

Who Are DCS?

Defence Children Services (DCS) is a Defence delivery organisation, subordinated under Army Regional Command. DCS' function is to support Service children and their Service families with educational needs, providing advice on a wide range of educational matters both overseas and in the UK, delivered by specialist education and advisory teams.

The EWO Role

Our Education Welfare Officers (EWOs), work closely with schools, pupils and parents to ensure attendance is maximised. We offer informal support to Service Personnel and entitled MOD civilians who have been identified as requiring early intervention.

Stage 1

If you have received a Stage 1 letter, you may be offered a referral into the EWO service for some informal support.

Stage 2

If your child's attendance continues to decline, this will be escalated to a Stage 2 referral for formal EWO support and parents/carers will be invited in for a MOD Attendance Review (MOR).

For More Information

Always contact your child's school first, as The Headteacher is the only person to whom the law gives discretionary power to grant the exceptional leave of absence.

Please also refer to your child's school attendance policy:

- For MOD schools; DCS Directive 3.2.6 School Attendance
- JSP 342 Education of Service Children & young people
- JSP 760 Tri-Service Regulations for Leave and Other Types of Absence

You may also seek advice from The Education Welfare Team. Contact: **RC-DCS-HQ-WSW@mod.gov.uk**



Defence
Children
Services

Attendance matters

Parent Information Leaflet



Why Does Attendance Matter?

Research shows that there is a direct link between good attendance and achievement in school. Poor attendance can have a direct effect on a pupils attainment and their future life chances.

For example, 90% attendance might sound quite acceptable but what that means in reality is:

- On average half a day of school missed every week. (Would an employer think this is an acceptable rate of attendance?)
- This would also mean in one year, four whole weeks of schooling missed.
- In five years, it would mean half of a school year missed.

Habits of poor attendance and lateness in school are often repeated in working life.

It is parents/carers responsibility to inform the school as early as possible on the first day of absence and every subsequent day thereafter.

The school may request a written letter or further evidence e.g. a doctors note, if the absence continues.

However, we do understand that being part of the MOD throws its challenges being situated overseas and occasionally families need to take time off school for exceptional circumstances.

What Are Exceptional Circumstances?

- Specialist medical appointments
- Visiting of boarding schools
- Compassionate leave (see JSP 751, Vol 1, Part 3)

Alternatively, there are situations when families would like to take time off, which may result in children's absences being extended due to their location and having to travel.

What Are Not Exceptional Circumstances?

- Weddings
- Visiting family
- Long periods of being on tour or operations (see JSP 760)

Parents need to be aware that ultimately discretion lies with the Headteacher for authorisation of absence requests. For more detail, please see the term-time leaflet.

Absence Requests

It is advised firstly to read the school's attendance policy and to then contact the school at the earliest opportunity to discuss any planned absences.

Further Support

If at any stage you would like further advice and guidance on school attendance, you can contact one of the Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) who are available to support, advise and guide you. You can self refer direct to one of our EWOs by contacting them at:

RC-DCS-HQ-WSW@mod.gov.uk

In Summary

The MOD applies the statutory requirement for parents to ensure that their children of compulsory school age receive an 'efficient and suitable' education. Should parents fail to do so there are mechanisms that can be brought to bear, if necessary, in order to enforce attendance for Defence personnel who come under scope of the Armed Forces Act 2006.