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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs), VERSION 1.0, DATED JUNE 2013

SCHOOLING, REBASING AND DRAWDOWN

INTRODUCTION

Service Children's Education (SCE) provides the children of Her Majesty's Armed Forces and other members of the Ministry of Defence stationed in certain overseas locations with access to a first-class education system. SCE's aim is to mirror provision in the maintained school sector in England from Foundation Stage through to sixth form and also to ensure that children benefit from their stay overseas.

Each school follows the **English National Curriculum**, administers national curriculum tests and public examinations and is inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) under the OfSTED Framework. Teachers in SCE Schools are UK qualified professionals especially recruited for service in SCE schools and each school has a School Governance Committee that represents the local service community in a manner similar to the way in which Governors work in the UK.

Within the Pupil and Family Services team, educational psychologists, social workers and specialist inclusion Support staff work from our Pupil and Family Services Centres. They work closely with organisations such as the British Forces Germany Health Service (BFGHS) and the Army Welfare Service (AWS).

STRATEGIC DEFENCE AND SECURITY REVIEW

WHY ARE SCE SCHOOLS CLOSING?

Since 2010 SCE has known that British Forces would withdraw from Germany in line with the Prime Minister's stated intention that withdrawal would be complete by 2020. Programme **BORONA** moved HQ ARRC Group from Rheindahlen and is now in the process of rebasing HQ BFG to Bielefeld. As a result the **Rheindahlen Military Complex (RMC)** and **Münster Station** will close by the end of 2013. **Elmpt Station** will close by the end of 2015. In March 2013 the Secretary of State for Defence announced the **Army Basing Plan** which will see units rebasing to UK and Garrisons and Stations closing by 2018.

WILL ALL THE SCHOOLS IN AN AREA CLOSE AT THE SAME TIME?

For the most part – yes. There are currently no plans to amalgamate schools as pupil numbers tail off though it may be necessary to retain a school in each Garrison or Station for an extra term to support the Rear Party. Details of closures are given below.

SCE SCHOOLS

WHICH SCHOOLS ARE CLOSING AND WHEN?

As SCE schools exist solely to support the military and attached civilian population, when Garrisons and Stations close SCE schools will close in the same time-frame. The SCE Executive Board, working closely with HQ BFG and the chain of command, has determined that SCE schools will close as shown in the table below.

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Station	Garrison/Station Confirmed Closure Date	SCE School Closure	
Rhine Garrison			
RMC	Dec 2013	Ark School	Jul 2013
		Windsor School	Jul 2013
Elmpt Station	Dec 2015	Brüggen School	Jul 2015
Bergen-Hohne Garrison			
Hohne	Dec 2015	Montgomery School	Dec 2015
		Slim School	Jul 2015
		Gloucester School	Jul 2015
Fallingbostel	Dec 2015	Shackleton School	Jul 2015
		Heide School	Jul 2015
Gütersloh Garrison			
Münster	Dec 2013	Oxford School	Jul 2013
Herford	Dec 2015	Lister School	Dec 2015
Gütersloh PRB	Dec 2016	Blankenhagen School	Jul 2016
Güt Mansergh	Not before Dec 2017	Haig School	Provisionally 2018
		King's School	Provisionally 2018
Bielefeld	Not before Dec 2017	Bielefeld School	Provisionally 2018
Paderborn Garrison			
Hameln	Dec 2014	Weser School	Jul 2014
		Prince Rupert School	Jul 2014
Paderborn	Not before Dec 2017	William Wordsworth School	Provisionally 2018
		Robert Browning School	Provisionally 2018
		John Buchan School	Provisionally 2018
		Bishopspark School	Provisionally 2018
Detmold	To be confirmed	Sir John Mogg School	Provisionally 2018

MOBILITY, REBASING & ARMS PLOT MOVES

HAVE THE MOD AND SCE THOUGHT ABOUT MOBILITY AND ITS EFFECTS ON PUPILS DURING DRAWDOWN?

Forces families are significantly more mobile than the UK population at large, and while Army Rebasing will see a large number of units moving over a relatively short period, to a degree this has always been the case. Through the rebasing and drawdown work that has been completed to date Service Children's Education (SCE), working closely with HQ BFG, has a good understanding of the practicalities of schooling through change and the pressures that parents face in making decisions that affect their children's education. Indeed, much of the drawdown planning to date has been based around schooling in order to not disadvantage children, and the following principles have been developed and will be followed:

- That unit rebasing moves are planned for the summer period to align with the natural break in the academic year. This assists families and posting branches to facilitate moves during the summer holiday period, thus minimising disruption to schooling.
- That parents make the final decision concerning children's schooling, and must be given sufficient information, notice, and the opportunity to make informed decisions.
- That children working to public examinations (GCSE, A level) should, where possible, be able to complete the course at the same school.
- That King's School Gütersloh provides secondary education for the BFG Central Region, and will be retained to the completion of drawdown.

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- That schools and parents should – wherever possible - be given a minimum 2 years notice of closure to assist with planning for a 2 year course of study to a public examination.
- That schooling and a broad curriculum will be provided to the end in SCE schools.
- That the Army organisation receiving units into UK will complete early liaison with the Local Authority to ensure that sufficient education provision is available for returning families.
- That early family moves to SFA in UK is unlikely to be possible due to pressure on UK SFA estate, but early moves to former RAF bases to be used by the Army may be possible.
- **Arms Plot** moves have been minimised in the light of Army Rebasing, but units subject to Arms Plotting by default have several years notice of their move, allowing them to make appropriate arrangements for children's schooling.

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROVISION

WHAT SCHOOLING PROVISION IS AVAILABLE TO PUPILS?

The final decision concerning children's education rests with parents.

Forces families in **Germany** have a variety of schooling options which may be used to meet children's individual needs:

- SCE schooling at the Duty Station.
- For secondary aged pupils, weekly boarding at King's School Gütersloh (until 2015).
- UK boarding utilising Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) for military personnel, or Boarding School Allowance (BSA) for UKBC personnel subject to eligibility and assessment of entitlement by DBS Relocations.
- Private arrangements (in UK or Germany).

I AM POSTED TO AN ISODET – WHAT OPTIONS EXIST FOR SCHOOLING?

- Pupils in ISODETs who would previously have termly boarded at Windsor School Rheindahlen have the option of attending a local International School **at public expense**.
- Parents of primary age pupils have the option of attending a local International School **at public expense** or of making use of local host nation schools and or pre-schools.

SCE BOARDING.

WHAT BOARDING FACILITIES WILL BE AVAILABE IN GERMANY DURING DRAWDOWN?

SCE boarding at Prince Rupert School in Rinteln will close in July 2014. It is anticipated that weekly boarding at King's School in Gütersloh will close in July 2015 when Bergen-Hohne Garrison will have closed and all BFG families (at that time in Bielefeld, Gütersloh, and Paderborn) will be within daily travelling distance of King's. Travel times are set out in JSP 342.

TRANCHE 3 REDUNDEES

I AM A TRANCHE THREE REDUNDEE – HOW WILL THIS AFFECT MY CHILDREN'S SCHOOLING?

The majority of redundees are expected to return to UK at the earliest opportunity. Tranche 3 volunteers will discharge by December 2013 and should have considered children's schooling as

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part of their decision-making process. They will lose SCE entitlement in December 2013, though alternative arrangements for pupils at critical stages of their public examination courses may (in certain circumstances) be offered to allow them to finish in summer 2013.

Non-volunteers will discharge in June 2014 and their children will therefore be able to complete academic year 13/14 in a SCE school if desired.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH F&C NON EEA TROOPS

I AM A MEMBER OF THE FOREIGN & COMMONWEALTH COMPONENT OF BFG AND DO NOT HAVE UK RESIDENCY – HOW CAN I PLAN FOR MY CHILDREN'S FUTURE?

Spouses and children of non EEA troops that do not have UK residency are being actively managed in order that family separation on rebasing is minimised. Any family in this position must contact their Commanding Officer for the matter to be referred to HQ BFG.

GERMAN SPOUSES AND LOCAL DISCHARGE

I AM THINKING OF SETTLING IN GERMANY WHEN I LEAVE THE ARMY, HOW WILL THIS AFFECT MY CHILD'S EDUCATION?

Some 800 military personnel currently based in Germany have spouses that are German nationals, and a number may elect for local discharge. Local discharge is at the discretion of the Chain of Command and personnel electing for local discharge will need to demonstrate that post Army living arrangements (housing etc) is in place. Children of those personnel discharged locally will lose entitlement to SCE schooling on discharge and must make alternative schooling provision in advance.

Continuation of SCE schooling is possible up to the point of final closure, but at **non-entitled repayment rates**.

APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIANS

COULD MY CHILD REMAIN IN BFG TO COMPLETE HIS/HER EXAMINATIONS AFTER I HAVE LEFT BFG?

There is a facility for parents to make a **Private Fostering Arrangement** where a child needs to complete a course of education and where the family is assigned elsewhere, but this option is likely only to be suitable for pupils who weekly board at King's School, Gütersloh.

WHAT IS PRIVATE FOSTERING?

A Private Fostering (PF) arrangement is made when a child under 16 years (18 years if the child has a disability) intends to live or is living with an adult other than a parent or person with legal parental responsibility for 28 days or more. This person will not be a relative (such as an aunt, uncle or grandparent).

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WHY ARE PRIVATE FOSTERING ARRANGEMENTS USED?

PF arrangements are made for a number of reasons. Usually in a military environment it is because one or both parents/carers are on exercise or working away from home, or a child may be living with friends to complete a critical stage of education.

INTERNAL TRANSFER AND SCE SCHOOLS CURRICULUMS

HOW MIGHT A MOVE OF SCHOOLS WITHIN BFG AFFECT MY CHILD'S EDUCATION?

Options may exist for personnel affected by Drawdown to transfer between units in Germany to provide a measure of continuity of education. Whilst it may be possible for a child to start a GCSE course in Gloucester School (Sep 2014 – Jul 2015), and complete it in King's School in July 2016 this is by no means certain. It may be possible for Hohne and Fallingbostel-based pupils to weekly board at King's School for the academic year 2013 – 2014 and thus avoid moving school mid-course. Parents contemplating such a solution are encouraged to contact the Headteacher at Gloucester School as soon as possible.

Where children with SEN and /or a disability move schools within SCE it is anticipated that the receiving school will, if additional resources are required and are locally available, be able to meet the child's needs. Prior to a move parents should check this is the case with the receiving school and /or the Assistant Education Officer (SEN), HQ SCE.

RETURNING TO ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND

HOW MIGHT A MOVE OF SCHOOLS AFFECT MY CHILD'S EDUCATION?

SCE follows the English National Curriculum. Families returning to UK will find that, as in SCE, secondary schools have a significant degree of autonomy in terms of examination boards, and schools in the same town will be following different curriculums which may be different to those followed in a child's current SCE school; parents therefore need to check the **Children's Education Advisory Service** (CEAS) in the UK before committing themselves.

Personnel rebasing to Scotland must also bear in mind that the education system in Scotland is significantly different to the rest of the UK (and SCE), in that the curriculum, term dates and examinations are quite different.

In order to ensure continuity of education families who have children with SEN and/ or a disability and are returning to the UK must, if they have not already done so, register with Children's Education Advisory service (CEAS) in the UK. The child's transition will also be supported through the current SCE School's use of Special educational Needs Transfer of Records and Information (SENTRI) documentation. Parents are advised to meet and discuss the arrangements for transition with the Headteacher and /or SENCO of their child's school.

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CONTINGENCY PLANNING

IS THE MOD AND SCE PLANNING FOR DELAYS TO THE REBASING PROGRAMME?

Army 2020 and Rebasing planning continues to develop, and it will be apparent that units cannot rebase until UK infrastructure is available. In the event that UK infrastructure work is delayed there will be a requirement for contingency planning to:

- keep schools in Germany open for longer periods; or
- make separate schooling and accommodation arrangements in UK.

There is no suggestion that contingent plans will be enacted, but SCE and HQ BFG remain fully engaged with UK authorities and committed to keeping the BFG community informed and maintaining the 2 year notice period.

7 ARMD BDE AND AFFILIATED UNITS IN BERGEN-HOHNE

I AM BASED IN THE HOHNE/FALLINGBOSTEL AREA - WHAT SCHOOLING WILL BE AVAILABLE TO MY CHILDREN UP TO THE FINAL PHASE OF DRAWDOWN IN 2015?

The drawdown of Bergen-Hohne Garrison and the rebasing of 7 Armd Bde and affiliated units in summer 2015 will be the first large scale move in the Army Basing Plan. Dates for rebasing from Bergen-Hohne have been confirmed and for those families involved:

- Primary Schooling will be unaffected and all schools will continue to Jul 2015.
- Secondary schooling will continue at Gloucester School to Jul 2015 meaning that:
 - Children starting GCSE / A levels in Sep 13 will complete the course at Gloucester.
 - Gloucester School may offer a restricted Year 10 curriculum (first year of GCSE) in Sep 14, however parents must be aware that Year 11 would need to be completed elsewhere. There may be an option for families posted to the Paderborn / Gütersloh area following the closure of Gloucester School in July 2015 to weekly board at King's School for the 2013 2014 academic year. This offer would only apply to examination year students.
 - Parents therefore need to consider carefully alternative arrangements for children starting GCSE / A level in 2014, as they will not be able to complete the course at Gloucester School.

20 ARMD BDE, FORCE TROOPS, AND AFFILIATED UNITS

I AM BASED IN THE CENTRAL REGION OF BFG - WHAT SCHOOLING WILL BE AVAILABLE TO MY CHILDREN UP TO THE FINAL PHASE OF DRAWDOWN IN 2017-18?

The Secretary of State's announcement that 20 Armd Bde would rebase 'not before' 2017 creates some current uncertainty as to exactly when rebasing will occur. However, there is certainty that pupils starting exam courses until 2015 will be able to complete studies at King's School Gütersloh; and SCE continues to work closely with Army HQ to determine when units will rebase; as UK infrastructure plans become firmer, SCE will receive a minimum of 2 years notice allowing the same process as for 7 Armd Bde units above to be followed, in outline:

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- Primary Schooling will be unaffected and schooling will be provided to Jul 2018.
- The future of **Sir John Mogg School Detmold** will be determined by the population to be supported (based partly on SFA availability in Paderborn/Sennelager); should the Detmold population reduce significantly the school may become unsustainable. However there are no plans currently to close Sir John Mogg School earlier than summer 2018.
- Secondary schooling will continue at King's School to Jul 2017 or later meaning that:
 - Children starting GCSE / A levels in Sep 2015 will complete the course at King's.
 - Parents may need to consider alternative arrangements for children starting GCSE / A level in 2016, as they may not be able to complete the course at King's. However there are no plans currently to close King's school earlier than summer 2018.
 - A decision on 20 Armd Bde rebasing is needed by early 2015.

AS SCE IS NOW RESPONSIBLE FOR 0 TO 5 PROVISION WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO CHILDCARE AND NURSERY PROVISION DURING DRAWDOWN?

The current national framework for children aged between 0 – 5 years is the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Where practicable, SCE intends to continue providing one full-time nursery in each remaining Garrison. The present nursery closures in Rhine and Munster are in parallel with the closure of neighbouring primary schools. During drawdown nurseries will remain operational as long as managers are able to maintain sufficient numbers of qualified staff to meet statutory EYFS welfare requirements.

Parents posted within Germany or from UK who require Early Years Care and Education (EYCE) for their child/children are urged to think carefully about their childcare needs. For example some families may need to register their child in a nursery and with a childminder or alternatively a SCE extended day-care setting and a childminder in order to have access to full day coverage. Information about nurseries and registered childminders is available on the HQ BFG drawdown team website and the SCE Schools information website – www.sce-web.com.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE BFG MUSIC SERVICE DURING DRAWDOWN?

The BFG Music Service will be maintained alongside secondary school provision until the closure of the associated Garrison or Station.

HOW WILL SCE ENSURE THAT TEACHERS AND OTHER SUPPORT STAFF REMAIN TO CLOSURE?

SCE is confident that it will be able to retain sufficient staff to enable it to deliver high quality education through to the closure of the last Germany garrison. Many teachers will be leaving SCE on early release packages that tie them into specific school closure dates. SCE will also be offering an attractive package of professional training for those wishing to remain until their school closes. In addition to this, SCE will be increasing the opportunities for additional management responsibilities for teachers in schools. Together, these measures will support teachers who want to move into leadership roles in schools in UK when their school closes. It is also important to note that SCE's recruitment programme remains buoyant. SCE is still able to recruit good quality teachers from UK on fixed term contracts. In June 2013 SCE will carry out a workforce audit in which every teacher will be interviewed with regard to their future in SCE.

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SCE will also be working alongside the MOD Outplacement Programme to offer teachers appropriate career advice and staff development opportunities designed to enhance their eventual return to working in the United Kingdom (or in international schools if they so wish).

SCHOOLS IN RHINE AREA CLOSED UP TO A WEEK EARLIER THAN THE PUBLISHED TERM DATES – WILL THIS APPLY TO ALL SCHOOLS AS THEY CLOSE AND WHY?

Schools closing in July will close to pupils three days early in the summer term to facilitate final closure. Schools closing in December will need to close slightly earlier to facilitate the movement of both staff and pupils. Further information will be available from each closing school's School Governance Committee (SGC) who will ratify each early closure and keep parents and staff fully informed. The draft School Calendar for the period up to 2018 has taken these factors into consideration.

WILL UK SCHOOLS BE ABLE TO COPE WITH THE INFLUX OF PUPILS FROM BFG?

SCE's Director of Education is currently working with Local Authority Education Officers, Local Authorities and schools, nationally and locally, to ensure that the needs of Service families returning to the UK are understood and taken account of in planning and also to ensure that they are aware of the Rebasing information.

SCE's Director of Education has also been working with the Department for Education (DfE) in order to support their strategic plans on sufficiency of school places.

SCE always encourages its Headteachers and other staff to visit schools in UK prior to any unit moves. In some cases Headteachers from UK will come out to visit SCE schools in order to meet the children in advance of the move. SCE Headteachers will thus be working closely with their UK counterparts and with the Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) in Upavon to ensure as smooth a transition as possible.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING TRANSPORT TO AND FROM SCHOOLS AND NURSERY SETTINGS?

This is a responsibility of the relevant Garrison Transport Office.

SOURCES OF ADVICE

WHO CAN I CONTACT FOR ADVICE AND SUPPORT WITH MY CHILD'S EDUCATION?

There are a number of sources of advice on children's education:

- The teacher of a child's current school should be the first port of call for education advice as they will understand better individual needs; however if you require information or advice on provision or accessing schools in the UK one of the two services below will be best placed for these enquiries.
- The **Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS)** is tasked with providing educational advice to MOD families and entitled civilians. CEAS has been helping service families for a number of years and has well-informed and experienced staff. CEAS work closely with

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SCE, DfE, Local Authorities and schools, nationally and locally, to ensure the needs of Service families returning to the UK are understood and taken account of in planning. It is essential that any families returning to the UK with questions about education are directed to CEAS or the BFG Parent Partnership Service for information, advice and, if necessary, support. CEAS can be contacted via email: enquiries@ceas.uk.com, the UK Helpline 01980 618 244 or visit www.gov.uk/childrens-education-advisory-service.

- The **BFG Parent Partnership Service (PPS)** is a confidential, impartial and independent service for parents /carers of children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) throughout BFG. PPS is part of CEAS but based in Germany. The Service provides advice and support for parents on educational issues, particularly SEN matters, and is the first point of contact for families with children with special educational needs returning to the UK. PPS can also provide information, advice and support on applications and appeals for schools places in the UK for all children. PPS can be contacted via email: BFG-HQ-G1-PPO@mod.uk, telephone: 02161 4726426 (until July 2013) 05219 254 2683 (from August 2013) or visit www.bfgnet.de/Community/parentpartnership.html.