



European  
Joint  
Support Unit

# Childcare and Schooling in France





**National Policy.** The joint policy for all school children education for service families can be found in JSP 342 and JSP 752. It authorises service members to school their children at a boarding school through the CEA scheme in the normal manner (JSP 752 Chapter 3) or in a local school in isolated detachments such as in France (JSP 342 Chapter 13). Since there is no SCE provided school in France, the key paragraph is 1309, which states that:

“In non-English speaking countries where SCE schools are not provided, the full cost of fees and other admissible expenses in the independent sector will be met from public funds.”

Advice can be obtained on all aspects concerning your children’s education from CEAS:

CEAS (Children’s Education Advisory Service) Tel: 01980 61 8244 [DCYP-CEAS-Mailbox@mod.uk](mailto:DCYP-CEAS-Mailbox@mod.uk)

Fax: 01980 61 8245. Fees can only be claimed for children from the start of the term during which they turn five.

**Local Policy.** Individuals are responsible for seeking the prior authority required for their children to attend either a boarding school in the UK (via CEA system), the British School of Paris (BSP) or another school of their choice on an *ab initio*, and/or annual basis. The school fees in France are paid for centrally through BDS and therefore all applications for school fees for those wishing to attend school in France must be sent through sent [BDS Accountant](#) (RAF/Navy) [Chief Clerk](#) (Army). for Attaché authorisation. They can also assist with the preparation and processing of these applications.

**The British School of Paris.** In Croissy-Sur-Seine (West of Paris) the British School delivers a British school syllabus with Anglophone staff from Nursery and Reception through to A-levels. The school accommodates around 50 nationalities with British being the largest contingent. A Comprehensive website contains a wealth of useful information on admission, curriculum and term dates. It can be found at [British School of Paris Admissions](#).

The levels of education differ at the various stage between France and UK, advice can be sought through the School Children’s Education Advisory Service on how the two match and which level is right for your child.

**Nursery school** fees are authorised through ISODET Tel: 0049 2161 472 3807 e-mail: [SCE-SupSvcS-ResFin-AsstBudMgr1@mod.uk](mailto:SCE-SupSvcS-ResFin-AsstBudMgr1@mod.uk)



**School Children Visits (SCV) Policy.** Defence policy for SCV can be found in JSP 752 Ch 4 Section 12.

**Method of Travel.** Each child at boarding school in the UK is entitled to six return journeys at public expense to visit you in France per academic year. Each journey for each child or parent must be applied for in advance in order to have a journey code. These journeys are normally used for the visits over the Christmas, Easter and Summer holidays as well as the respective half terms. The official method of travel is flying, and this therefore dictates the maximum reimbursement claim possible, though you are of course more than welcome to drive using the Eurotunnel or ferry. There are no MOD chartered/part-chartered flights to France. You may use civil flights or 'Eurostar' but you will need to book your tickets at the earliest opportunity to make the most of low cost fares and you will only be able to claim MMA for a notional journey to and from airports of embarkation and disembarkation

**SCV - Local Overseas Allowance (LOA).** You will receive the child element of LOA for the duration of all six SCVs. To ensure timely payment of LOA you should inform EJSU support staff of the dates of all visits as soon as they are confirmed.

**University & Gap Year Students.** Dependent children who are over 18 and have completed A Levels are no longer entitled to LOA. However, students undertaking their first degree are entitled to three return SCVs per academic year.

**Children in French Schools.** Children in French schools can receive funding to reimburse the purchase of the annual book pack (French Schools demand that parents buy a defined list of books at the start of each year). Funding is available to pay for additional French lessons for children in French-speaking school. Application through the CEAS.



## ENROLING YOUR CHILDREN IN PUBLIC CHILDCARE AND STATE SCHOOLS

### CHILDCARE

In order to enrol your child in a public crèche you will require:

- Proof of residence (lease contract, utility bill)
- Copies of your passports, marriage certificate and birth certificates.
- Up-to-date vaccination certificate - Compulsory vaccines in France are diphtheria, tetanus and polio
- Please check with your local *Mairie* (town hall) for specific area requirements.

There are a number of childcare options open to children aged from 2 months to 3 years. The type of childcare that suits you will depend on your situation. The choices available are public and private crèches, childminders, nannies and au pairs. There are both full-time and part-time options.

Your local *Mairie* provides information on all childcare (public and private).

**Public crèches** '*crèches collectives*' are generally reserved for families where both parents work or are in full time study and you apply for these in the '*petite enfance*' (early childhood) section of your local *Mairie* (town hall). They are the cheapest form of childcare, but spaces are difficult to come by.

If you do not manage to get a spot in your local crèche the '*crèches familiales*' is the next option. These are qualified childminders who are employed directly by the *Mairie*. These childminders care for the children at home but are supervised by the crèche director and required to participate in weekly activities at the crèche collective. You sign a contract with the *Mairie* and the cost for both of these options is means tested. The *Mairie* will provide a list of people in your area who do this, and you contact them directly to get a place.

For mothers/fathers who don't work there is the option of '*Haltes-Garderies*' (public and private). This offers occasional or part-time childcare for those children under 6 years of age (priority for those between 1 and 4 years of age).



## **FRENCH STATE SCHOOL SYSTEM**

*Maternelle* is the equivalent of UK nursery or pre-school for children from 3 to 6 years. Usually four days a week, with Wednesday off, from 8.30 – 4.30. It is not compulsory, but most French children attend. In the first year there is the option of mornings only.

*Primaire* is primary school. The children attend school four days a week also 8.30 – 4.30.

*College* is secondary school but is only middle school, for children aged 11 to 15.

*Lycée* is the last three years of high school. You need to visit the *Marie* (town hall) to register your children for a place at school with the following documents:

- A 'justificatif de domicile' - ie your rental contract or a utility bill.
- Child's birth certificate.
- Your marriage certificates
- You and your children's passports.
- A record of their vaccinations - they may accept your child's health book, but it's worth asking your doctor in the UK for a print-out on headed notepaper/with a stamp on it before you go.

When you enrol your child at school, the *Marie* will ask you for your CAF (Caisse d'Allocations Familiales) number in order that they can work out how much to charge you for school dinners and out-of-hours care (prices are graded according to salary). The CAF is similar to our Child Benefit Office and works out how much a French family can receive in state-handouts for their kids (the more children you have the more you get). You need to work out whether it is worth your while to stop UK Child Benefit and get the French equivalent once you are settled here. If you choose to go French, you will need a letter from HMRC stating you do not get benefits in the UK and you then need to prove your salaries to the CAF once you move in. I would recommend never to do anything in France that involves showing your earnings as once you are in the system it may prove more difficult to explain that you are not taxable in France.

Consequently, you can just tell the *Mairie* that you have no CAF number and they charge the maximum which is still a lot cheaper than in the UK.

## **LANGUAGE TUITION FOR CHILDREN ATTENDING FRENCH SCHOOLS**

You should be aware that tuition is available for children entering French schools. The entitlement is defined under JSP 342 Ch 13 para 1315 (c) – up to 5hrs per week for up to 6 months if the child is studying at a local school. Contact CEAS – Tel: 01980918244, Mil: 943448244,

e-mail: [DCYP-CEAS-Mailbox@mod.uk](mailto:DCYP-CEAS-Mailbox@mod.uk)

## **SCHOOL INSURANCE**

School insurance is required at French state schools and you will need to provide the insurance certificate at the school. You will need at least third-party insurance in case of an accident at school causing damage to school property or injury to another student. Your child will also need medical insurance in case of personal injury and personal comprehensive insurance if your child eats at school or participates in extra school activities. Third party insurance is often covered by your household insurance policy.

If your child is attending a private school, you will be advised by the school on the requirements. Please either contact [BDS Accountant](#) (RAF/Navy) [Chief Clerk](#) (Army) for DCYP-CEAS application forms.