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.

We have been advised by South Staffordshire LMC, which exists by Government statute, of 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's policy to reduce GP paperwork and preserve valuable GP time for clinical care. Please see: **Bureaucracy busting concordat: principles to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and administrative burdens on general practice - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)**. 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.

In cases where a child has recurrent short-term illnesses, this is a matter for very sensitive and expert management by the school in consultation with the parents and the child. In cases where there is more prolonged absence, the problem needs very careful assessment and the school, with appropriate consent, may seek 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