



ASCOT MEDICAL CENTRE

Brook House, Brook Avenue, Ascot SL5 7GB

Fit (Sick) Note Guidance for Children

The surgery is often contacted by parents requesting evidence to support their child being absent from school due to sickness, for example a request for a **'Fit Note'** which is also called a MED3 or Sick Note. However, GP practices are unable to provide these for school children or those in education.

The Fit Note, or to give its official title, 'A Statement of Fitness for Work', is used as a form of evidence that can show proof of illness to an employer or be used as proof to access health-related benefits. It can also be used as evidence for eligibility for statutory sick pay (SSP). It is designed specifically for those in work and not those in school.

As such, the surgery cannot supply a Fit Note for a child's absence from school. The only proof that should be required for a child being off sick is a note from the parent/guardian/carers, as they are responsible for excusing their children for any absences from school and this should be evidence enough for the educational establishment. When a child suffers from a long-term condition, any certification will be provided by the medical specialist responsible for their long-term care.

There should, therefore, be no reason for any evidence to be supplied to support a child's absence from school. If a letter is requested as evidence for school absence, this is a private, non-NHS service and, as such, would attract a charge. The same will apply for any requests for retrospective requests for school absences due to sickness. A GP surgery will not be able to provide this information.

Absence During Examination Periods

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. Where a child has missed an exam, Examination Boards have confirmed that they do not require the GP to provide a certificate before special consideration of the case.

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 the following:

Statement from Joint Council for Qualifications

I can confirm that GPs are not expected to routinely provide medical notes. Where a school or college feels able to substantiate the candidate's absence from an examination, then medical documentation is not required. For example, the candidate is seen to be falling ill the previous day or earlier in the week. Alternatively, the candidate has a long-standing medical condition which is known to the school or college and this has 'flared up', manifested itself, which has led to the candidate being absent from the examination.

In the above scenarios the school or college would produce a typed statement, signed by a senior leader.