Introduction of “Fit Notes” - the Statement of Fitness for Work
A Guide for Staff Working in Schools

With effect from 6th April 2010, the way your GP surgery deals with certified sickness absence has changed.

The current sick note/medical certificate has been replaced by a statement of fitness for work, or “fit note”, which will help employees get the support they need to get back to work.

Under the new fit note system a GP will be able to advise whether an employee is either unfit to work, or may be fit for work if certain temporary adjustments are made.

You should continue to submit fit notes to your school in the normal way. If the fit note states that you are “not fit for work” it will be used to arrange your sick pay. If, however, the form states that you “may be fit to work” you will need to discuss this advice with your headteacher (or designated officer) to see if it is possible for the support you require to be provided in order for you to return to work on an agreed date and with the appropriate adjustments in place for a specified period. Should it be decided that it is not possible for you to return to work until you have recovered further, you will remain on sick leave. Please note that, in these circumstances, you do not need to return to your doctor for a new fit note.

The introduction of the fit note does not affect the requirements for the payment of Statutory Sick Pay, which remain unchanged nor does it relieve employers of their responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act. As before, a fit note statement is still not required until after the seventh calendar day of sickness.

All employees should re-familiarise themselves with their responsibilities for notifying their place of work that they will be absent due to illness as set out in Part 1, Section 3 of the “Caring about Sickness – The Management of Sickness Absence” policy for schools. This policy will be updated in due course to reflect the introduction of the fit note.

Further information regarding fit notes can be found by using the link below


In the meantime, should you have any further questions regarding this guidance, please contact Human Resources on (01743) 254501/254491 or the Occupational Health Service on (01743) 252833.