



Moving schools—advice for parents

Defence Community Organisation

Defence Community Organisation provides a range of support for families with school-aged children when they post to a new location.

We've developed some tips and resources to help you support your child when they change schools. Tips include things to do before you move, the education liaison officer support available, documentation you'll need and things you can do on arrival to help your child settle in to their new school.

CHOOSING A NEW SCHOOL

Gather as much information as possible about potential schools in your new location. Visit school websites or ask them for an information pack.

Sometimes there are schools in areas where service residences (Defence Housing Australia properties) are located. Some of these schools may also employ a Defence School Mentor. To see which schools in your new location have a mentor, visit

www.defence.gov.au/dco/family/kids/education.asp

We have education liaison officers at a number of our offices around Australia who can help you with information about local school enrolment, zoning and general education enquiries about the state or territory you are moving to. To get in touch with an education liaison officer, contact the Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608 or email

defencefamilyhelpline@defence.gov.au.

NEW SCHOOL INFORMATION

Talk to your child and ask what they would like to know about their new school. Parents and children or teens can often have very different ideas of what is important to them when selecting a school.

Including your child in this process can help them settle into their new school and reassure them of the similarities they are familiar with.

Information you may find helpful includes:

- school handbook
- school start and finish times, term dates and curriculum days
- student placement procedures
- how the school communicates with parents, how to make appointments with school staff and the school expectations of parents
- homework, assignments and assessment requirements



- availability of before and after school care
- school curriculum and specialist subjects available, languages other than English, sports, or religious instruction
- school canteen and other school facilities
- elective subjects (secondary), excursions and extra-curricular activities available
- student welfare services
- school rules and behaviours
- fees and contributions
- support for new students
- school bus routes and timetables.

APPROACHING THE NEW SCHOOL

When you have selected a new school, complete the enrolment process, ask for any additional information relevant to your child and advise them of your estimated start date.

Arrange an interview with the Principal to discuss any issues or concerns and to provide or update any information that is relevant to your child.

It is useful to involve your child in the interview, if appropriate, and be honest about any difficulties your child may have experienced at their previous school. Also advise the Principal of your child's talents and achievements. Take copies of assessments, reports and work samples to the school interview.

Give consent for the new school to make contact with the previous school to transfer your child's student records. For information about the Student Data Transfer parental consent visit

www.educationalcouncil.edu.au/archive/publications/ISDTN.aspx

It is good to arrange for your child to visit the school prior to commencing class if possible, so they can familiarise themselves with the school environment and teachers.

Make sure your child knows how to get to and from school and nominate where they will be collected from, or the school bus number and where it departs from.

TIPS WHEN MOVING

Talk to your child about the planned move and include them in the plans as much as possible.

Talk regularly as a family about the move and encourage your child to discuss their feelings about moving and leaving friends. Take care not to oversimplify any anxieties, as these are real to your child.

Discuss the positives that come with relocating to a new location and encourage your child to keep in touch with their old friends, while making new friends at their new school.

Encourage them to take photos or keepsakes from their old school and friends, and perhaps use some time to create a time capsule or scrapbook.

If time permits, allow your child to attend final classes, sporting activities, graduations and farewells.

Try not to make too many changes to your family's routine or rituals during and following the move. Reassure your child during these times and try to attend similar activities in the new location, as well as exploring new activities and adventures as a family.

Defence Community Organisation offers a wide range of support services for ADF members and their families.

For more information on this factsheet, other education support available or other Defence Community Organisation support services visit

www.defence.gov.au/dco or call the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.

