



## State School Admissions

The Army Families Federation Cyprus (AFF Cyprus), regularly get enquiries from worried and stressed parents, who feel frustrated by the UK state schools admissions process. It is a myth service families get priority or an automatic place at their preferred school. This article will hopefully give clear information about the process.

### Which Schools are in the Area?

As soon as you know where you are going, find out details of the schools in the new location. The earlier you start the better. Sources of this information include:

- Local HIVEs who produce Education Information Sheets - [www.hive.mod.uk](http://www.hive.mod.uk)
- Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) - 0044 1980 618244, [ceas@gtnet.gov.uk](mailto:ceas@gtnet.gov.uk)
- Local Education Authority (LEA) - [www.dfes.gov.uk/leagateway](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/leagateway)
- Wales Learning for Welsh schools - [www.learning.wales.gov.uk](http://www.learning.wales.gov.uk)
- Learning Scotland for Scottish schools - [www.ltscotland.org.uk](http://www.ltscotland.org.uk)
- Schools in Northern Ireland - [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)
- Service Children's Education for overseas schools - [www.sceschools.com](http://www.sceschools.com)

You will also need to inform the school your children currently attend that you will be moving shortly. Don't worry if you do not move, you will not lose your child's place at school.

### What are the Schools like?

When you have gathered your list of prospective schools, find out as much information as you can about each one. Look at:

- OFSTED reports- [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)
- Departments for Education and Skills (DfES) for performance reports- [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)
- Local Authority Booklets
- Ask the school to send you a copy of it's prospectus
- The school's website

When it is practicable, arrange to visit the school. There is nothing better than seeing for yourself what a school is like and to see if it will be suitable for your child.

### Applying for Admission

When you have all the information available you can begin to make an informed decision as to which schools you wish to apply for. Remember, in England you have the right to express a preference for a school, but that this does not mean that you will always be offered a place from your preferred school. Contact the schools you are interested in and ask them about their particular admissions process. Each area is different and certain schools have different admissions procedures. You do not need an address before you apply. All you need is a posting order or letter from your CO confirming the move (Contact AFF Cyprus for more details).

### Successful Offers of a Place at the Preferred School

If you were successful in obtaining your preferred school, you simply need to inform the old school that your child is leaving and ask for all of his/her relevant reports and files that you are required to hand over to the new school. Don't forget - you will be responsible for delivering these to the new school!

### Unsuccessful Applications and Appeals

Some schools are more popular than others and receive more applications for places than there are available. You will however, always be offered a school place for your child somewhere but not necessarily at the school of your choice. If you are unhappy with the place you have been given, then you can appeal to the Independent appeals panel in the area. If you wish to appeal Contact CEAS (0044 1980 618244) as they can help you throughout the appeals process, and in some cases accompany you to the appeal itself. Please investigate the school you have been offered, as it may be suitable for your child. Don't refuse a place because somebody told you it was awful two years ago. When appealing you may be asked to supply extra evidence as to why your child should be going to a particular school, and CEAS can help you with this too. If you can, you should attend the appeal hearing; you are the best person to answer questions about your child.

### **School Age Differences in Scotland and Northern Ireland**

The date of your child's birthday can affect which year group your child is put into at schools in Scotland and Northern Ireland. This can result in your child moving either up or down a year. If you are applying for admission to a school in either location, speak to the Head in order to clarify the situation. If you don't get the answer you were hoping for, contact the LEA or CEAS for further advice.

### **Summary**

Every parent wants to do the best for their child. In order to find out what state education choices you have, you must do careful research. Get as much information as you can and ask as many questions as you can, only then will you be able to make an informed choice. There are many people available who are only too willing to help and advise you on this matter.

### **Further Assistance**

- AFF Cyprus, Tel: 2596 2110, [armyfam@globalsoftmail.com](mailto:armyfam@globalsoftmail.com)
- AFF Education and Childcare Specialist, Stephanie Paden - [stefpaden@aol.com](mailto:stefpaden@aol.com)
- Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS), Tel Civ: 0044 1980 618211, Tel Mil: 94344 8244, [ceas@gtnet.gov.uk](mailto:ceas@gtnet.gov.uk)