**Managing Sickness Absence**

**Occupational Health Referral – Guidance for Employees**

A referral under the School’s Managing Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure to Occupational Health (OH) is being made to seek advice regarding how any medical condition may impact your job, how your job may impact on your health and to determine whether your manager can put any measures in place to help you to effectively perform your duties.

1. **Why does OH want to seek information from my GP?**

A GP’s report will help OH to provide your manager with advice on your situation. OH may also seek information from any specialists who may be involved in your case. The information sought will only be related to the current circumstances. OH will not have access to your full medical records.

1. **Do I have a choice about whether a GP’s report is sought?**

The Access to Medical Records Act 1988 requires that you give your consent to OH seeking a report from your GP. You should complete the consent form sent to you. Obviously you may withhold your consent, but this will affect the advice given by OH.

1. **Can I see the GP’s Report?**

If you give your consent, you can see the report before it is sent to OH. You should indicate that you wish to see the report by ticking the box at the bottom of the consent form. Once your GP has prepared the report you should make arrangements with your GP to see the report. This should be done within a reasonable time (21 days). There is no charge to you for writing the report; this is paid for by the School. There is also no charge for reading the report but your GP may charge a reasonable fee if you wish to have the report photocopied and/or posted to you.

If you indicate you do not wish to see the report, but change your mind, you can still tell the GP that you wish to see the report. Depending on when you decide to see the report, it may have already been sent to OH.

1. **What if I am unhappy with my GP’s report?**

You are entitled to ask your GP to amend any part of the report, which you regard as inaccurate or misleading. If the GP does not agree, you are entitled to attach a written statement giving your views on the report. Please note that your GP is not obliged to show you those parts of the report which they believe would be likely to cause harm to your physical or mental health, or that of others, or would reveal information about any other person or the identity of a person who has supplied information about your health unless that person also consents. In these cases, your GP will tell you and you will only be allowed to see the remaining part of the report.

1. **What happens when my GP’s report is sent to OH?**

OH will consider the GP’s report and decide whether or not to meet with you. The purpose of any meeting will be to discuss your medical condition further (this may or may not include a medical examination) and possible options that will support you in your job. If you wish, you may be accompanied at the meeting by your trade union representative or colleague.

If you have not given your consent for OH to receive a GP’s report, OH may still make arrangements to meet with you.

When OH has sufficient information they will then provide a report. If a GP’s report has been received this will only be seen by OH, although there may be references to the GP’s report in the report produced by OH. You may ask to see the OH report before it is sent to your manager.

*Please note: OH cannot provide clinical details without your written consent. OH will make you aware of what information will be provided to management during the consultation.*

1. **What happens if I choose not to discuss my situation with OH?**

When you are invited to a meeting with OH, it is part of your contract of employment to attend. Obviously if there are valid reasons for you being unable to attend (e.g. you are too sick to attend) you should inform OH as soon as possible. In exceptional circumstances OH may consider a home visit. Failure to attend without valid reasons may result in you breaching your contract of employment and appropriate action being taken.

If you attend the meeting with OH, this is your opportunity to discuss the situation with them. A report will be produced by OH and will be based on all the information available to them, including anything you discuss with them.

1. **Do I have to be physically examined by the OH doctor?**

In most cases a physical examination will not be necessary by the OH doctor. However, where an examination is proposed the doctor will explain in detail why he/she wants to conduct the examination and what it will entail.

A chaperone will be present and employees will be advised by the OH doctor that they may refuse the examination if they wish.

1. **What should I do if I disagree with the OH report?**

If you disagree with the information OH has provided to the School you should raise your concerns with them. If you wish, you may provide a written statement, setting out the reasons why you disagree with the report. A copy of this statement will be provided to the School.

1. **Can I see my OH records?**

You are entitled to see your OH records. As before, you cannot see those parts of the report which they believe would be likely to cause harm to your physical or mental health, or that of others, or would reveal information about any other person or the identity of a person who has supplied information about your health unless that person also consents. In these cases, OH will tell you and you will only be allowed to see the remaining part of the report.

If you wish to see your records you should put this request in writing. There is no charge for seeing your records, but there will be a reasonable charge should you want copies of all or part of your records.

1. **What happens after management has received the OH report?**

Once management has received a report from OH, they will contact you to discuss this advice.

1. **What if I have any other queries?**

If you have queries regarding this process please speak to your line manager.