



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Human Resources Directorate
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 1162-17

Thank you for your email of 7 December 2017 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

I would be grateful if you could provide me with answers to the following questions:

- 1. What is the maximum amount payable to Department employees in receipt of Continuity of Education Allowance (a) for UK-based pupils, and (b) for pupils based overseas, per term/school year.*
- 2. What are the country-specific residency requirements for parents receiving Continuity of Education Allowance for a child or children attending a fee-paying school in the UK.*
- 3. For how long after a foreign posting has come to an end are parents in receipt of Continuity of Education Allowance for a child or children attending a fee-paying school in the UK eligible to claim it?*
- 4. Are either household income and/or individual school fees taken into account when calculating Continuity of Education Allowance payments?*
- 5. Could two parents from the same household, one of whom works for the FCO, the other for the same or another government department (eg. DfID) both claim Continuity of Education Allowance for the same child?*

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested.

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

It is a condition of their employment that members of the diplomatic service must be prepared to serve anywhere in the world at any time during their career, sometimes at very short notice. Those with children have a legal obligation as parents to ensure that their

children receive a full-time education from the age of five years. Most parents prefer to take their children with them abroad, but in some of the 168 countries and territories where the FCO has UK based staff, we do not permit staff to take their children either for health or security reasons. In others, local schools of an acceptable standard are not available.

It is longstanding practice that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) helps staff meet their potentially conflicting obligations by providing financial support for their children's education in the UK where staff choose this, or are obliged to do so given local conditions in the country to which they are posted, particularly at secondary level. This support encompasses a period before and after the posting and the period of the posting itself.

The FCO refunds standard term fees up to a ceiling which is reviewed annually. Where staff opt to send their children to more expensive schools, staff meet the difference in cost. The maximum amount the FCO will pay is determined by an independent survey conducted by Employment Conditions Abroad (ECA) International, which is used by public and private sector employers whose staff work across the world. Various factors, including availability of places (sometimes at short notice) and proximity of other family members, influence which schools staff choose for their children.

You asked the maximum ceiling for Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) for both
(a) UK-based pupils, and
(b) pupils based overseas, per term/school year.

Continuity of Education allowance is only available for pupils (from Year 3) attending a school in the UK which provides full boarding. The ceilings for Academic Year 2017/18 are (per term, 3-term school year):

Senior Boarder	£10,570
Senior Day Pupil	£7,400
Junior Boarder	£9,291
Junior Day Pupil	£6,504

This provision may continue for up to 5 years upon an officer's return to the UK, provided the officer will serve overseas again at the end of their home tour (and before the child completes their education), to allow children to complete key stages of their education without multiple disruptions and is available as a day pupil or boarding option.

For pupils based overseas the costs of schooling, where available, at an appropriate school from a list of pre-identified schools in the city of posting are covered directly by the FCO.

The only country-specific residency requirements for parents receiving Continuity of Education Allowance for a child or children attending a fee-paying school in the UK is that both the officer and other parent (where there is one) must both be overseas at post to qualify. However eligibility for first access to CEA is permitted for the term immediately prior to an officer's posting.

Household income is not a consideration for eligibility for CEA.

You also asked if two parents from one household, who work for different government departments could both claim Continuity of Education Allowance for the same child; this would not be possible under our Continuity of Education Allowance rules and the application process specifically addresses this scenario.

Yours sincerely,

Human Resources Directorate



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