**Advice on the Provision of GP Letters for School Children unable to sit examinations due to illness**

As we approach exam season in schools we thought it would be useful for the LMC to provide a clarification about the provision of letters for school children who are unable to sit examinations due to illness. **GPs are under no obligation to provide letters in these circumstances.**

The following is extracted from the BMA guidance [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/employment/gp-practices/service-provision/supporting-pupils-at-school)

“It should be noted that 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.

GPC has sought and received confirmation from the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator that Awarding Organisations make no requirement for pupils to obtain a medical certificate in support of their 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 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.”

In order to assist practices who wish to either refuse to undertake this work, or charge a fee should they chose to do the work, the LMC have written a template (below) with wording for a letter which practices may wish to send to parents and/or schools if they receive requests for letters certifying illness for children during exam periods.

*You have requested a letter from the GP concerning your child’s illness which* ***prevented/affected****\* their ability to sit an examination.*

*It is the responsibility of a child’s parent, legal guardian or carer to provide a note explaining why the child is off school and/or unable to sit an examination and GPs have no legal or contractual obligation to provide sick notes for school children; if under specific circumstances they decide to do so then they are entitled to charge a fee for undertaking this work. The General Practitioner’s Committee of the British Medical Association has confirmed with the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator that Awarding Organisations make no requirement for pupils to obtain a medical certificate in support of their application for special consideration if they are unable to attend an examination.*

***We are therefore unable to provide a letter from the GP.\*/If you require a letter from the GP then we can provide this on receipt of a fee of £xx\*\*.***

***\*Delete as appropriate***

***\*\*Insert fee agreed by practice***

Drafted by David Gibbs, Head of Business Support, Derby and Derbyshire LMC, April 2017.