



## Harrow Council responds positively to LMC request regarding school sick notes

Drs Meena Thakur and Noreen Ryan of Harrow LMC recently wrote to Harrow Council regarding requests for sick slips from local schools, following a school's claim that GP sick slips are required by the Council. The LMC has since received a very positive response.

In his letter to Harrow LMC, Patrick O'Dwyer, Divisional Director Education Services, outlined a practical approach to school sickness and absence which we would like to see reflected across London:

"I would like to reassure GPs that Harrow Council and its school does not require parents to supply medical verification in respect of every child who is absent from school due to illness; schools should only require this where a child's attendance has deteriorated to a level of concern and there appears to be no satisfactory reason for the level of absences.

"Where a child's absence does fall to a level of concern, parents are requested to provide medical verification to support any future absences due to illness. It is made clear to schools and parents that does not mean that parents must supply a formal letter or certification from their GP which we appreciate can cost parents and additionally take up GP time unnecessarily. Medical verification can be GP appointment cards, NHS appointment confirmation text messages, copy of prescription for the child or showing the school the medication prescribed. We have provided some parents with slips to bring to the GP to verify their visit to avoid formal certificates, but again parents are only required to do this where the child's attendance has fallen to a level of concern. Furthermore to avoid congesting valuable GP and avoid creating an over dependence on medical services, our schools are also advised that for minor illnesses that do not require a child to see a GP but the child's attendance level are a concern, that parents should be informed to bring the child to the school welfare rather than the GP as they will be able to confirm the child is unwell and may be able to provide some helpful advice on common, minor illnesses and ailments."

Harrow Council will be writing to all their schools, both primary and secondary, to remind them of this policy.

Practices can access template letters and other resources from our GP State of Emergency website.