VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE
Lexington, Virginia

GENERAL ORDER)
NUMBER 61) 15 March 2016

Medical Leave and Medical Furlough Policy

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to outline procedures and guidelines when cadets no longer meet medical eligibility and must be placed on medical leave or furlough. The purpose of medical leave and medical furlough is to ensure the safety of cadets as well as to enhance cadets' ability to successfully complete VMI's rigorous program requirements. VMI is committed to the well-being and safety of members of the VMI community as well as the integrity of the learning and work environments at VMI. The directives outlined in this General Order supplement, but do not replace, existing directives contained in VMI Regulations and other official VMI publications.

2. **Definitions:**

   A. Medical Leave: Medical leave is normally for a short, specified period of time in order for cadets to receive medical treatment or rehabilitation services off Post and out of the local area. Medical leave may be voluntary or involuntary, based on the severity of the circumstances.

   B. Medical Furlough: Medical furlough is for a longer duration and is to be used when a cadet's illness or injury is such that the cadet is unable to perform the duties required of a VMI cadet. Medical furlough may be voluntary or involuntary, based on the severity of the circumstances.

3. **Authority:**

   A. The Commandant, advised by the Institute Physician, has the authority to place a cadet on medical leave and voluntary medical furlough. The decision will be made based on an assessment of the cadet's medical history, diagnosis, and prognosis as well as consultations with specialists as appropriate.

   B. In accordance with Virginia Code § 23-9.2:10, the Threat Assessment Team (TAT) has the authority to assess individuals whose behavior may present a threat and to determine appropriate means of intervention and action with such individuals, including, but not limited to, (i) referrals to the community service board or health care providers for evaluation or treatment; and (ii) involuntary medical furlough to resolve potential physical threats. The Superintendent, in consultation with the TAT, has sole authority to impose involuntary medical furlough, as detailed below.

   C. Nothing herein shall prevent VMI from immediately placing a cadet on medical furlough if emergency circumstances exist.

4. **Procedures:**

A. Medical Leave: The Commandant, advised by the Institute Physician, will grant medical leave. In some cases, cadets placed on medical leave will be given specified medical treatment requirements that must be completed prior to the leave period ending. Cadets who fail to complete the specified medical treatment are then subject to being placed on medical furlough.

B. Voluntary Medical Furlough: The Commandant, advised by the Institute Physician, will grant voluntary medical furlough. In most cases, the Institute Physician, in consultation with appropriate Institute officials, will provide detailed directives and guidance on what the cadet must do in order to complete his or her medical rehabilitation and return to VMI, based on an individualized assessment.

A letter specifying recommended treatment and rationale for such recommendations, steps required before submitting a request to return to VMI, and the required timeline for such treatment and steps will be provided to the cadet. In some cases, limits and restrictions may be imposed upon cadets returning to VMI for other purposes (e.g. visits, meeting with faculty) while on medical furlough. Restrictions of this nature will be communicated in writing to the cadet.

If circumstances do not allow the cadet to return to VMI at the conclusion of the period of medical furlough, the cadet must request an extension of the medical furlough in writing to the Commandant, prior to the designated deadline. Failure to request an extension of medical furlough beyond the designated deadline will result in administrative withdrawal from the Institute. Requests for extensions of medical furlough will be reviewed by the Institute Physician and appropriate Institute officials. The Commandant shall notify the cadet of the decision in writing.

While the cadet is on furlough, the cadet will maintain periodic contact with the Institute Physician to help the cadet meet the requirements of the medical furlough and return successfully to the Institute.

C. Involuntary Medical Furlough: If the TAT determines after conducting an individualized assessment of a cadet that involuntary medical furlough of that cadet is necessary to preserve the health or safety of members of the Institute community or to resolve potential physical threats, the TAT will make such recommendation to the Superintendent, who has the sole authority to place a cadet on involuntary medical furlough. A cadet placed on involuntary medical furlough will be sent a letter which details the determination of the appropriateness of medical furlough, recommended treatment and rationale for such recommendations, and the length of involuntary medical furlough. The cadet will further be informed that he or she may request involuntary medical furlough review with the Superintendent, by notifying the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent within 48 hours of receipt of the involuntary medical furlough letter.

Such review will be conducted as soon as practical following the request, typically within 10 working days or as soon as the cadet's condition permits. The decision of the Superintendent to place a cadet on involuntary medical furlough shall be final. If a cadet on involuntary medical furlough is found to have committed an act or acts of misconduct that warrant a disciplinary suspension or dismissal then the procedures for such action, as detailed in General Order 17, will be followed.

If circumstances do not allow the cadet to return to VMI at the conclusion of the period of medical furlough, the cadet must request an extension of the medical furlough in writing to the Superintendent prior to the designated deadline. Failure to request an extension of medical furlough beyond the designated deadline will result in administrative withdrawal from the Institute. Requests for extensions of medical furlough will be reviewed by the TAT and appropriate Institute officials, including the Institute Physician. The Superintendent shall notify the cadet of the decision in writing.

While the cadet is on furlough, the cadet will maintain periodic contact with the Institute Physician to help the cadet meet the requirements of the furlough and return successfully to the Institute.

5. **Readmission:**

A. Medical Leave. Cadets on medical leave shall return at the completion of their specified leave period and report immediately to the Institute Physician upon return.

B. Medical Furlough.

- Cadets will be responsible for executing all releases of information for records that are required for a full evaluation by Institute officials when considering readmission to VMI.

- Any cadet seeking readmission following medical furlough shall be subject to the same two-year limit on absence from VMI that is imposed on other cadets seeking readmission, in accordance with VMI's readmission standards as published on the website www.vmi.edu/readmin.

- A cadet seeking to return from medical furlough shall present documents and information specified in the medical furlough letter to the Institute Physician to demonstrate that all required treatment plans and programs have been successfully completed or are being completed. The Institute Physician shall consult the TAT regarding any request for readmission from a cadet placed on involuntary medical furlough and may consult the TAT regarding a cadet's return to VMI following voluntary medical furlough.

- All documents and request to return form must be submitted before 1 November for return in the spring semester and 1 June for the fall semester. Cadets failing to submit all required documents by these deadlines will not be allowed to return the following semester.

- Requests to return from furlough take approximately three weeks to process. The Institute Physician will make a finding to the Institute Readmissions Committee regarding whether or not the cadet seeking readmission is qualified to safely and successfully complete all aspects of the VMI program, with or without accommodation. Each cadet will be assessed on his/her ability to re-assimilate and bond with the Corps. VMI reserves the right to deny a cadet readmission if the Institute Readmissions Committee determines that the cadet would have difficulty in returning to VMI under the rules and restrictions of the VMI program or presents an ongoing physical threat to the health or safety of members of the VMI community.

- The Chair of the Institute Readmission Committee shall notify the cadet of the decision in writing, including the rationale for the determination.

- A cadet denied readmission will be allowed to present additional documentation for consideration by the Institute Readmission Committee, which he or she must do within five business days of receipt of the determination letter.

- After reviewing the additional information, if the Institute Readmission Committee again denies readmission, the cadet will be notified in writing. The cadet has five business days from receipt of such letter to appeal this decision in writing to the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall notify the cadet in writing of the final decision on readmission. The decision of the Superintendent is final with no further appeal.

FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT:

James P. Inman
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Chief of Staff

DIST: E

OPR: Post Hospital