your second letter, sent on 15 December 2009 has been passed to me as Acting Chief Executive of Ofqual, for response.

Awarding Organisations make no requirement for pupils to obtain a medical certificate in support of an application for special consideration. Students are asked for information in support of their application, but this may take the form of a statement by the school. The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) has confirmed that as far as they are concerned, if a student was absent from an examination as a result of illness and has the support of the school or centre to be absent, special consideration will be granted on that basis. Awarding organisations do not insist that medical proof is provided.

I am sure that you have considered the likelihood that the misconception stems from the conventional necessity for adults to produce a sick note after long periods of absence from work. In order to address this issue with the schools we have contacted the Department for Children Schools and Families and requested that they made local authorities aware (via their weekly email) of this message, which they have now done. We have also informed the Joint Council for Qualifications and have posted a notice on our website. In addition we will pass on this message to the teacher associations and unions.

I hope this response is useful, but I can assure you that the regulations do not ask for medical corroboration in these circumstances and that I do not believe any misconception stems from the awarding organisations.

Yours sincerely,

Isabel M. Nisbet

Isabel Nisbet
Acting Chief Executive

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