

LETTERHEAD

Date

Dear Medical Professional,

The Pine-Richland School District's mission is to *focus on learning for every student, every day*. We recognize that not all students need the same degree of support and at times require guidance of their medical doctors when it comes to navigating medical conditions. As a public school district, we are bound to attendance requirements and truly believe that we can help the majority of students thrive here in the least restrictive environment at school. It is our duty to provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education to all of our students, including the provision of medical care through the Certified School Nurses (CSNs) in every one of our schools, and at times through personal care assistants (PCAs) with or without medical certification and training. Special transportation accommodations can be made as appropriate also.

We have provided supports for immunocompromised children, those receiving chemotherapy treatments, those with concussions or other traumatic brain injuries, and any number of social, emotional, or behavioral challenges that our full psychological and student services team, inclusive of 3 school psychologists, over a dozen certified school counselors, and several dozen special education teachers specializing in emotional, learning, life skills, and autism support. We offer services to students qualifying for occupational, physical, or speech therapy, as well as those evidencing the need for very specific accommodations or modifications to their educational programming or typically-scheduled day. We remain open to designing flexible reentry programs, whereby students come for preferred activities for a portion of the day and slowly add the instructional time back in until they're able to successfully complete a full school day and all instructional learning experiences.

A part of our interaction with you, as the provider, is to optimize their learning experience and to get them to school, feeling connected, and helping them to succeed, regardless of any medical or psychological barriers they may be facing. Our team routinely conducts evaluations of students' needs and takes into consideration the input of our assessments and those providing support to the student both within and outside of the school setting. When warranted, the district collaborates with families to make recommendations for a more appropriate educational setting to receive help or work with families wishing to pursue partial programs, whereby the students' insurance helps to provide both therapeutic and/or medical support while the education is occurring as well. Our goal is to ensure that students continue to learn. If they are medically unable to come to school for a period of time, we also are willing to determine if a student qualifies for homebound services and send tutors to the house to assist students. Students can also be referred to school-based mental health services or take part in our Student Assistance Program (SAP).

We only reach out to providers for their partnership after we recognize a student's attendance is declining and has reached 10-days (e.g. the maximum number of days a parent is able to excuse their child from school). At that point, a School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) is required. The longer a student is out of school without some planning for reentry and education occurring, we recognize that they often feel more and more behind, lack the skills and knowledge to continue

with the educational programming on their own, and can at times become increasingly more anxious about their return, generating avoidance behaviors.

Our hope is that working with you to follow our procedures for medically-necessitated long-term care will allow us an opportunity at the end of each quarter (e.g. 9 weeks) to determine if the child's absences are truly necessitated by a medical need and are in the best interest of the student's learning and growth. At times, families will approach providers putting pressure on them to furnish requests for excused absences, even when the connection is poor at best or they were not seen in the office to receive direct care. We discourage these types of communications and instead wish to partner with you to understand the true medical needs of the student. As a public school district, we are also required to maintain a contract with a medically-certified physician in our community to function in the role of consultant and provider of direct care for those unable to seek medical care elsewhere. We do consult with this physician when there are concerns about the relevance of medical conditions and the resulting absenteeism experienced at the school level. Please know that we only do this when questions of validity of professional judgment or conflicts of interest arise. As a rule, we do not permit the parents of a student, even if medically-certified, to be the provider issuing excuses on behalf of their child, given the clear conflict of interest and ethical issue.

Each of these circumstances led to us creating the form below, which we are now asking you to complete leveraging your medical training, professionalism, and expertise. Should we have any questions, we do reserve the right to reach out to you to discuss your guidance further. We have also asked the family to complete the attached Release of Information Form to facilitate that exchange effectively and with confidence.

If you have further questions, concerns, or information that you would like to discuss, we ask that you reach out to the student's principal and school nurse, as noted below. We appreciate your partnership and will work with you each quarter to update you on the days of absence, the student's achievement and growth, and any other pertinent information as we work to ensure the holistic development and well-being of our shared child.

With Respect & Gratitude,

Principal

School Counselor

Medically-Necessitated Long-Term Care Explanation - Quarterly Update Form

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is to inform Pine-Richland that Student Name has been under my care. I understand the importance of school attendance; however, due to an ongoing medical concern, I am asking that you please excuse Student Name up to doctor recommended number of days each month. This note is to expire on Date of expiration and is not to be used beyond this current school year. I understand if these absences are significantly affecting this student, the school will request to collaborate further with me in order to provide the fullest amount of support necessary for this student.

Please feel free to elaborate on the medical condition and offer in school educational support suggestions if appropriate:

Sincerely,

Treating Doctor, Date

***Attach Release of Information with this letter**