

## **ELIGIBILITY TO ATTEND CONUS DoD DOMESTIC DEPENDENT ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS (DDESS)**

This information paper has been prepared to provide the BASIC eligibility requirements for enrollment in the CONUS DoD Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools (DDESS). The requirements are subject to change at the direction of the Secretary of Defense. The DDESS Director and District Superintendents reserve the right to request additional information, should it be deemed necessary to make a determination of eligibility. Additional documents may also be requested when a dependent is enrolled for local purposes.

1. Eligibility requirements for dependents of military members and Federal civilian employees<sup>1</sup> to attend a CONUS DDESS schools are defined in:
  - A. Section 2164 of title 10, United States Code
  - B. Department of Defense Instruction 1342.26, "Eligibility Requirements for Minor Dependents to Attend Department of Defense Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools," dated March 4, 1997.
  
2. The statute and implementing Instruction mandate two specific criteria for eligibility which cannot be waived:
  - A. The enrolling sponsor must be on extended active duty or a full-time Federal civilian employee; AND
  - B. The sponsor must be residing in permanent living quarters on the installation.
  
3. In order to enroll a child in a DDESS school (CONUS), the sponsor must present documentation of the following:
  - A. He/she is on **extended active duty or a full-time Federal civilian employee; AND**
  - B. He/she is **residing in permanent quarters** on the installation (or has a 90- or 180-day letter) AND that the **child is authorized to reside** with him/her; AND
  - C. The child is his/her **dependent**.
  
4. The following paragraphs detail documentation that can be presented as verification of the above criteria:
  - A. **Active duty status:**
    - (1) Copy of member's current orders (unless otherwise noted, orders are considered to be valid for 3 years from reporting date to the installation).
    - (2) Copy of member's U.S. Government Issued Identification Card (military ID)
    - (3) Statement from unit personnel office certifying member's active duty status.
    - (4) Guard and Reserve members **MUST** submit current orders ordering the member to active duty status for at least 365 days/1 year.

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<sup>1</sup> Dependents of full-time DoD civilians who reside on the installation will be able to attend tuition-free. Dependents of non-DoD Federal agencies may attend IF the sponsor's employing agency agrees to reimburse DoD for the costs of the educational services provided.

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### B. **Residence in Permanent On-Base Housing:**

- (1) Current lease. Most leases are for 6- or 12-months and then convert to month-by-month. After the initial lease period, other documentation is required.
- (2) Letter from installation housing office verifying residency.
- (3) **PROVISIONAL ENROLLMENT**
  - a. Provisional enrollment will be granted to children whose sponsors have been issued a letter from the installation housing office affirming that the sponsor has applied for and will be able to occupy permanent quarters on the installation within 90 school days after the sponsor reports to the new duty station.
  - b. Letters issued after this time frame (i.e., when the sponsor first reported to the installation) will NOT be accepted unless the sponsor can provide acceptable justification as to why his/her family situation has changed in such a manner that they now desire to reside on the installation (for example, a single member marries).
  - c. Only one letter will be accepted; if the family is not placed within that period, the matter will be forwarded to the DDESS Director for a decision as to whether the students should or should not be disenrolled at that time.
  - d. If a sponsor whose dependents were registered with a 90- or 180-day letter turns down housing when offered (without regard to the number of “turn downs” the housing office will accept), removes their name from the waiting list, or moves to the inactive list, eligibility ceases IMMEDIATELY and the dependents will be disenrolled in accordance with DDESS guidelines.
  - e. An installation commander can request that the DDESS Director authorize the housing office to issue 180-day letters based on (1) a major renovation project; (2) a major construction project; (3) a natural disaster; or (4) emergency conditions.

### C. **Who qualifies as a dependent:**

- (1) Biological children. Documentation could be:
  - a. Sponsor’s name on the birth certificate; OR
  - b. Child listed on sponsor’s orders; OR
  - c. Approved DEERS application; OR
  - d. Child’s ID<sup>2</sup>; OR
  - e. Statement from military personnel office verifying dependent status.
- (2) Stepchildren:
  - a. Child listed on sponsor’s orders; OR
  - b. Approved DEERS application; OR
  - c. Child’s ID: OR

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<sup>2</sup> “Child’s ID” refers to the US Government Issued Identification Card that has the child’s name and photo and provides the name of the child’s sponsor; this should be the name of the enrolling sponsor.

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- d. Statement from military personnel office verifying dependent status; OR
- e. Child's birth certificate indicating spouse is biological parent; documentation that spouse is the primary/physical custodian of the child, and marriage certificate to spouse.

(3) Adopted children:

- a. Sponsor's name on the birth certificate (modified at time of adoption); OR
- b. Child listed on sponsor's orders; OR
- c. Approved DEERS application; OR
- d. Child's ID; OR
- e. Statement from military personnel office verifying dependent status.

(4) Legal dependent:

- a. Child listed on sponsor's orders; OR
- b. Approved DEERS application; OR
- c. Child's ID; OR
- d. Statement from military personnel office verifying dependent status; OR
- e. Court documents granting custody of the child to the sponsor (must have case file number, date, names of sponsor and child and a signature by an official of the court—usually a judge or magistrate) **IMPORTANT NOTE:** A Power of Attorney or a written agreement between two parties does NOT meet this requirement.

5. Beginning School Year (SY) 2009-2010, the **minimum entrance ages** required in ALL DDESS schools are:

- A. PreKindergarten: 4 years old by September 1 of the school year.<sup>3</sup>
- B. Kindergarten: 5 years old by September 1 of the school year.
- C. First Grade: 6 years old by September 1 of the school year.
- D. Exceptions to this cut-off will only be granted if the child has been registered in a program accredited by a nationally recognized accreditation organization for at least 9 weeks and the change in schools is due to the sponsor's PCS.
- E. A certified birth certificate issued by the responsible governmental office (state, county, US Department of State (for overseas births)) is **REQUIRED** for enrollment in PreK, Kindergarten, and First Grade.

6. In limited and specific situations **PROVISIONAL** enrollments may be granted to provide adequate time for the sponsor to obtain documents enumerated above. If documents are not provided by the date assigned by the school, the child is subject to immediate disenrollment.

7. The DDESS Director has been delegated the authority to make all eligibility decisions for the CONUS and Puerto Rico DDESS schools.

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<sup>3</sup> Students enrolled in any PreK program (in or outside of DoDEA) for SY 2008-2009 who do NOT meet the September 1 cut-off for SY 2009-2010 will be allowed to enroll in the PreK program for an additional year.

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8. The only discretion provided to the Secretary of Defense allows the Secretary of Defense for good cause to continue enrollment notwithstanding a change in the status of the military member which would otherwise terminate eligibility.
  - A. “Good cause” continuation of enrollment has been defined by the Secretary to mean “in the national interest” and has been reserved for such situations as:
    - (1) The death or disability retirement of a military member
    - (2) Students who are currently enrolled and will be a rising senior
  - B. “Good cause” approvals are for one school year only.
  - C. “Good cause” cannot be granted to students not currently enrolled.
  - D. Requests must be submitted to the DDESS Director for consideration and approval/disapproval.
  
9. Students who are legally enrolled on the first day of school may complete the school year.
  - A. This does not include students who are provisionally enrolled based on their sponsor submitting a 90- or 180-day housing letter when their sponsor either turns down housing or removes their name from the housing list.
  - B. This does not include students who were provisionally enrolled when required documents are not provided by the sponsor by the suspense date established by the school.
  - C. This does not preclude the Secretary or designee from removing a student for other reasons (such as discipline).

For additional information, please contact the registrar/eligibility POC at your DDESS Superintendent/Asst Superintendent’s office or Stephanie Rogers or Brenda Gregorich at the DDESS Area Service Center, 678-364-8002 or 8005.

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