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## 1 Introduction

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This document sets out the procedure for overseas education for Service children, including early childhood education, childcare, primary and secondary education. It should be read in conjunction with the Education of Service Children Overseas Policy which sets out the principles/rules governing education of Service children.

**It is not intended for this document to be read cover to cover – you should only read the section that is relevant to you at the time.**

### 1.1 Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding (AFFS) Function

Working to the Chief of Defence People through the Director of Armed Forces People Policy, the AFFS organisation is the Departmental focus for all policy issues related to Armed Forces families (including children's education) and safeguarding. AFFS advises the wider MOD, Other Government Departments, Devolved Administrations, and other stakeholders, to ensure their policy, procedures and practice take best account of Service children's educational needs. The team also provides educational advice and guidance to the overseas chain of command (CofC). This includes assessing educational transitions between locations to enable local commands to make informed decisions about the educational options. The AFFS educational policy team owns this policy and can be contacted by emailing [People-AFFS-Education-Mailbox@mod.gov.uk](mailto:People-AFFS-Education-Mailbox@mod.gov.uk). General enquires should be directed by email to [People-AFFS-MAILBOX@mod.gov.uk](mailto:People-AFFS-MAILBOX@mod.gov.uk).



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## 2 Universal Infant Free School Meals

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Service children and children of entitled MOD Civilians in schools overseas aged 4, 5 and 6 (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 or equivalent) are entitled to a Universal Infant Free School Meal. As year groups differ overseas, the date of birth of a child is used to confirm eligibility. This is in line with DfE policy. It is the applicant's responsibility to check they are eligible to claim.

### 2.1 Method of Claim

Authorisation must be sought from the individual's Commanding Officer, Commander or Head of Location prior to applicants making a refund claim via JPA's i-Expense (Overseas Nursery Authority & Universal Infants Free School Meal Costs – Expense Claim IN506031).

- Eligible MOD Civilians, without access to JPA, should submit claims to their overseas administration unit for reimbursement.
- All applicants should complete the JPA F031. The following rules apply:
  - Where the meal is provided by the school a refund of billed actuals is admissible. An invoice or receipt is required.
  - In schools without facilities to provide meals, a refund per meal can be claimed. This is in line with government funding allocated to schools in England per academic year as published on the free school meals funding page on [GOV.UK](http://GOV.UK).
  - The claim amount should be converted into local currency using the Garrison Accounting Rate (GAR) for the relevant country should be used.
  - Claimants can only claim for days that a child has attended school; proof of attendance is required.

### 2.2 Method of Payment

Once applicants have confirmed their eligibility and sign off has been received by the Commanding Officer, Commander or Head of Location, applicants with access to JPA should submit a claim via JPA's i-Expense (Overseas Child Expenses). Instructions of how to submit a claim via JPA can be accessed at <https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/sites/IntranetDBS/Documents/IN506031.pdf>

Those without access to JPA should speak to their overseas administration unit and arrange for refunds to be paid under local arrangements. UIN D2321A and RAC PAA002 should be used when undertaking local payment action, but only once eligibility has been confirmed.



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### **3 Casework**

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In addition to the advice provided by OEST, Service personnel and MOD Civilians who consider their circumstances warrant the submission of casework for review by OEST and AFFS EPT are to adhere to the following casework requirements and guideline for submission content:

#### **3.1 Entitlement Sought.**

Be clear about what entitlement is being sought. Reference the paragraphs specific to the policy entitlement you seek and outline briefly why your circumstances are not covered by the policy as it is written.

#### **3.2 Background and case specific information**

Start at the beginning and go through the facts in chronological order. Where relevant include:

- 3.2.1 Dates of all important events. Below is list of examples, it is not exhaustive. Any date you feel is relevant to the timeline should be included.
- Any delays in actions or submissions at unit/assigning authority/Bde or by the SP etc should be explained.
  - Any dates effecting child's education provision.
  - Dates SMEs were consulted.
  - Dates assignment was offered/accepted/changed.
  - Date assessment of support needs was completed.
- 3.2.2 What advice was sought or offered and by whom. In cases of incorrect advice, be specific about dates, places and names, enclosing evidence if available as vague references to a telephone conversation for example is insufficient.
- Include printouts or web address where information was sought on the internet.
  - List agencies, SMEs and MOD staff members consulted in researching your choices.
- 3.2.3 Relevant family or compassionate circumstances (enclosing relevant welfare or medical reports). Detailed medical information is not normally required and should be restricted to confirmation from a medical SME that there is a medical issue and their recommended course of action in relation to the casework/appeal. Full details are required for welfare issues; however, for particularly sensitive cases considered 'welfare in confidence,' advice should be sought from OEST as to the level of evidence required to be submitted. All data provided by Service personnel is managed in accordance with the principles of



the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and by supporting their submissions with such data, they are consenting to its use in support of their casework submission.

- 3.2.4 Any financial hardship suffered as a result of the policy not being applicable/as per the sought entitlement.
- 3.2.5 Any remedial action taken by the Service person to mitigate impact on the Service child.
- This should include details of meetings held with the school pastoral staff, governing body etc.
  - Details of advice and support from the functional CoC.
  - Details of guidance and support received from OEST.
  - Details of any other agencies support has been requested through.
- 3.2.6 Relevant financial information relating to the entitlement sought, e.g. cost per term per child of the educational setting chosen,

### **3.3 Justification**

This is the key part of the submission and needs to focus on the exceptional circumstances. It must be argued in a logical and convincing manner. If this presents difficulties, does the case deserve to go forward? The key issue is whether the circumstances of the case fall within the spirit and intent of the regulations. If it falls at the 'margins', is it possible to argue that there are other circumstances which should be taken into consideration within the scope of the regulations?

### **3.4 Summary**

Close with a short, succinct paragraph that summarises the case, whether it is supported by the Chain of Command or otherwise, and details the outcome sought. Do not introduce new information or facts; these should have already been included in the background or justification.

### **3.5 Completion by Chain of Command**

Once completed casework forms are to be submitted to the functional/budgetary CoC for their review and comment. It is to be made clear whether the case is supported and if the funds will be approved if the case is found admissible.

Any casework that does not include a breakdown of the costs that are to be incurred by the MOD should not be supported. Incomplete casework is to be returned to the SP for further work rather than submission to OEST. The following is to be considered:



- **Regulations.** Does the case fall within the spirit and intent of the regulations? Examine the aim of the policy. Is this case unique, or are there others like it? Do the circumstances indicate a need for fundamental policy review?
- **Knowledge.** Ignorance of the regulations is never a defence in itself; however, in a more complicated case it might be seen as a mitigating factor.
- **Alternatives.** Is there an alternative method of compensation, monetary or otherwise? Is it a reasonable and fair claim on tax-payers money?
- **Extenuating Circumstances.** To what extent are the circumstances brought about by the exigencies of the Service? Where there are extenuating personal circumstances, has the Service person acted in a responsible manner? Is their action a matter of personal choice? If so, do the circumstances justify the reimbursement from public sources being sought?
- **Culpability.** Is the Service person at fault in any way? If so, what degree of blame should be attached to them? Did they seek proper advice? Were they correctly advised? Have they signed to say that they have read and understood the applicable regulations?

Once satisfied the casework is complete the CoC are to submit it, along with all associated evidential documentation, to OEST via email: [RC-DCS-HQ-OES@mod.gov.uk](mailto:RC-DCS-HQ-OES@mod.gov.uk).



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## 4 Support Available

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### 4.1 Military HR Policy and Procedure Queries

Personal questions not answered within this publication and cases of doubt over eligibility or entitlement are to be directed through chains of command.

To access the correct support, please go through the following routes:

1. **Unit HR First POC** for Service personnel for any aspect of personnel administration.
2. **JPAC Enquiries Centre Queries** regarding pay and allowances submissions and errors, and the use of JPA. 94560 3600
3. **DBS Pay & Allowances Casework & Complaints Cell** DBS MilPers-MilOps-PACCC-Group, [DBSMilPers-MilOps-PACCC-Group@mod.gov.uk](mailto:DBSMilPers-MilOps-PACCC-Group@mod.gov.uk) Tri-Service pay and allowances casework and complaints via Unit HR admin staffs.

Further information on statutory (i.e. legal) entitlements can be found on the [.GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) and [Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service \(ACAS\)](https://www.acas.co.uk) websites.



**5 Roles and Responsibilities**

MOD expects all those involved to apply this procedure in accordance with the following generic roles and responsibilities:

Role	Key responsibilities in carrying out this procedure
Service Person	Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents are responsible for the education of their children. This is equally true for parents posted to overseas MOD locations. Parents are to research education provision in the prospective overseas location as dictated by this policy. Parents must declare all known additional educational needs for their children during the family supportability assessment as detailed in MOD Policy Assessment of Support Needs For Accompanied Assignments Overseas.</li> </ul>
Line Manager and/or Chain of Command	Responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overseas commands are responsible for making decisions on each family circumstance as to whether the overseas location provides suitable education. Commands are also responsible for the funding arrangements related to a Service child's education overseas.</li> <li>• As per the principles in HM Treasury document 'Managing Public Money', value for money should be considered as part of the decision-making process.</li> </ul>





Role	Key responsibilities in carrying out this procedure
Defence Business Services (DBS)	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing Education of Service Children Overseas MI, as required.</li> <li>• Publishing announcements on Education of Service Children Overseas in support of the Policy SME.</li> <li>• Managing Policy documents in the Military People Policy Optimisation team site.</li> <li>• Uploading documents and employee-centric material into the Military People Policy Optimisation team site.</li> <li>• Answering employee queries through the DBS Enquiry Centre or through the Digital Workplace (DWP).</li> <li>• Providing new or amended services to meet the needs of Policy, as required and IAW the CR process if they impact MilHRS.</li> </ul>
<p>Mil HR Advisor SME</p> <p>(From Wtr, TG17 and AGC Specs)</p>	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working closely with Senior Leaders supporting development of business strategies through HR Consultancy and Interventions on people issues.</li> <li>• Delivering change programmes and initiatives through comprehensive people change approaches.</li> <li>• Directing employees to DBS if they have any queries.</li> </ul>
Mil HR Policy Holder SME	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging stakeholders (including DBS) on proposed Policy or Procedure changes.</li> <li>• Drafting changes to Policy suites and passing to DBS for publication.</li> </ul>
CDP or ACDS People Cap	<p>Responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The sign off, and fair and consistent application of this procedure.</li> <li>• Deciding whether a Policy Exception can be made after consulting the Policy SME.</li> <li>• Overseeing Military HR compliance audit requirements and compliance action plans that arise as a result.</li> </ul>



## 6 Document Information

### 6.1 Document Coverage

This procedure supersedes all previous MOD procedures on Education of Service Children Overseas. The totality of documents included in this Policy Suite, of which this document is a part, are listed in the Military People Policy Optimisation team site.

### 6.2 Document Information

Filename:	Education of Service Children Overseas Procedure
Document ID:	<b>JSP 342</b>
Owning Function / Team:	Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding Team
Service Owner (1*):	Defence People Team
Approving Authority:	

### 6.3 Document Versions

Version	Publication Date	Revision History	Revised Pages
1	<b>dd/mm/yyyy</b>	Policy Simplification Revamp	N/A

MOD will review this Procedure in two years, or when changes to legislation or best practice dictates.

### 6.4 Linked JSPs

JSP Number	JSP Name
MOD Policy	Assessment of Support Needs For Accompanied Assignments Overseas
JSP 752	Tri-Service Regulations for Expenses and Allowances
JSP 834	Safeguarding



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**7 FAQs**

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- Q: Will the MOD pay for any school I choose?  
A: Where there is no MOD school in the overseas location of the Service parent, and where the language of instruction in schools is English, the MOD expects Service children to use local state provided education.  
Where there is no suitable local state school (i.e. the taught language is not English or the state curriculum does not provide a broad and balanced curriculum sharing common aspects of the Department of Education 'national curriculum' as taught in local-authority-maintained schools in England), casework can be submitted to AFFS EPT outlining the exceptional circumstances that require supportability within a private schooling provision.  
In line with HM Treasury published guidelines, [Managing Public Money](#), the MOD must balance fiscal responsibilities with the operational output of its Commands. A Budget Holder is authorised to decline funding for educational options if it is felt a school does not provide value for money against operational outputs and other options are available. This will vary from case to case with the base for comparison of offers being the DfE England local-authority-maintained schools.
- Q: Can I move my child to a different school once overseas?  
A: Any change to school placement following agreement of supportability must be discussed with the OEST prior to any steps being taken to withdraw a child from school or move a child to a different school. A supportability review or MASO may be initiated as a result of a request to change schools.
- Q: Does an MOD school have to take my child?  
A: As with all schools, safeguarding is a primary concern of the school's management. For example, where an admission would place children over the stated class size or if a child is deemed not supportable in location, the MOD school has the right to refuse an admission.
- Q: Why can't I get the same amount of childcare funding in Scotland/Wales/NI as I do in England?  
A: Within the United Kingdom education is a devolved responsibility, and the statutory entitlement of UK residents (including Service Personnel and their dependents) may vary depending on where they are stationed within the UK. Up to date information can be found on the Childcare choice's website. <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk>
- Q: Why is there a difference across the UK in the cost of early education and childcare?  
A: Early childhood education and childcare costs vary across the UK, this is the same for all parents accessing it, not just Service families. Early childhood



education and childcare is not a statutory requirement. All families who access early childhood education and childcare, do so through personal choice, based on the individual circumstances of their family. Those that choose to send their child to an early childhood education and childcare provider, will pay fees or access the relevant funded entitlements, based on family circumstances, and the location in which this service is accessed. We recommend that all Service families conduct their own research into the availability and costs of childcare before they choose their next assignment.

- Q: What is the MOD doing about the disparity across the UK of 2-year-old funding the government introduced in April?  
A: 15 hours of funded childcare for 2- year-olds is available for working parents in England and Wales. The Flying Start Scheme in Wales provides free childcare to some eligible children aged 2-3, and is already in force. The MOD have not heard any proposals that Scotland will be introducing this. Education is a devolved matter and the MOD have no influence over it.
  
- Q: What meals can I claim for under Universal Infant Free School Meals?  
A: Parents can claim back term-time only (38 weeks of the year) and only for 5 lunch meals per week for days the Service child was in attendance at school.
- Q: Can I claim for Universal Infant Free School Meals if I provide my child with a packed lunch?  
A: Packed lunches can only be claimed for if the school can't provide any food or if certain allergies, learning difficulties and illnesses prevent a child from eating the meal provided by the school. Parents must provide relevant evidence prior to claiming. The value of the refund is in line with the funding provided to schools, this is published each academic year.  
In general, MOD Schools overseas provide the meal free of charge to eligible children, however, where the school cannot provide a meal, a refund for a packed lunch can be claimed for. [www.gov.uk/education/free-school-meals-fsm-funding](http://www.gov.uk/education/free-school-meals-fsm-funding)
  
- Q: Why can't parents claim UIFSM when based in the devolved nations?  
A: Education statutory services and funding is set and delivered by each Devolved Administration. Within the four countries of the United Kingdom Service families receive the same level of statutory services as other citizens. In overseas locations (that is: outside the United Kingdom) the MOD seeks to replicate the statutory entitlement that would be received in England, so far as it is reasonably practicable to do so. Since Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland are part of the United Kingdom the MOD has no responsibility for delivering statutory services, and there is therefore no entitlement to the MOD Universal Infant Free School Meals.
  
- Q: Can I claim UIFSM for my children attending a virtual school?  
A: UIFSM only be claimed when children are present in a school setting, attendance records need to be provided alongside any claim for UIFSM.



- Q: What is Overseas Nursery Authority?  
A: The MOD delivers 15 or 30 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year free early education/childcare to all Regular Service Personnel, Reserve Personnel undertaking Full Time Reserve Service (Full Commitment) (FTRS FC) and entitled Civilians who are assigned overseas where they are accompanied by their eligible children, through places at MOD-provided settings or through access to the MOD Overseas Nursery Authority where there is no MOD-provided setting or an MOD-provided setting has no capacity.
- Q: My child is school age in England but our location does not have statutory schooling until age 5. Can I claim ONA?  
A: The age at which a child is accepted into full-time school in overseas locations is dictated by local provision. When a child reaches the age at which they would be in full-time education in England and where there is no access to school-based provision, ONA may be extended until such time children enter full-time education locally.
- Q: Where the statutory school age is three, does the family apply for school funding through ONA?  
A: If a host nation requires a child to begin education before the term after their 3rd birthday ONA may be claimed where no suitable state school exists. Advice can be sought from the ONA policy sponsor via the AFFS Child Expenses mailbox, [People-AFFS-Child-Expenses@mod.gov.uk](mailto:People-AFFS-Child-Expenses@mod.gov.uk).



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## 8 Glossary

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- **Service Child.** For the purposes of this JSP only, the term ‘Service child’ means the child of at least one parent/carer with a legal obligation to support the child and where the parent/carer is either a MOD Civilian or Serving member of the Regular Armed Forces, including mobilised Reserve Forces personnel (who are eligible for overseas assignment).
- **Suitable Education.** For the purposes of this JSP, suitable education is defined as:
  - An education that offers a broad and balanced curriculum which shares common aspects of the English state school system.
  - An education that does not place the safety, welfare, or social development of a Service child at risk.
- **Efficient Education.** In line with Department for Education guidance, an efficient education is one which achieves what it sets out to achieve. It is important that this concept is not confused with suitability. An unsuitable education can be efficiently delivered – but is still unsuitable.
- **Local Private School.** Non-state provided education such as private day schools or independent schools. The school should be within the recommended distance from home as per DfE guidance [Travel to school for children of compulsory school age](#), or close enough to allow for daily travel between the school and the Service person’s residence at work address.