



Defence
Children
Services

Defence Children Services Schools and Settings Special Educational Needs and Disabilities offer

Defence Children Services (DCS) is part of the Ministry of Defence whose function is to support military families and their children who are educated overseas. DCS has a similar role to a local education authority but does not have the same legislative powers.

DCS Schools and Settings mirror the English education system and adopt the principles of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (2015). Terminology for SEND may differ across the UK:

- England: SEND
- Scotland: Additional Support Needs (ASN)
- Wales: Additional Learning Needs (ALN)
- Northern Ireland: SEN Support

What is SEND?

The SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years, January 2015 states:

“A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him/her. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- a) Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or,
- b) Has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.”

This means that children with SEND may need extra help or support, or additional provision made for them to have the same opportunities as others their age. If a child has a SEND, their needs will mainly fall into one or more of the following four broad areas:

- Communication and interaction needs
- Cognition and learning difficulties
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- Sensory and/or physical needs

What is the DCS commitment to inclusion?

DCS Schools and Settings are committed to inclusion, ensuring all children thrive and achieve their full potential. DCS Schools and Settings aim to:

- Create an inclusive, safe environment where all contributions are valued, and diversity is celebrated.
- Invest time in getting to know children early, particularly at points of transition, being both anticipatory and reactive in planning support that will help them succeed.
- Deliver high quality and evidence-informed inclusive teaching practices consistently throughout the school
- Provide targeted support for children with SEND in an organised, clear and structured way so schools can ensure support is available when needed, and that responsibilities of staff are well understood.
- Build strong relationships based on trust with families to help create coherent and consistent support for children
- Ensure the responsibility for inclusion is shared and guided by a clear ethos, aligning planning, development, and accountability to drive consistent, inclusive practice
- Ensure all children have access to participate fully in school life including all extra curricula clubs and activities.

What is the DCS Schools and Settings SEND offer?

The DCS Schools and Settings SEND offer provides service families with information about the support available for children with SEND in overseas locations. It empowers families by outlining:

- What to expect from DCS Schools and Settings.
- Available services and provisions.
- How to access support.
- Steps to take if concerns arise.

How do I apply for an overseas school place for a child with SEND?

The Overseas Education and Supportability Team (OEST) coordinate this process. Please see their webpage for information about this process and see detailed direction in JSP 770 and JSP 342.

MOD Policy, 'Assessment of Support Needs for Accompanied Assignments Overseas, outlines that *"there is no automatic entitlement to an accompanied assignment or transfer overseas. But the MOD will, where possible, enable this for its Service personnel/MOD Civilians and their families"*. All DCS Schools and Settings are committed to inclusion for all children. For children with SEND, the graduated approach will be followed. If a school or setting feel that a child needs SEND provision that is in addition to the resources available to them at SEN support, a Service Children's Assessment of Need (SCAN) may be appropriate. Whilst the SCAN is analogous to an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP - England), Co-ordinated

Support Plan (CSP - Scotland), a SEN Statement (Northern Ireland), or an Individual Development Plan (IDP – Wales), it is important to understand that a SCAN does not guarantee access to the same level of support that may be available in the UK.

What can I expect from a DCS School and Setting for children with SEND?

Every DCS School and Setting will:

- Follow the graduated approach (assess, plan, do, review cycle).
- Use their best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEND gets the support they need.
- Ensure that children and young people with SEND engage in all school/setting activities to the best of their ability through making reasonable adjustments.
- Adapt their teaching to meet individual needs which leads to access to the curriculum for all.
- Designate a suitably qualified teacher or setting practitioner to be responsible for co-ordinating SEND provision (the SEND co-ordinator, or SENDCo).
- Work closely with parents and when required, inform parents when they are making special educational provision for a child.
- Publish a SEND information report and share the arrangements that have been taken to prevent SEND children from being treated less favourably than others.
- Review the SEND policy annually.
- Comply with the DCS directive: Supporting Children with SEND.
- Display their specific universal, targeted and specialist offer on their website page.

What is the Graduated Approach: Assess, Plan, Do, Review (ADPR)?

This is a model of action and intervention which is regularly reviewed to support progress:

1. **Assess:** Identify the child's needs and establish a baseline.
2. **Plan:** Develop an Inclusion Support Plan (ISP), alongside parents, with agreed outcomes.
3. **Do:** Provide targeted support under the teacher's supervision.
4. **Review:** Termly reviews held with parents to evaluate progress.

Universal, Targeted, and Specialist Provision

Universal: support available to all children without specialist resources.

Targeted: additional support for children which is specifically designed to meet their needs.

Specialist: higher-level support likely requiring external agency support and specialist assessment.

What do I do if I have concerns about my child's development / progress?

If you are concerned about your child's progress or development, contact their class teacher, tutor, or the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo). You can discuss your concerns and plan next steps together. Preparing notes before the meeting may be helpful.

How do schools and settings support transitions?

DCS schools and settings prioritise smooth transitions for children moving schools, classes, key stages, or to post-16 education. Early planning is encouraged, including virtual tours and liaising with the new school. If you are moving on from a DCS school or setting, let them know as early as possible so they can begin the transition process with your child. If you know the school or setting you are moving to, the DCS school/setting will begin liaison work as soon as they have your permission. For children with SEND, additional support is coordinated by the DCS school or setting, the Overseas Education and Supportability (OES) Team, and the Education Advisory Team (EAT-UK). Further information about how DCS schools and settings support transitions can be found [here](#).

What services are available in DCS Schools?

The available services are dependent on the overseas location, your local DCS school or setting will be able to provide more specific information. Please check their website for relevant information.

Medical and Community Health services: It is in your best interest to ensure that the appropriate facilities are available in the overseas location to maintain continuity of treatment for a specific condition. If your child is diagnosed with a particular illness or a condition that is being treated in the UK, it is very important that you consult with your unit medical officer well in advance of arriving in post overseas.

Early Years Settings and Childcare: The current overseas context does not guarantee full or automatic access to 0-5 early years/childcare in every location. In locations where parents are not able to access MOD provision, they may make use of the Overseas Nursery Allowance to fund early years education/childcare for eligible children. More detailed information can be found on the gov.uk [website](#).

Eligible dual-working parents may make use of Tax-Free Childcare overseas where it is supported by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. Tax Free Childcare for Service parents overseas can only be accessed in a registered setting. Detailed guidance is accessed [Tax-Free Childcare \(TFC\) - GOV.UK](#).

Free Early Years education / childcare: From September 2025 in DCS-provided settings overseas, parents with children aged 9 months to school starting age can

access 15 or 30 hours' funded childcare (depending on eligibility). To apply for 15 or 30 hours' funded childcare and for more detailed information search for the DIN: 2025DIN01-081-Funded childcare entitlements and processes for overseas Service personnel and UK Based Civil Servants (UKBCs) with accompanying pre-school aged children on **defnet** or **Defence Connect** (accessible by MOD personnel only). Applications should be forwarded to the relevant setting or school for approval and recording.

Wraparound Childcare (WAC) Offer: Eligible working parents (at least one of whom is a member of the Armed Forces), with children aged between 4-11 years old (4-16 years old if in receipt of certain disability benefits) who are in full time education (including home educated children), will be able to claim back the costs of regulated wraparound childcare (known as "Out of School Childcare" in Wales and "School Age Childcare" in Scotland) for a maximum of 20 hours per week, per eligible child, during term time. The allowance is for 39 term time only weeks in a 52 week (one year) rolling period. The 39-week allowance will start on the date of the first week of childcare claimed. From 1 January 2025 WAC scheme eligibility was extended to include Service personnel who are serving overseas within the European Economic Area and Switzerland (EEA&S) with a child attending a host nation provider for before or after school childcare, or who are serving overseas with a child attending a DCS school or setting for before or after school childcare (see 2025DIN01-087-Defence Wraparound Childcare (WAC) Allowance.docx).

Transport: Funding and arrangements for transport mirrors, where reasonably practicable, the principles laid out in Department for Education statutory guidance for the maintained education sector and ensure that a child's education is not disadvantaged. Personnel are to follow direction and guidance for School Transport contained in JSP 800 (Vol 5). Generally, transport is not provided, but in some locations, there is transport from remote service accommodation areas. Ask the local DCS school or Hive for more information. Transport is not provided for the Early Years settings.

Welfare and Social Care Services: This varies widely dependant on overseas location: your command, the service family federations or local Hives can provide specific information.

Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT): Speech and language therapy focuses on assessing and supporting children's communication difficulties, including speech, language, and social interaction challenges. Speech therapy aims to help children develop the skills needed to understand and express themselves effectively. SaLTs work in partnership with DCS education settings and families to address and support a wide range of communication difficulties, these include speech sound difficulties, language disorders, stammering, and social communication needs.

All DCS Schools and Settings can access support and advice from the DCS SaLT team, however the provision for SaLT services does vary significantly across overseas locations. For example, in British Forces Cyprus children can access the Speech and Language Therapy service in location through SSAFA Community Health, and in DCS settings in Gibraltar, SaLT can be accessed through the Gibraltar Health Authority

(GHA). In other DCS settings overseas, we provide a remote advisory service with some in-person visits through the year for clinical assessment and review. More information is available from your DCS school or setting.

Educational Psychology: DCS Educational Psychologists (EPs) and Senior Educational Psychologists (SEPs) work in partnership with education settings (early years settings, primary and secondary schools), families, and other practitioners to help children to have a successful experience of education by supporting inclusive practice and interventions to support learning and social/emotional development. For children with significant SEND, EPs/SEPs play an important role in providing statutory-comparable and non-statutory support to the child, their parent/carer and the education setting. All DCS Schools and Settings can access support from the Educational Psychology Team.

Safeguarding and Education Welfare Officers: DCS provide professional support to all schools and settings.

Local Hives: The HIVE Information Service provides information about services available in each overseas location through websites, telephone and email inquiries. They do this on behalf of the chain of command to the Service community and they welcome enquiries from serving personnel, dependants, partners, extended families, and the wider military community including veterans and MOD civilians.

Family Federations: The family federations are the independent voice of Service families, they work hard to improve the quality of life for Service families around the world. They can provide information about services available in each overseas location through websites, telephone and email inquiries.

Useful links

- <https://aff.org.uk/uk-overseas/your-cyprus-posting/>
- <https://aff.org.uk/uk-overseas/your-germany-posting/>
- <https://aff.org.uk/uk-overseas/your-brunei-posting/>
- <https://www.raf-ff.org.uk/overseas/>
- <https://bfgnet.de/hive.html>
- <https://nff.org.uk/overseas-assignments/>

DCS Schools and Settings locations

Germany

- Ramstein
 - St David's Primary School (3 to 11 years)
- Sennelager
 - Attenborough Early Years (0 to 3)
 - Attenborough Primary School (3 to 11 years)

Cyprus

- Akrotiri
 - Akrotiri Early Years Setting (0 to 3 years)
 - Akrotiri Primary School (3 to 11 years)
- Ayios Nikolaos
 - Ayios Nikolaos Early Years Setting (0 to 3 years)
- Dhekelia
 - Dhekelia Early Years Setting (0 to 3 years)
 - Queen Berengaria Primary School (3 to 11 years)
 - King Richard Secondary School (11 to 19 years)
- Episkopi
 - Episkopi Early Years Setting (0 to 3 years)
 - Episkopi Primary school (3 to 11 years)
 - St John's Secondary School (11 to 19 years)

Brunei

- Treetops Early Years Setting (0 to 3 years)
- Hornbill Primary School (3 to 11 years)

Italy

- BFS Naples Primary School (3 to 11 years)

Belgium

- SHAPE Primary School (3 to 11 years)

Falkland Islands

- Mount Pleasant Primary School (2 to 11 years)

Gibraltar

- Sunflowers Early Years Setting (0 to 3 years) (no website)
- St Christopher's Foundation Stage (3 to 5 years)

The Netherlands

- AFNORTH Primary School (3 to 11 years)

DCS complaints procedure

The DCS's complaints policy against DCS schools and settings provides further information on how to complain. It can be sourced from your local school or setting.

DCS privacy notice

Defence Children Services Schools and Settings Special Educational Needs and Disabilities offer

Our privacy notice on how we use pupil information, can be sourced from your local school or setting or the DCS schools' website (in due course)

The DCS Schools and Settings SEND Offer was developed in partnership in 2019 with Defence Children Services, DCS schools and settings, parents, pupils, EPSL, service family federations, representatives from the armed services and education partners from the devolved authorities - it was updated in November 2025.