

## Module 3: Non-DoD Schools Program

**Lesson One:** Overview of the Non-DoD Schools Program

**Lesson Two:** Enrollment Procedures and Contacts

**Module Overview:** The Non-DoD Schools Program (NDSP) is designed to provide financial assistance and support for the academic success of children who are dependents of military families stationed in foreign locations. The program's goal is to ensure military-connected children receive a quality education abroad that both meets U.S. graduation standards and prepares for them for college and career success. This module explains important aspects of the eligibility, enrollment, and reimbursement process associated with Non-DoD Schools Program services that will help School Liaisons inform military families how to maximize eligible supports to ensure the best education for their child. School Liaisons play a critical role in assisting families navigate these important services and reimbursements.

**Learning Objectives:** Through this module, School Liaisons will be able to:

- Explain the purpose of the Non-DoD Schools Program.
- Describe the policies and provisions for support of student education abroad.
- Identify the appropriate procedures and personnel for School Liaisons to share with transitioning families.

## Lesson One: Overview of the Non-DoD Schools Program

**Lesson Overview:** The Department of Defense (DoD) is committed to ensuring that quality educational options are available to children from military families. The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) is responsible for operating schools stateside and abroad on military installations to provide a high quality education. DoDEA also provides support and resources to local education agencies (LEAs) throughout the U.S. that serve children of military families. Local education agencies (LEAs) can refer to school districts, school divisions and counties. Subsequently, in this module the term “school district,” or simply “district” will be used.

When military families are expected to live abroad and a DoDEA school is not available, DoD has a provision to assist families called the Non-DoD Schools Program. The program is overseen and managed by DoDEA and is designed to defray the costs to families of obtaining education services abroad.

This lesson provides School Liaisons with an understanding of the services provided by the Non-DoD Schools Program.

### Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this lesson, School Liaisons will be able to:

- Explain the purpose of the Non-DoD Schools Program.
- Describe the policies and provisions for support of military-connected student education abroad.

## History and Purpose of the Non-DoD Schools Program

The Non-DoD Schools Program has been operating for 5 years and is growing steadily. During the 2009–10 school year, the Non-DoD Schools Program had almost 3,400 students enrolled in 150 countries and in 531 schools worldwide. DoDEA’s budget for the Non-DoD Schools Program worldwide is in excess of \$50 million.

The Non-DoD Schools Program supports a variety of schooling options for children ranging from homeschool programs to public or private schools. The process for selection begins with a determination of whether a quality school exists within commuting distance of a family’s location. If there is an adequate school in the area within daily commuting distance of the employee’s post of assignment, that school is referred to as a “school at post.” If an adequate school is so far beyond daily commuting distance of the employee’s post as to necessitate room and board, it is referred to as a “school away from post.”

## Screen Four

### Eligibility for Attendance

Eligibility to attend a non-DoD school at the Federal Government's expense is limited to *command-sponsored dependents* of military personnel who are assigned to overseas areas where no DoDEA school is available within the commuting area. A command-sponsored dependent is a minor of school age, residing with the active duty military or the full-time DoD civilian sponsor at an overseas location where an accompanied-by-dependent tour is authorized. The age of eligibility is as follows:

- For kindergarten and first grade, the *local* education authority entrance age requirements apply. Note that these requirements may be different from the DoDEA standard, which stipulates a child must be 5 years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> for kindergarten and 6 years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> for first grade.
- Children ages 3 to 5 with developmental delays and disabilities may be eligible for services if they meet DoDEA special education criteria.

Approval for the enrollment of an eligible minor dependent of a DoD sponsor must be obtained from the DoDEA Non-DoD Schools Program office prior to enrolling a child in a non-DoD school abroad.

## Reimbursement

The reimbursement rates for overseas schools and supplemental services are determined by the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) and are meant to cover those expenses that would otherwise be covered by U.S. public schools. The allowable rates are determined locally by the DSSR according to a “*base school*,” which is usually the least-expensive adequate school available to families “at post.”

Funding is provided up to \$5,700 each school year for grades K–8 and up to \$7,700 in grades 9–12 or as specified by the DSSR; however, if the local school is certified as appropriate by the U.S. Department of State, reimbursement is limited to the school-at-post rate if it is lower than the home study educational program/private instruction.

The allowable charges under the Non-DoD Schools Program are based upon what would be covered by U.S. public schools.

### Basic Allowable Charges

Basic allowable charges include

- tuition;
- application, registration, and capital fees;
- school, public, or private commuter transportation (one round trip per day for day school and three round trips per year for boarding students);
- book expenses as required by the school;
- AP/IB courses and exams;
- rental of musical instruments for school related group instruction;
- required fees such as technology, library, and laboratory fees; and
- a complete academic course using correspondence courses and/or other appropriate materials in the home, including online school programs.

### Allowable Expenses—Home Study and Virtual Schools

The Non-DoD Schools Program will reimburse a family for a complete academic course using correspondence course materials in the home or private instruction if other local school options are deemed unavailable. Funding is up to \$5,700 each school year for grades K–8 and up to \$7,700 for grades 9–12 or as specified by the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR).

The Non-DoD Schools Program has seen an increase in the use of DoDEA’s virtual school curriculum, especially by older students who often need courses in subjects such as math and U.S. history.

### Allowable Expenses—Additional Education Support

Based on circumstances and prior approval from the Non-DoD Schools Program, certain additional services may be reimbursed to supplement a student’s academic needs. These include

- summer school, when mandated;
- PSAT/SAT/ACT exam fees and preparation courses;
- foreign language courses;

- gifted instruction; and
- tutoring.

### **Special Education Provisions**

The DoDEA Non-DoD Schools Program is committed to the provision of appropriate special education and related services for eligible DoD dependents. Enrollment in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) (link provided in the Resources section of this module) and screening prior to an overseas assignment is mandatory for all military personnel. In addition, prior to any special education activity, entitlements and command sponsorship must be verified.

It is important to note that local foreign schools are not held by the provisions under the Americans With Disabilities Act, and therefore are not mandated to enroll or provide services for children with special needs or to provide indicated services. Non-DoD Schools Program coordinators should be contacted to discuss ways in which special needs provisions can be secured in the local country.

### **Non-Allowable Expenses**

The following expenses will not be reimbursed:

- insurances (liability, healthcare, etc);
- deposits refundable to sponsor;
- parent association fees;
- lunches;
- lodging/meals;
- laundry;
- supplies (paper, pencils, binders, etc.);
- personal items;
- courses not directly related to curriculum of U.S. schools, etc.;
- SAT exams and preparation;
- driver's education; and
- graduation caps and gowns.

Parents should be reminded of their responsibility to ensure their children's educational costs do not exceed the DSSR educational allowance for their location.

## Lesson One Summary

### Key Points:

- The Non-DoD Schools Program assists military families living abroad in places without high quality instruction in the local community or a DoDEA school.
- Eligibility to attend a non-DoD school at the Federal Government's expense is limited to command-sponsored dependents assigned to overseas areas where no DoDEA school is available within the commuting area.
- Approval for the enrollment of an eligible minor dependent of a DoD sponsor must be obtained from the DoDEA Non-DoD Schools Program office prior to enrolling a child in a non-DoD school abroad.
- The reimbursement rates for overseas schools and supplemental services are intended to cover those expenses that would otherwise be covered by U.S. public schools.

### Looking Forward:

Learn about how to enroll in the Non-DoD Schools Program and who to contact.

## Lesson Two: Enrollment Procedures and Contacts

### Lesson Overview:

This lesson provides information to School Liaisons about how military-connected students enroll in a Non-DoD Schools Program and the appropriate channels for doing so.

### Learning Objectives:

Upon completing this lesson School Liaisons will be able to

- Identify the procedures and correct personnel to assist transitioning families.

## Process and Required Documentation

Families receiving orders to transfer to an overseas location should first contact the gaining School Liaison to discuss the local school options. If it is determined that no DoDEA school is available within commuting distance, families should then determine other school options. Local School Liaisons can assist with this assessment.

To enroll in the Non-DoD Schools Program, families must submit the following documents to its headquarters located in Arlington, Virginia:

- Form 610 (Link to DoDEA Web site);
- sponsor's PCS orders;
- verification of command sponsorship;
- Request for Reimbursement of Transportation Expenses;
- copy of birth certificate or passport (kindergarten and first grade);
- school fee schedule and calendar; and
- home-based education plan (if applicable).

This process of enrollment can be activated prior to leaving the U.S. or once the family has actually transferred to the new location.

## Contacts

The Non-DoD Schools Program is a department within DoDEA. The program headquarters is located in Arlington, Virginia, and houses personnel who assist in managing enrollment and reimbursements. These personnel also assist in creating Non-DoD Schools Program-related policy, monitor program operations, and collect data.

Each geographic region of the Non-DoD Schools Program has assigned personnel called *Dependent Education Liaisons (DEL)*. A DEL is an educational coordinator who works with families and students to help with educational services and transition issues in-bound, while the families are stationed and as they transition back to the United States. DELs can assist with issues such as special needs, tutoring, supplemental services, and homeschooling. They should be contacted first when families are requesting information about a new post overseas, but headquarters can also be contacted for initial, general questions. School Liaisons can help families connect to their assigned local DEL.

The regional education areas are as follows:

- Peachtree City, Georgia – serving the Americas
- Wiesbaden, Germany – serving Europe
- Okinawa, Japan – serving the Pacific

Please note: The Non-DoD Schools Program will be upgrading its Web site shortly to include more access information about DELs and data about foreign location schools and their requirements.

## Lesson Two Summary

### Key Points:

- Families receiving orders to transfer to an overseas location should first contact the gaining School Liaison to discuss local school options.
- Each geographic region of the Non-DoD Schools Program has assigned personnel
- Enrollment procedures in the Non-DoD Schools Program can be activated prior to leaving the U.S. or once the family has actually transferred to the new location.
- Families must submit the appropriate documents to the NDSP headquarters.

### Looking Forward:

Next, assess your learning from this lesson.

## Module Summary

**Module Overview:** The Non-DoD Schools Program (NDSP) is designed to provide financial assistance and support for the academic success of children who are dependents of military families stationed in foreign locations. The program's goal is to ensure military-connected children receive a quality education abroad that both meets U.S. graduation standards and prepares for them for college and career success. This module explains important aspects of the eligibility, enrollment, and reimbursement process associated with Non-DoD Schools Program services that will help School Liaisons inform military families how to maximize eligible supports to ensure the best education for their child. School Liaisons play a critical role in assisting families navigate these important services and reimbursements.

### Key Points:

- The Non-DoD Schools Program assists military families living abroad in places without high quality instruction in the local community or a DoDEA school.
- Eligibility to attend a non-DoD school at the Federal Government's expense is limited to command-sponsored dependents assigned to overseas areas where no DoDEA school is available within the commuting area.
- Approval for the enrollment of an eligible minor dependent of a DoD sponsor must be obtained from the DoDEA Non-DoD Schools Program office prior to enrolling a child in a non-DoD school abroad.
- The reimbursement rates for overseas schools and supplemental services are intended to cover those expenses that would otherwise be covered by U.S. public schools.
- Families receiving orders to transfer to an overseas location should first contact the gaining School Liaison to discuss local school options.
- Each geographic region of the Non-DoD Schools Program has assigned personnel
- Enrollment procedures in the Non-DoD Schools Program can be activated prior to leaving the U.S. or once the family has actually transferred to the new location.
- Families must submit the appropriate documents to the NDSP headquarters.

### Looking Forward:

Next, learn more about how the U.S. public education system works in Module 4.