



MEDICAL CERTIFICATES AND ABSENCES DUE TO ILL HEALTH

Students are required to produce documentary evidence that they were unfit to attend due to ill health.

The students applying for EMA will be subject to similar sickness reporting conditions as other students in their school for the first five days. If a student is absent for less than 5 consecutive school days they must submit a sickness/absence certificate, duly signed by their parent/guardian, to the school (within three days of the absence), describing the reasons for absence.

For absences of 5 consecutive school days (7 days including weekend) or more an EMA medical certificate signed by a doctor is expected. Doctors are not obliged to provide medical certificates and the cost of providing this certificate may have to be at the student's own expense.

Where an EMA medical certificate is not received, a sickness/absence certificate signed by their parent/guardian, must be provided instead. **In cases where a medical certificate is not received, the school will carry out a "Return to School Interview". If there is doubt as to the authenticity of the illness, the case can be referred to the local authority for adjudication and review.**

Long term medical absence may result in the review of a student's EMA award. Individual circumstances will be taken into account. Medical Certificates must be received by the school within three days of the end of the absence.

Reporting procedures similar to that for teachers will be necessary. Students should arrange to phone the school on the first day of absence. If they are still absent after 4 days and expect their absence to extend beyond 5 school days, they should arrange to inform the school. If the student is unable to phone the school, the student's parent or guardian is responsible for performing this action.

For extended periods of absence (more than 12 days) the student must phone the school to notify them of their continued absence after periods of 7 days (i.e. day 5, day 12, day 19 etc.). Where an EMA medical certificate has been submitted to the school to

cover the period of absence (i.e. certificate for 28 days), these phone calls will not be necessary.

Students receiving EMA will receive “Return to School Interviews” from their guidance teachers after every absence if a pattern of short term absences can be identified. Where persistent short-term absences occur guidance staff can suspend the students EMA payments, if the “Return to School Interview” does not satisfy the school that the absences were genuine.

To assist with the administration of EMA and to encourage students to be responsible, a short period to return a sickness/absence certificate or medical certificate is required. A sickness/absence certificate or medical certificate must be received by the school within 3 days of the end of the period of absence, at the latest. Failure to comply with this will result in the forfeit of the EMA payments for the period of absence. Schools will inform the Education Department where a sickness/absence certificate or EMA medical absence certificate is not received within 3 days of the student returning to school. This will ensure that no EMA payments are made for the period of absence, whether authorised or not.

LATENESS

Western Isles schools use the categories prescribed by ScotXed to record attendance and absence for both morning and afternoon sessions. A “Late 1” (arrival in school after the registration period but before the morning interval and after lunch but before the afternoon interval) without an acceptable reason is the definition of “lateness”. A “Late 2” (arrival after the start of the morning interval or arrival after lunch and after the afternoon interval) without an acceptable reason is the definition of an “unauthorised absence” for EMA purposes, requiring the forfeit of the EMA award for that week.

The flexibility to define what an acceptable reason for lateness or absence, will remain with the head teacher of each school.

The definition of persistent lateness is 3 late attendances. The school will issue a warning letter to the pupil and the pupil’s parents where this occurs. Any subsequent instances of late attendance will lead to forfeit of the EMA, in the week that the late attendance occurred. The SEEMiS software in schools will report on the attendance, absence and late attendances direct to the Education Department. This data will be processed centrally and EMA payments will automatically be stopped by the Department where students are guilty of persistent late-coming or have unauthorised absences.

Payment will subsequently be made to students if the school informs the Department that late attendances or absences, were for acceptable reasons and the certificate was received within three days of the student returning to school.

Rough Guide to Absences.

If you have been off sick for less than 5 whole days, fill in a “Sickness/Absence Certificate” and hand it to your registration teacher or the school office. If you don’t do this within 3 days of coming back to school, your EMA payment for the week(s) in question will not be made.

If you have been off sick, or are going to be off sick, for more than five consecutive school days (seven days including weekend) please arrange for a “Medical Certificate” to be signed by your doctor. Take the “Medical Certificate” with you when consulting the doctor and have it filled in before you arrive. Fill in your name, address, date of birth, date of consultation and the first day of absence, before you go to see your doctor. Your doctor will then only have to sign the form and enter your expected return date to school. If you are unable to get a “Medical Certificate”, a “Sickness/Absence Certificate” must be submitted instead. If you don’t submit the relevant form within 3 days of coming back to school, your EMA payment for the week(s) in question will not be made.