



See Distribution

4 June 2020

DIRECTED LETTER – SCHOOL CHILDREN’S VISITS FOR OVERSEAS-ASSIGNED SERVICE PERSONNEL – INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS DURING PERIOD OF COVID-19 BORDER RESTRICTIONS

1. I am directed to inform you of the following interim arrangements for School Children’s Visits for overseas-assigned Service personnel following the introduction of stricter border controls in response to Coronavirus (COVID-19). These arrangements are effective immediately and will remain in place until further notice by AF Rem Allowances. General advice on the Defence implications of the new Border Force restrictions can be found on DefNet at [Defence Advice Note 18](#).
2. Under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (England) Regulations 2020 (and equivalent regulations elsewhere in the UK) (the Regulations) international travellers arriving in the UK will be subject to stricter border controls. These are essential public health measures intended to prevent the reintroduction of COVID-19 cases from abroad as the UK increasingly controls the spread of the disease at home. These measures are:
 - a. A mandatory requirement for all people arriving in the UK to self-isolate at a location they specify for a period of 14 days, or until the international traveller departs the UK meaning, for example, that short visits accompanying children back into the UK are feasible. Self-isolation requirements are set out in the Government guidance available at <https://www.gov.uk/uk-border-control>).
 - b. The mandatory collection of data for arriving passengers including, for example, information on location abroad, journey to the UK, location in the UK and details of next of kin. This will help support Public Health England’s contact tracing system.
3. In order to give parents the flexibility to respond to these stricter border controls the following provisions have been agreed and should be read alongside JSP 752 Chapter 10 Section 2 – School Children’s Visits. No additional costs are permitted for Reverse School Children’s Visits as these visits do not normally attract payment of subsistence. Any other questions should be addressed through the Chain of Command to Admin Support Units, Families Section DSCOM or DE Strat in the normal way.
4. Assuming airlines are not currently offering an unaccompanied minor service, then a parent would need to accompany their child(ren) and comply with the

Government's self-isolation requirements on arrival in the UK. In addition, older children who would normally travel unaccompanied may require a parent to accompany them if they are required to self-isolate in a hotel. This includes those attending University if individual circumstances mean this is essential and is agreed by Chain of Command. The following options should be considered and it is expected that the lowest cost option will be utilised wherever possible. The options have been listed, alongside the allowable expenses, in order starting with the most cost-effective/desirable (option a.). Whilst we expect the most cost-effective option available to be utilised, we do recognise that personal circumstances will vary and not every option will be available to every family. Service personnel should therefore discuss their individual circumstances with their Chain of Command and agree the most appropriate course of action.

a. **Self-isolation carried out at boarding school for the child and the parent returns overseas immediately.** Any additional costs incurred for the boarding element of school fees for a 14 day self-isolation period prior to the start of term, which are proportionate to regular boarding fees and charged to all parents for self-isolation, would be refunded in full and terminal travel costs up to the cost of MMA for the journeys in accordance with JSP 752 10.0211 b. (3) would be permitted. Hire car costs are permitted within the total terminal travel costs claim which must not exceed the cost of MMA for the journey. This is in accordance with current regulations.

b. **Self-isolation carried out at the home of a nominated Guardian.** Where possible we would expect it to be just the child who self-isolates at the home of the nominated Guardian and the parent would be able to return overseas straight away. Guardians allowance is not normally payable under these circumstances but, exceptionally, under the COVID-19 restrictions it may be claimed for each day when the child is self-isolating with the Guardian and the parent is not present. Where it is necessary for the parent to remain with the child at the home of the Guardian for all or part of the 14 day isolation period, then subsistence at the Private Arrangements Rate (PAR) may be claimed. Please note that only one PAR claim is permissible per night per family and Guardian's allowance is not be payable on nights when PAR is claimed. Terminal travel costs up to the cost of MMA for the journeys would also be permitted for the parent to transport the child to the home of the guardian, to take the child to the school (conducted by either the parent or the guardian), and for the parent to return to the point of departure in the UK in accordance with JSP 752 10.0211 b. (3). Hire car costs are permitted within the total terminal travel costs claim which must not exceed the cost of MMA for the journey. This is in accordance with current regulations.

c. **Parent and child self-isolate in Service welfare housing.** The availability of this type of accommodation should be checked with the Welfare team by the Chain of Command. There would not be a second accommodation charge made to the individual Service person for this accommodation. Terminal travel costs up to the cost of MMA for the journeys may be claimed from the point of arrival in the UK to the welfare accommodation, from the welfare accommodation to the school and for the parent to return to the point of departure from the UK under JSP 752 10.0122 b. (3). Hire car costs are permitted within the total terminal travel costs claim which must not exceed the cost of MMA for the journey. This is in accordance with current regulations.

d. **Parent and child self-isolate with friends and family.** Subsistence at the Private Arrangements Rate (PAR) may be claimed. Please note that only one PAR claim is permissible per night per family. Terminal travel costs up to the cost of MMA for the journeys would also be permitted for the parent to transport the child to the home of the friend/family member, to take the child to the school (conducted by either the parent or the guardian), and for the parent to return to the point of departure in the UK in accordance with JSP 752 10.0211 b. (3). Hire car costs are permitted within the total terminal travel costs claim which must not exceed the cost of MMA for the journey. This is in accordance with current regulations.

e. **If all of the above options are not appropriate for the family's circumstances, then the Parent and child may self-isolate in a Hotel.** It is recommended that, where possible, the hotel is booked by Unit Admin through HRG for full board (Lunch, Dinner, Bed and Breakfast). If this method is not available then subsistence at the normal UK daily subsistence rate can be claimed for each day for the parent and each child. Terminal travel costs up to the cost of MMA for the journeys would also be permitted for the parent to transport the child to the hotel, to take the child to the school, and for the parent to return to the point of departure in the UK in accordance with JSP 752 10.0211 b. (3). Hire car costs are permitted within the total terminal travel costs claim which must not exceed the cost of MMA for the journey. This is in accordance with current regulations.

5. There may be children attending University, who utilised a School Children's Visit to return to the overseas assignment area for the Easter holiday period, and who now need to vacate their accommodation and collect their personal belongings as the University term will not now resume until sometime after the summer vacation period. In these circumstances, if it is essential that the student returns to the UK to collect their personal belongings, then they may do so using one of their SCV journey entitlements. Alternatively, a parent may return to collect the belongings on behalf of the student under reverse SCV arrangements as detailed in JSP 752 10.0228. In accordance with current regulations, no subsistence costs are payable.

6. The terms of this Directed Letter will remain in place until rescinded or replaced by AF Rem Allowances. The additional costs associated with the arrangements covered in this DL should be recorded so that they are available should this information be required at a later date.

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