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To: Deputy Directors-General, Chief Directors, Directors, Deputy Directors, Circuit Managers and Heads of educational institutions

Short summary: *This circular aims to inform all staff about the factors to consider when validating a medical certificate and the reasons for requesting additional medical information.*

Subject: Valid medical certificate

1. This circular explains the factors to consider when validating a medical certificate and the Western Cape Education Department's reasons for requesting additional medical information.
2. This circular must be read in conjunction with the *Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM)*, published in *Government Gazette* No. 39684 of 12 February 2016, the *Determination and Directive on Leave of Absence in the Public Service, 2018* and Circular 0057/2003, dated 06 March 2003.
3. Medical practitioners and persons certified to diagnose and treat patients, who issue and sign medical certificates for the purposes of normal sick leave, must be registered with the following professional councils:
 - a) The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA);
 - b) The Allied Health Professions Council of South Africa; or
 - c) The South African Nursing Council.
4. The registration details of medical practitioners may be confirmed with the abovementioned councils.
5. A medical certificate must contain the following information:
 - a) The initial(s) and surname, registration or practice number, address and qualifications of the medical practitioner who issued the medical certificate.

- b) The name of the patient.
 - c) The PERSAL number of the patient (if applicable).
 - d) The date and time of examination.
 - e) Whether the medical practitioner is issuing the certificate as a result of personal observations made during an examination or as a result of information received from the patient which is based upon acceptable medical grounds.
 - f) A description of the nature and extent of the illness or injury in layperson's terms (if the patient has given informed consent for it to be disclosed).
 - g) Whether the patient is totally indisposed for duty or whether the patient will be able to perform less strenuous duties in the workplace.
 - h) The exact period of recommended sick leave.
 - i) The date of issue.
6. If the medical practitioner uses pre-printed medical certificates, wording not applicable to the patient must be deleted.
7. The delegated authority is obliged to accept medical certificates that do not describe the nature and extent of an employee's illness for sick leave taken during the normal sick leave cycle. However, the employer may request medical information describing the nature and extent of the illness before granting sick leave.
8. For the purposes of temporary incapacity leave, the employer only accepts medical certificates issued and signed by practitioners registered with the HPCSA and who are legally certified to diagnose and treat patients. Such medical certificates must (if the employee has given his/her informed consent) include the nature and extent of the employee's illness or injury.
9. Employees should rest assured that the employer will, in accordance with constitutional rights to privacy and the *Code of Conduct for the Public Service*, published as Chapter 2 in the *Public Service Regulations, 2001*, treat any information regarding the medical condition of an employee with the necessary respect and confidentiality at all times. Such information will therefore not be disclosed to any person(s) not authorised to receive it. Should an employee disclose any confidential information of another employee to any other unauthorised person, it will be viewed in a serious light and disciplinary steps will be taken against the transgressing employee.
10. Kindly bring the contents of this circular to the attention of all employees.

SIGNED: BK SCHREUDER

HEAD: EDUCATION

DATE: 2020-02-28