Dear Parents and Guardians,

Term Time Absence Requests:

We continue to receive a high volume of requests for student leave during term time. To avoid misunderstanding, unexpected costs, or disappointment, we ask that families read the guidance below carefully before making any arrangements.

Term-Time Leave

Leave during term time will not normally be authorised and will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Examples of circumstances that may be considered include:

- Medical or dental appointments
- Attendance at funerals
- Religious ceremonies or observances
- Interviews at Sixth Form Colleges or University Open Days

All requests are considered on an individual basis, and submission of a request does not guarantee approval.

Permitted Absence

A student may only be absent from school when:

- They are medically unfit to attend, or
- Exceptional circumstances apply, as outlined above

In all cases, permission must be obtained from the school in advance of any absence or travel arrangements being made. Both the school and parents are legally accountable to Kent County Council for any unauthorised absence.

How to Apply

To apply for leave, families must complete the relevant **Exceptional Leave Request Form**, providing full details of the proposed absence. The completed form should be submitted to the appropriate member of staff listed at the end of the document.

Requests submitted on the day before, or on the day of, the intended absence may be refused or delayed. Families are strongly encouraged to submit applications well in advance and to include any relevant supporting documentation where available.

We recognise that in certain circumstances, such as bereavement, advance notice may not always be possible. In such cases, families should contact the school as soon as practicable.

End of Term Absence Requests:

To ensure clarity and consistency, families are reminded that the school day on the final day of term normally concludes at 13:30. This timetable enables students to participate fully in scheduled morning activities, often whole-school events where individual absences can be disruptive, followed by time to pack, change, and take lunch after 13:05.

The sole exception to this arrangement is the end of the academic year (Grand Day), when the school day finishes at 16:00, following the completion of the full programme of celebrations and activities.

Early Departures Will Not Be Approved

Requests for early departure due to misinterpretation of the school calendar, travel convenience, or cost considerations cannot be accommodated. Granting exceptions sets a precedent that undermines fairness and consistency across the school community. Only requests based on exceptional circumstances will be considered.

Student Collection Times

If you are unable to collect your child at 13:30, students may remain on site until 21:00 on the final day of term, with students moving to the selected Late House from 17:00. Dinner can be provided for students being collected later in the evening at a cost of £10. After 21:00, we recommend using the school's overnight accommodation, which is available at a cost of £73 for the night.

Flight Bookings and Travel Planning

Parents booking flights are advised to ensure that departure times are no earlier than 18:00 on the final day of term. Flights scheduled before this time do not allow sufficient time for travel to the airport or for security procedures. Please note that traffic on the M20, M26, and M25 can be unpredictable, and airports frequently experience congestion. Booking flights too early may result in missed connections, additional expense, and unnecessary stress. Students will not be permitted to leave school early to accommodate such arrangements.

If you are unsure about suitable travel timings, we strongly recommend consulting YMS Travel before confirming flight bookings to ensure adequate allowance is made for departures after 13:30.

Requests to Alter Term End Times

While some parents have proposed a 09:00 Friday finish to allow additional travel time, this would result in a loss of teaching hours and would not meet statutory requirements for instructional days. Furthermore, experience suggests that even with an earlier end to term, requests for still earlier departures or travel the previous evening would continue.

To help accommodate travel needs, overnight accommodation is available at £73 for students departing on Saturday or those experiencing travel difficulties on Friday. This option is also offered where UK guardians may be unable to assist with travel or accommodation arrangements.

Term Dates and Planning

To avoid planning errors, please refer to the official term dates published on our website: Term Dates - The Duke of York's Royal Military School

Circumstances

Requests for early departure will be approved only in cases of genuine exceptional circumstances. For instance, a flight scheduled at 17:15 that requires early release would not normally be considered exceptional if later flights are available or if travel can take place the following day using the school's overnight accommodation. An example of an acceptable exception would be a long-haul journey (such as to Brunei) where no viable flight options are available on the Friday or Saturday.

Return to School

Students must return between **16:00 and 19:00** on designated return days as outlined in the school calendar. Returns outside of this window are not permitted. In exceptional circumstances, for example, where flight schedules result in particularly challenging arrival times, early arrival may be authorised; however, permission must be sought in advance from the PA to the Principal by the weekday before the start of the new term (e.g. the Friday before a Sunday return).

Where a student is expected to return late following a school break, parents are asked, wherever possible, to ensure that the PA to the Principal is also informed.