

## **Stoke-on-Trent Protocol for the Admission of Children of UK Service Personnel**

Protocol Created	August 2014
Review Date	March 2016 and then annually unless a need to review earlier is identified [V1.1]

**March 2015**

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## Description of Policy

This policy describes how UK service personnel can seek admission to schools, recognising they may arrive in an area at short notice and after Year Groups have been established.

## Linked Policies

- The School Admissions Code 2014
- The Stoke-on-Trent Admissions Policy
- The Armed Forces Covenant<sup>1</sup>
- Stoke-on-Trent Protocol for the Admission of Children of UK Service Personnel

This protocol applies to:

- All Stoke-on-Trent City Council schools at primary and secondary phase except for Special Schools.
- All parents and carers seeking admission to school for a child in their care.
- Admissions from September 2012

## Operation of the protocol

The protocol is operated by officers of the Schools Admissions Team in co-operation with management and staff in schools. The governing bodies and staff in all schools are requested to support the efficient operation of the protocol. Schools should assist by referring, to the School Admissions Team, any families of UK service personnel who approach a school direct.

## Background

The Armed Services Covenant states that the “children of members of the Armed Services should have the same standard of and access to, education as any other UK citizen in the area in which they live. The services should aim to facilitate this in the way they manage personnel, but there should also be special arrangements to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-armed-forces-covenant>  
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support access to schools if a place is required part way through an academic year as a consequence of a posting.”

The School Admissions Code 2014 acknowledges at section 2.18 that families of UK Service personnel are subject to frequent movement at short notice. This can mean that children of such families are disadvantaged educationally by being more likely to have a need to apply for a school place outside the normal admissions round when schools may already be full. This protocol seeks to mitigate this disadvantage.

The Code requires admission authorities to allocate a place in advance of the family arriving in the area provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering area address when considering the application against their oversubscription criteria<sup>2</sup>.

The School Admissions Code 2014 also makes reference to the Children of UK Service personnel in relation to class size exceptions<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> 2.18 **Children of UK service personnel (UK Armed Forces)** - For families of service personnel with a confirmed posting to their area, or crown servants returning from overseas to live in that area, admission authorities **must**:

a) allocate a place in advance of the family arriving in the area provided the application is accompanied by an official letter that declares a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering area address when considering the application against their oversubscription criteria. This **must** include accepting a Unit postal address or quartering area address for a service child. Admission authorities **must not** refuse a service child a place because the family does not currently live in the area, or reserve blocks of places for these children;

b) ensure that arrangements in their area support the Government’s commitment to removing disadvantage for service children. Arrangements **must** be appropriate for the area and be described in the local authority’s composite prospectus.

<sup>3</sup> 2.15 Infant class size – Infant classes (those where the majority of children will reach the age of 5, 6 or 7 during the school year) must not contain more than 30 pupils with a single school teacher. Additional children may be admitted under limited exceptional circumstances. These children will remain an ‘excepted pupil’ for the time they are in an infant class or until the class numbers fall back to the current infant class size limit. The excepted children include:

f) children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admissions round.

## Purpose of the protocol

The purpose of this protocol is to ensure that:

- a place is allocated to a child in advance of the school year where necessary and to enable decisions to be based on a Unit address in advance of a home address being confirmed;
- the best interests and needs of the child should be the focus of any discussions surrounding his or her admission to school, including a possible admission above the PAN of the receiving school;
- the process of identifying a child who may benefit from early confirmation of the result of a request for a school place should begin as early as possible and integration planned to make the process as smooth as possible;
- early identification will enable all appropriate agencies to take a full part in decision-making and providing support to the child;
- the receiving school can receive the child's school file and records from education establishments out of the United Kingdom at an earlier point.

## Criteria

- The child shall be a member of a family of UK Service personnel;
- The family shall be relocating from another part of or into the United Kingdom;
- An application for admission shall be accompanied by **official confirmation of the relocation date from the Ministry of Defence.**

## Normal Round Applications (Nursery, Reception and Year 7)

Stoke-on-Trent Local Authority has published over subscription criteria within the Admissions Policy. The Armed Services Covenant **does not** seek preferential treatment for the children of UK Service personnel, but rather to

- enable decisions to be based on a Unit address in advance of a home address being confirmed;
- ensure that the best interests and needs of the child(ren) should be the focus of any discussions surrounding their admission to school, including a possible admission above the PAN of the receiving school, should the specific social/medical circumstances relating to a child be such that the receiving school would agree the additional admission<sup>4</sup>.

### Procedure:

In considering a request for admission and in the absence of a confirmed home address, the LA and admission authorities will accept a Unit postal address from service personnel. Where it is necessary to measure the distance to school for the purposes of deciding priority in relation to other applicants, the main entrance of the Unit will be used.

When the School Admissions Team is notified, with a supporting letter by an applicant, that the family is relocating to an area, this address will be used for Admissions purposes. The child(ren) may be given priority within the relevant admission criteria based on Social/Medical, where appropriate. Any place offered will be held open for the Autumn term.

Where the requested school is oversubscribed, the child(ren) will be placed on the relevant waiting list according to the home address or Unit address. No further priority will be given to reflect the family status. The Right of Appeal will be given.

Where an appeal is to be submitted to the Independent Appeals Panel, this should be done in relation to the appropriate deadline for Appeals. Late appeals should be discussed with the clerk to the Stoke-on-Trent Education Appeals Panel.

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<sup>4</sup> The Local Authority would generally only apply this priority if it was not possible to offer an alternative school place within a reasonable proximity, thus creating an exceptional social need for a place at a nearer school. Schools that act as their own admission authority are responsible for making their own decisions on admissions but the Stoke-on-Trent Admissions team would liaise with those schools and would endeavour to support Armed Services families to ensure a suitable school placement could be found in a timely way.

## In Year Applications

In considering a request for admission and in the absence of a confirmed home address, the LA and admission authorities will accept a Unit postal address from service personnel. Where it is necessary to measure the distance to school for the purposes of deciding priority in relation to other applicants, the main entrance of the Unit will be used.

When the School Admissions Team is notified with a supporting letter by an applicant that the family is relocating to an area and there is a vacancy in the relevant Year Group at the preferred school, a place will be offered and held open for up to 12 school weeks. It should be noted that school holidays will not be counted when calculating school weeks.

Where the requested school is oversubscribed, the Governing body will be asked to consider whether the child(ren) can be admitted above the PAN. Each application must be considered in accordance with a school's published admission arrangements which would mean that such a child(ren) could only be admitted if they were at the top of a waiting list. The child(ren) may be given priority within the relevant admission criteria based on Social/Medical, where appropriate. If the requested school does not admit the child(ren), the child(ren) will be placed on the relevant waiting list according to the home address or Unit address. No other priority will be given to reflect the family status and they will have the Right of Appeal.

## Class Size Exceptions

'The School Admissions (Infant Class Sizes) (England) Regulations 2012 extended the categories of children to be treated as an exception to infant class size to 'children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admission round'. This exception allows a school to admit children of UK service personnel above infant class size but **does not require** them to do so. Each application must still be considered in accordance with a school's published admission arrangements which would mean that such a child could only be admitted if they were at the top of a waiting list. The exception to infant class size only applies when a decision is made to admit a child as there will be instances when a UK service personnel child cannot be admitted<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> For example, where a number of service children require admission to Key Stage 1 classes at the same time, creating a significant increase to class sizes within a local school.

If the admission authority decided not to admit the child and the family submitted an appeal, the admission authority would still need to argue the appeal on infant class size which should confirm why a decision was made not to admit as an excepted child and the prejudice that would be caused to the efficient education or efficient use of resources if the child were admitted.

- If a child of a member of UK service personnel is not at the top of a waiting list then the admission authority would have to breach infant class size in order to admit the other children ahead of the UK service personnel child in order to ensure they admitted according to their admission criteria. In this scenario a school could not therefore admit the UK service personnel child and any appeal would still need to be based on infant class size prejudice.

Paragraph 2.18 of the School Admissions Code confirms that admission authorities must 'ensure that arrangements in their area support the Government's commitment to removing disadvantage for service children'. Whilst there is no requirement for service children to be given high priority in admission arrangements, admission authorities should consider applications on a case by case basis and where there are exceptional circumstances they should consider whether a child should be given exceptional medical/social priority for a place. In considering such applications outside the normal admission round, admission authorities may want to take into account the availability of other places in the area.'

## Contacts

Stoke-on-Trent In Year Admissions Team Tel: 01782 23 7856 [Inyearadmissions@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:Inyearadmissions@stoke.gov.uk)

Stoke-on-Trent Normal Round Admissions Team Tel: 01782 23 4598 [Admissions@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:Admissions@stoke.gov.uk)

Children's Education Advisory Service<sup>6</sup> – Ministry of Defence Tel: 01980 618244  
[enquiries@ceas.uk.com](mailto:enquiries@ceas.uk.com)

Department for Education<sup>7</sup>

Office of the Schools Adjudicator<sup>8</sup>

School Admissions Code<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/childrens-education-advisory-service>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-schools-adjudicator>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/389388/School\\_Admission\\_Code\\_2014\\_-\\_19\\_Dec.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/389388/School_Admission_Code_2014_-_19_Dec.pdf)



## Version Control

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