

## **Continuity of Education (CEA) Sixth Form changes**

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In early 2018, AFF was informed by the MOD that the Continuity of Education (CEA) rules for Sixth Form were changing, but were assured that the numbers of claimants whose eligibility was under threat would be very limited.

However, when the DIN outlining the proposed changes was published (2018DIN01-020), it became clear that both AFF and our families were struggling to interpret the new rules and we requested clarification from the Army Remuneration Policy Team (Army Rem Pol). This request for clarification highlighted that there was some disparity in the interpretation of the rules.

Subsequently, the policy has been formally published (in JSP752). As this policy change is rather complicated, this document hopes to make the rules clearer for our families by providing some scenarios which have been commented on by Army Rem Pol.

Around 350 Army children in the CEA system will be due to start Sixth Form in September 2019 and the application window opens on June 1 2018. Families who have children entering Sixth Form in Sept 19 and know that they are due a posting within 37 months of June 1 2018, are **strongly urged to apply at this time**.

If the Serving person's (SP) Career Manager states that the next posting is likely to be over 50 miles, eligibility should be retained, and whilst you will have to resubmit an Eligibility Certificate (EC) on assignment, mobility will not be reassessed at this stage irrespective of the location.

If you leave your application until after you have moved on assignment, and are able to complete Sixth Form during that assignment, your eligibility will be in question irrespective of your location and;

- you may have lost the opportunity for assessing choice of state school options
- and if not in time to give a term's notice for leaving the school you will be liable to pick up the costs.

### **Scenarios**

**PACCC disclaimer: In deciding CEA eligibility, the PACCC considers a wide range of factors in addition to the assessment of the Career Manager (CM) and the Commanding Officer (CO). PACCC will only make a definitive decision once it is in possession of all the relevant facts.**

**1.** Soldier living in their own home due to be posted Jan 2021 already on second posting in home, but no idea of whether they'll be posted within 50 miles or not. Child starts Sixth Form in September 2019.

If the assignment is within the period from application to the end of Sixth Form (which in this case it is) and the CM and CO state it is likely that the SP will be assigned more than 50 miles, eligibility should be retained.

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**2.** Soldier living in own home/SFA due posting early 2020, but is placed on the Reserves list May 18. Will have a year to find a job on Reserve list but won't know what/where or if will find job. Daughter due to start Sixth Form Sept 19.

It will be up to the CM and CO to make the judgement as to whether it is *likely* that the SP will receive an assignment (either on promotion or not) that is over 50 miles away from the SP's current duty station before the child is due to finish Sixth Form.

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**3.** Soldier posted shortly after child finishes Sixth Form, but child has registered SEN. Will they retain eligibility?

As with all SEN related applications or other factors such as mental health issues, PACCC will make the assessment as to whether SP will remain eligible and casework would need to be submitted.

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**4.** Family posted to Cyprus over the Sixth Form period. Will they lose eligibility because child can attend Sixth Form in Cyprus?

If the EC is submitted prior to the move, the SP will be assessed as mobile and eligibility likely retained. If the EC is submitted after the move and the assignment is greater than 37 months (postings are rarely longer than 36 months) eligibility would be under question, however, by being assigned overseas, the family have fully committed to family mobility and whilst Sixth Form could be provided on the island, the curriculum choices would be limited and would be factored into PACCC's consideration. For assignments less than 37 months, then there is an obvious move of over 50 miles and eligibility will likely be retained.

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**5.** Soldier posted July 2019 – unlikely to find out where until early 2019 so will miss the Sixth Form application process. Waits until posting order is received (April) to apply for eligibility but posting location is within 50 miles of current posting. Has missed deadline for Sixth Form applications and has not given a term's notice from current boarding school.

If the move in July 19 is less than 50 miles, the SP will likely lose eligibility. If the SP had applied in June 18 when the application window opened, it is likely that the CM and CO would have assessed a move over 50 miles likely in the 37 month period until the child finishes Sixth Form, and eligibility would have been retained.

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**6.** Soldier applies in June 2018 and EC states that will be posted during Sixth Form but within 50 miles. Will they lose their EC?

Unfortunately, in this case, if the EC states that the SP is not likely to be assigned more than 50 miles in the period from application until the child finishes Sixth Form, it is unlikely that eligibility will be retained.

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**7.** Soldier applies in June 2018 and EC states that they'll be posted during Sixth Form but within 50 miles. Has two other younger children in system. Will they lose eligibility and if so how does this affect siblings?

Cases where other siblings are in receipt of CEA will be considered by PACCC who will consider all the family circumstances, including how removal of eligibility will affect other siblings and the subsequent impact of unplanned assignments on the family. If an older sibling loses eligibility, this will not affect the eligibility of younger siblings. On assignment, the SP will need to resubmit an EC for the younger siblings; provided the SP is still assessed as eligible the younger siblings will continue to receive CEA.

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**8.** Soldier applies in June and EC states that they will be posted once child has started Sixth Form but within 50 miles. If they lose their eligibility, what happens if they are posted during Sixth Form but then confirmed once child has left boarding school that the posting will be one more than 50 miles away – can they retain their certificate?

If this is a two-year assignment, and the soldier knows about this 15 months prior to the child starting Sixth Form (assuming a sixth month notification), then the SP will move again prior to the end of Sixth Form. Provided this move is likely to be more than 50 miles, eligibility should be retained. For an assignment of three years or more which is less than 50 miles, eligibility will likely be removed. A change in circumstances after removal of eligibility would go to PACCC for consideration, however, if the child has already started Sixth Form, CEA may not be the appropriate way of maintaining continuity of education.

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**9.** Daughter due to start Sixth Form in Sep 19. Soldier not due to be posted until Sep 22. Local Sixth Form with a place is at a school in special measures. Soldier appeals to say that they will not have continuity of education as the school may close if doesn't improve and that the education may be poor, affecting their child's future. Can they retain eligibility?

The CM and CO would make the assessment as to whether it is likely that they will be assigned more than 50 miles away before the end of Sixth Form (Jul 21). In this scenario if the soldier does not have an assignment move during the four years from application in June 18 to Sep 22, it is unlikely they will retain eligibility to CEA. While local school issues would be considered by PACCC, CEA is designed to provide continuity of education, not provide a specified quality of the education.

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**10.** Son due to start Sixth Form Sep 19. Soldier not due to be posted until Jan 2021. None of the local Sixth Forms offer the same curriculum as the boarding school. Son wants to study Greek, Latin and Ancient History as he wishes to study Ancient History and Archaeology at higher education, and wants to become an archaeologist. Moving to Sixth Form in local area will prevent this. Can they retain eligibility?

Eligibility is based on mobility not educational aspirations. However, curriculum differences is a justification to move schools within CEA, and would be considered as mitigation by PACCC if casework were submitted to justify enabling the child to continue with their chosen study path.

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## AFF's View

AFF is concerned that families were not consulted about the change to this policy, and is asking that in future the Families Federations are involved in any discussions to ensure that families' voices, especially those of their children, are considered at this critical stage of education.

Families can seek further clarification on this policy from the Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) via email ([DCYP-CEAS-Enquiries@mod.uk](mailto:DCYP-CEAS-Enquiries@mod.uk)) or by telephone on 01980 618244. They can offer information, but won't be able to advise on individual cases.