GUIDE TO
BRITISH
EDUCATION

About British Schools
Where can my children go to school?
What can I expect?
Differences in Education
If you have, or expect orders to the United Kingdom (UK) or another foreign area with British schools, and you are a potential Non-DoD Schools Program (NDSP) family, this resource guide is meant for you!

Moving overseas can be a daunting task, and undoubtedly one of the most important decisions you will make is where your children will go to school. NDSP has designed this guide to provide you with information and resources that will help you make informed decisions.

The British school system is successful and has produced world renowned leaders and scholars; however, there are differences compared to what you may have experienced in the United States public school systems. It is important to read through all of the information to understand the unique differences in the British vs. U.S. education systems, to understand your NDSP entitlements, and to shape your expectations for a smooth transition.

The NDSP looks forward to working with you, and we are here to assist you as your children make this educational transition.

Regards,

The NDSP Team

Experience, travel - these are an education in themselves

A-level: Qualification normally first gained in the UK at the age of 18, but without a formal age limit. Available in many subjects. A-Levels take two years and are comprised of two parts: AS-level and A2 level.

AS-level (Advanced Subsidiary): The first part of an A-level, comprised of one year of study. It can be a qualification in its own right, but many students continue on to a full A-level award.

A2-level: The second part of an A-level (Advanced) study. Completion of AS-level and A2 level results in full A-Level completion.

Attainment targets: The knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils of differing ability and maturity are expected to attain by the end of each key stage of the national curriculum, i.e. assessed at ages 7, 11, 14 and 16.

Bridging course: General name for any course preparing students who need to improve their academic study skills or language ability before they progress to higher-level study.

Catchment area: A defined geographical area from which a school takes its pupils.

DFE: The Department for Education. The UK government department responsible for schools and student education.

FE: Further education. Non-compulsory education taken after school-leaving age (16–18 years). Usually used to describe education between school and higher education (university).

Foundation course: One- or two-year full- or part-time course to prepare a student for entry to a degree program in a particular subject.

GCSE: General Certificate of Secondary Education. The first qualification obtained by UK students at the approximate age of 16. There is no age limit, and mature or international students may take GCSE examinations.

IB: International Baccalaureate: a two-year course approximately equal to up to six A-levels (depending on the points awarded for the IB).

Key stages: The four stages of pupils’ progress in acquiring knowledge and skills as set out in the national curriculum. Pupils are tested at the end of each stage: Key Stage 1, where the majority of pupils are aged 5 to 7; Key Stage 2, where the majority of pupils are aged 7 to 11; Key Stage 3, where the majority of children are aged 11 to 14; and Key Stage 4, where the majority of pupils are aged 14 to 16. There are statutory assessment arrangements at the end of Key Stages 1, 2, and 3.

LEA: Local educational authority. Part of local government in the UK that administers education up to college level in a particular district. Universities are not governed by LEAs.

Ofsted: Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills. It brings together the regulation and inspection of day care and children’s social care and the inspection of Local Authority (LA) children’s services, schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning, adult education and more.

Reception: The equivalent of a pre-kindergarten in the United States.

Seminar: Small class where students discuss a topic with a lecturer or tutor. Questions are encouraged, but discussion is less free than in a tutorial and not everyone present will necessarily be expected to contribute to the discussion.

UCAS: The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. UK national organisation that administers applications for entry onto full-time UK higher-education programs.
Transferring Overseas

What about my child’s education?

Military and DoD civilian families serve our nation’s interests around the world. What the children of DoD sponsors learn in host nation educational systems and in their cultural experiences will follow them everywhere they go. Their learning and experiences will enrich not only their lives, but the lives of those they share their experiences with. NDSP strives to support the educational needs of all DoD children in international locations where there are no DoD Schools. Children are at the heart of why we serve and all that we do.

Receiving orders for an overseas assignment can be the beginning of an exciting adventure for a military family. There are many important decisions that coincide with a transition to a location that is remote, or in an area without the support normally associated with an overseas assignment on an installation. Choosing the educational option that will be most effective for your child will be one of the most critical decisions you’ll make.

The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDeA) offers support to families in areas where there isn’t a DoD school within a commuting distance through the Non-DoD Schools Program (NDSP). The program provides financial assistance to defray the costs of education in overseas locations. Additionally, NDSP has a team of specialists to provide transition and educational support and coordination for all students to include those with special needs. NDSP supports a variety of options for school-aged children depending on the sponsor’s permanent duty station and billet. Options can include home school programs, online or virtual schools (to include the DoDeA Virtual High School) host nation public schools, private day schools and boarding schools.

To make sure you “Know Before You Go,” visit the NDSP website at: www.dodea.edu/ndsp.

The Non DoD Schools Program (NDSP) provides support to families in areas where there is not a DoD school in the overseas location. NDSP supports a variety of educational options for families and provides an educational allowance to defray the costs of education.

Eligibility for dependents of DoD personnel assigned to an overseas area is governed by the provisions of DoD Regulation 1342.13, “Eligibility Requirements for Education of Elementary and Secondary School-age Dependents in Overseas Areas,” February 29, 2008, as amended. Generally, if a child would be eligible to attend a DoD school overseas, eligibility will apply for the NDSP. Please visit www.dodea.edu/ndsp to learn about eligibility.

NDSP has a team of educational specialists called NDSP Instructional Systems Specialists (ISS) that provide transition and educational support and coordination for all NDSP students to include those with special needs. The NDSP ISSs can help Sponsors and their families navigate the educational options to ensure the best educational setting for their child.

While the NDSP ISSs are available to support and consult with families that are in the process of transitioning and choosing schools, it is important to note that NDSP does not certify, accredit, assess or deem schools adequate or inadequate. Families have the option and responsibility to choose the educational option that is the best for their child. NDSP will assist in providing the resources and information that will empower parents to make informed decisions.

In some overseas locations, DoD families may be stationed with Department of State personnel and their families. DoD personnel must go through the NDSP to determine eligibility, enrollment for funding, and approval for supplemental and special education support.

All NDSP Sponsors must complete the NDSP Online Sponsor Orientation which can be accessed on the NDSP Website. The orientation will help families understand the NDSP entitlements, processes, procedures, allowances and enrollment options and will result in a smoother educational transition for your children.

On our website you will also find a listing of schools. This is not an “approved schools list” but is merely a listing of schools that DoD and Department of State children have attended in the past. NDSP does not endorse any of the schools listed.
What are the educational options in the UK?

Prior to researching schools in the United Kingdom (UK) you need to understand what you are eligible for.

In the United Kingdom, NDSP students in kindergarten through fifth grade (Year 1 through Year 6) are required to attend local state run tuition free schools. All students are eligible to attend tuition paying schools beginning in Year 7 (6th grade). The Student Placement Guidance provided on the next page outlines the educational options in areas where there are no DoD schools. The chart lists the options in priority order.

Sponsors on orders that specifically state that they are filling a Personnel Exchange Program (PEP) billet, or are assigned to the Department of State Embassy or Consulate under the Chief of Mission have an exception to the policy requiring students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade to attend the local tuition free schools. These families are authorized tuition paying schools beginning in kindergarten.

In the UK, children begin school earlier than in the United States. Please understand that NDSP cannot provide financial assistance for students in Reception. NDSP only provides financial assistance for the equivalent of US kindergarten through twelfth grade. This does not preclude families from enrolling their children in the UK tuition free schools for Reception.

Children in the UK are typically placed in “year groups” determined by the age they will attain at their birthday during the school year. In most cases, progression from one year group to another is based purely on chronological age, although it is possible in some circumstances for a student to repeat or skip a year, it is very unlikely. If your child skipped a grade or was held back in a US school, the UK school will most likely place your child with their chronological age peers. Unfortunately NDSP can do very little to change this reality.

**NDSP AUTHORIZED OPTIONS LISTED IN PRIORITY ORDER**

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (K-5 or Year 1- Year 6)**

1. Local, public school delivering instruction in English and is tuition-free;
   - Exception is provided for South Africa, Singapore and Jamaica
2. If not available then,
   - Home-based education/schooling reimbursed by NDSP.
   - Local private day school delivering instruction in English - tuition reimbursed by NDSP up to the DSSR.

**MIDDLE SCHOOL (Grades 6-8 or Year 7 - 9)**

1. Local public school delivering instruction in English and is tuition-free;
   - Exception for the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Singapore and Jamaica.
2. If not available then,
   - Home-based education/schooling reimbursed by NDSP, or,
   - Virtual school
   - Local private day school delivering instruction in English. Tuition reimbursed by NDSP up to the DSSR.
3. If not available then,
   - Private boarding school (CONUS/OCONUS) delivering instruction in English and within the established DSSR based on the sponsor’s location. Boarding school is defined as a school providing residence halls on campus and meals in addition to an education.

**HIGH SCHOOL (US Grades 9-12 or British Year 10 through A-Level)**

1. Local public school delivering instruction in English and is tuition-free;
   - Exception for the UK, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Singapore and Jamaica.
2. If not available then,
   - Home-based education/schooling reimbursed by NDSP, or,
   - Virtual school
   - Local private day school delivering instruction in English. Tuition reimbursed by NDSP up to the DSSR.
3. If not available then,
   - Private boarding school (CONUS/OCONUS) delivering instruction in English and within the established DSSR based on the sponsor’s location. Boarding school is defined as a school providing residence halls on campus and meals in addition to an education.
Education Allowance

The education allowance is established by the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR), and the rates are subject to adjustment. The DSSR is the maximum allowance a Sponsor is authorized for educational expenses for his/her work location. DoDEA does not set the education allowance rates, nor do we have influence over them.

NDSP is authorized to cover the costs of tuition, transportation and any other authorized annual fees that are below or within the DSSR for the location. Any expenses incurred above the DSSR are the responsibility of the Sponsor. It is extremely important that Sponsors know the DSSR rate PRIOR to choosing a school.

Sponsors are also required to complete an NDSP Family Budgeting Tool as a part of registration and recommended annually thereafter. This tool is designed to help Sponsors understand what expenses will be covered, and what they can expect to pay.

Tables A and B are examples of DSSR education allowance charts found on the Department of State website. You will notice that the rate changes depending on the grade of the student.

In this example of a DSSR chart for Menwith Hill in the UK, you will notice that the At Post and Away From Post rates are the same at each grade level. This indicates that there are adequate schools in the location and that boarding school is not an option.

In this example of a DSSR chart for a different city in the UK, you will notice that the At Post and Away From Post rates are DIFFERENT at each grade level. This indicates that there are not adequate schools in the location and that boarding school is authorized. Although according to this chart boarding school is authorized at kindergarten, NDSP does not authorize boarding school until sixth grade.
The school your children will attend is based off of many factors and can vary due to circumstances. You can put them in the state schools (free), prep and public schools (cost fees and require entrance exams), or you can home educate. To clarify, public schools in England are what private schools are in the US. If you choose the free education, which school your child will go to is determined by the catchment area. The closer you live to a school the better chances of getting into that school. There are many different types of schools in this category which can be church schools, single sex, or mixed schools. However, the schools will have cap sizes on how many students they let in for certain years. We live right next to the school in our town, but due to class sizes they were both accepted into different schools. I have one son in a school in the next town over and my other son in a school much further away. There are no school buses like there are in the USA. As we do not have a car, the school system was able to set up taxi services to get both my boys to their appointed schools and put them on waiting lists for the closer schools in the area. You should also know that you have the right to appeal the school selection process. Most schools have some sort of uniform required. Depending on if you choose the state school or the prep school will determine how extensive their uniform needs will be per school. Typically for both schools there will be a Autumn/Winter uniform for the colder months and a Spring/Summer uniform for the warmer months. For boys this may mean the difference of trousers and shorts and sleeve lengths in shirts. For girls many schools require a summer dress that is usually in a gingham fabric. The prep school my sons attended required specific hats for both seasons that were required to be worn to and from school along with their school blazer. Extra items like these that may have only been worn for mere minutes before and after school ended up bringing the cost up when looking at the total items needed to stay in uniform regulations. They also required a sports kit for physical activities and sports, a book bag with the school crest, and specific items to which ‘house’ they belonged too. If you are familiar with the Harry Potter series, this is equivalent to being sorted into a house and the same colours of red, blue, yellow, and green are normally used. I will say that despite the cost, I love uniforms. It makes getting my kids ready for school in the morning that much easier and takes off the importance of what clothes a child wears to school in regard to their peers. Be aware of the costs of uniforms when looking at schools—especially independent schools!

I have experienced three different schools in the US with my boys and two different schools in the UK. While my sons are still in primary school, I can say that so far the differences have really varied between schools and not so much between the USA and the UK. My sons did extensive daily homework that included accelerated maths with their charter school in the US, nightly homework at their prep school in the UK, and weekly homework at their state school in the UK. As far as I can tell so far, there are minor differences like math in the US is called maths in the UK. While you learn cursive in the USA, you learn joined up writing in the UK. While it is similar, the two forms of writing are not exactly the same. Of course while in the US your students will learn the pledge of allegiance, art, US History, in the UK, they will learn the words to ‘God Save the Queen’ and the history of the United Kingdom. I think the quality of the education can be found varying by school and by how involved the parents are with their children. The schools seem more competitive in regard to class system in the UK, especially as students get into the secondary stage of their education. The schools in the UK are definitely more formal and that takes a little getting used to for the kids and the parents.
The vast majority of American families have a very positive experience in the British educational system, and would relish the chance to stay or return to the UK. There are, however, some educational differences between the UK and US school systems that you should be aware of to ensure a smooth transition. Managing your expectations and going with a positive outlook on all of the opportunities your children will get to embrace will make all the difference in a positive experience for parents and children.

THE BRITISH SCHOOL SYSTEM

A British education has become popular across the globe, and, according to ISC Research, there are more than 2,000 schools outside Britain teaching parts of the English National Curriculum that would typically prepare students for GCSE and A-level examinations.

According to the Council of British International Schools, “Choosing a British international school not only gives students the benefit of a British education, it is also eminently transferable. The structure and consistency of the National Curriculum allows students to move easily, if necessary, between British schools in various countries including the UK, and facilitates an easy progression to university in the UK or elsewhere in the world.”

Schooling is compulsory in England for all children between 5 and 16 years of age. Children enter school the September after their fourth birthday. NDSP can only provide reimbursement for education for the one year of education prior to what is comparable to the US first grade. Therefore, if parents would like for their children to attend Reception, they may send their children to the local free schools, or they will have to pay for the tuition out of pocket.

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW?

The UK school system has some things that are quite different from the US schools. It is important to know and understand these differences to help you make an informed school choice.

The School year:

The school year runs from September to July and is divided into three terms (semesters). The autumn term (Fall) runs from September to Christmas, the Spring term runs from January to late Spring. The summer term runs from April to July. Each term lasts approximately 12 weeks, and a half term holiday is given in the middle of each term, usually a weeks’ duration. Half term holidays are usually held in October, February and May. The Christmas and Easter holidays are usually two weeks and the summer holiday is around 6 weeks long.

Primary schools:

Primary schools are for children aged 4 to 11 years. This may also be referred to as Key Stage 1 (ages 4 to 7) and Key Stage 2 (ages 7 to 11). The first class in primary school is usually called the Reception class (pre-school), and each child automatically moves to the next grade at the end of the school year.

The subjects to be taught at primary schools are specified by the National Curriculum, which also sets out Standard Attainment Targets (SAT’s) to be reached. Pupils are tested on SAT’s at 7 and 11 years old, at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, in the compulsory core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science. Other subjects, including History, Geography, Technology, Music, Art and Physical Education (PE) are also taught. Details of these are found in the individual school prospectuses. For younger children, the subjects are often integrated into topics.

Secondary schools:

Between the ages of 11 and 16, children attend Secondary school, usually comprehensive schools where all abilities are taught. State secondary schools must follow the National Curriculum and assessment of the children takes place at Key Stage 3 (age 14) and Key Stage 4 (age 16).

The General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) is the principal means of assessment for 16 year olds. Many subjects include course work in addition to examinations in each individual subject.

Many pupils remain at school after the minimum leaving age of 16. Education for 16 to 18 year olds is usually referred to as Sixth Form, with the Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth. In the Lower Sixth, students study for AS level exams, usually in 3 or 4 subjects, leading on to A-level exams (Advanced Level) usually in 3 subjects in the Upper Sixth. The usual route to university and college is through the A level system, depending on the grades attained in these examinations.

PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

Children attend primary school between the ages of 4 to 11 years. At this stage, a broad range of subjects are taught to all children, and there are often after school clubs which extend the curriculum further such as specialist sports, music and languages.

The School day:

The school day is usually from around 8:45am to 3:00pm, with a lunch break around 12:00, each individual school sets its own times. Some schools provide a hot lunch, while others expect the children to bring a “packed lunch”. All schools are required to give religious education, but any child may be withdrawn from religious activities at their parents’ request.

A comparison of the grades, and testing requirements.

- **US Equivalent**
- **Key Stage**
- **School Year**
- **Age of child**
- **Testing**

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<th>PRIMARY</th>
<th>US Equivalent</th>
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<td>Year 13</td>
<td>17-18 years</td>
<td>A level</td>
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US V. UK

A comparison of the grades, and testing requirements.
School uniform:

Many British schools have a uniform that all children are required to wear. This usually comprises a grey skirt or trousers (pants), shirt, sweater or sweatshirt and perhaps a blazer and school tie, although this is becoming less common. Different schools have their own school colors, and you can buy items of school uniform directly from the school. Many national retailers also stock the most common items.

Schools usually also require a uniform for Physical Education (PE), often shorts with a T-shirt and black trainers (tennis shoes/sneakers).

School Reports:

At primary school age, school reports to parents are usually written once a year, and there are Parents Evenings held to discuss progress, usually once per term or three times per year. The report will focus on the progress of your child, but grades are not always given, either as an overall attainment standard or on individual pieces of school work.

The school will administer SAT tests at the end of Key Stage 1 (age 7) and Key Stage 2 (age 11). The school is required to submit their SAT’s testing results to the Department of Education, who produce national league tables of schools once per year. These are published in the newspapers and are available from the County Council or the Department of Education. This means you can compare the results of one school versus another.

You may not receive as much information about your child’s progress as you may be used to or expect. As a general rule in respect of a child’s progress, “No news is good news”. Report cards are only issued once per year in British primary schools, and information about grading is infrequent.

If you, as a parent, have concerns about any aspect of school life, you should first speak to the class teacher, then send a note to the Head Teacher asking a specific question, and an appointment to discuss the issue. Often individual class teachers also have a “home book” for each child, where comments and concerns can be written by both the parents and teacher.

SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

Children attend secondary school between the ages of 11 and 16 years. Many students will choose to stay at school for a further two years after this. At the beginning of secondary school, students study a wide variety of subjects, but one of the main differences between the British and American school systems is that the British students specialize in their chosen subjects much earlier. American students will probably find that their education is more broad based but less specialized than their British counterparts from age 15 onwards.

Most local schools welcome our American students to stay through age 18, but this may depend on their progress in school.

Up to the end of Key Stage 3 (age 14), all students follow the same curriculum, which includes English, Mathematics, Science (Physics, Chemistry and Biology), History, Geography, Languages, ICT (Information and Computer Technology), Religious Education, Physical Education, Music, Drama, Art, Design & Technology (covering such topics as woodworking, metalwork, cookery, textiles etc.) and PHSE (Personal, Health, and Social Education).

Choosing Subject options

Towards the end of Year 9 (age 13-14), all students select approximately 10 subjects to study in more detail, and drop all other subjects. Some of these subjects are compulsory, such as English, Mathematics and Science, and others are selected by the student. These subjects are studied for the next two years (years 10 and 11), culminating in the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) exams at the end of Year 11. All GCSE subjects are a two year course, and many of them involve course work throughout the two years as well as written exams at the end of the two years. As well as the traditional subjects studied to date, students may also be able to choose other GCSE subject options such as Engineering or Business Studies.

American students entering a private school will need to take the two year GCSE course to find difficulty to assimilate, as they will have missed some of the course content which will be included in the final examinations. They may also have missed some coursework which makes up part of the final grade, and modular examinations which can take place throughout the two years.

At the end of Year 11, after GCSE’s, students may leave school if they wish, or move on to a technical or training college. However, the more academic students usually opt to go on to Sixth Form, where they specialize further. Students usually study up to 5 subjects (in great detail) in the first year of Sixth Form, and specialize usually in 3 subjects in the second year of Sixth Form. These three subjects are studied to an advanced level, and British students would be ahead of their American counterparts in these subjects only, while having a much narrower based education in other general subjects.

At the end of the Sixth Form, students leave school but can move on to the University system. Most university courses are 3 or 4 years in duration, and students will specialize in usually one subject only. There is not a general education year at the beginning of a university course, and students will only attend lectures in their chosen course subject(s).

Keeping informed of your child’s progress

At secondary school age, you will usually receive one school report per term (three per year) detailing your child’s progress. In addition, you will be invited to attend Parent’s Evenings where you can discuss your child’s progress with individual subject teachers.

Many secondary schools operate a Tutor (Home Room) system. When your child starts at school, they will be placed into a Tutor Group, with a Form Tutor (Home Room Teacher). The Form Tutor will move up the school along with all the students in his/her group. This means that the Form Tutors get to know each student very well, and is the first point of contact in the event of any problems.

Private / Independent Schools:

Private or independent schools are schools that are privately maintained by fees paid by parents.

Confusing to Americans, in Britain these private schools are sometimes known as “public schools”. Often these schools offer boarding facilities for students as well as day school. This means that the school day is longer, and often includes Saturday school particularly for sports, but the school holidays are longer. These independent schools do not have to follow the National Curriculum and Standard Attainment Targets although most will follow the GCSE curriculum as this is a nationally recognized set of qualifications.

To get a place at a private school, you should apply direct to the School Admissions Secretary who will provide you with information about the school and the admissions process. Often your child will have to sit an entrance test prior to being accepted at the school, which will assess their current attainment level and help the school to place your child in the right class.

FURTHER EDUCATION

Further Education covers education for students over the age of 16, and goes beyond what has been achieved in previous compulsory education but which are not at degree level (Higher Education). Typically Further Education includes A-levels, AS levels and certain vocational qualifications.

The largest group of people in further education is those aged between 16 and 19, to whom further education must be available if they want it. But many other people undertake full or part-time further education. Students aged between 16 and 19 can study at school or at a college providing further education. They can often remain at the school they have been attending, or may transfer to a different school, for example if their current school doesn’t offer the range or combination of courses they wish to study.

There are generally two types of college:

1. Sixth form colleges are similar to schools, and a student can transfer to one at the age of 16.

2. Colleges of further education usually offer a wider range of courses than sixth form colleges and provide education and training for students aged over 19 as well as for full time 16-19 year olds.

Colleges produce their own prospectuses, providing information on entry requirements and the purpose of courses. These prospectuses may also be available through your child’s schools and the local careers service. Some students aged 16 and over may be eligible for financial help through the Learner Support Funds and it is worth asking the school or college about this.

HIGHER EDUCATION / UNIVERSITY

Beyond college and sixth-form, is university. Entry requirements are a guideline of the recommended academic ability the course provider expects students to have. Each course of study has different requirements: usually a mix of qualifications, subjects, or exam grades they recommend students have or be working toward. Most programs require A-level exams with minimum scores.
WHERE do you start?

Researching schools and educational options is a time consuming task; however, it is the most important task that will help to make your child’s educational transition smooth.

**RECEIVE ORDERS**

When you receive assignment orders to an overseas location where there is no DoD school, contact the NDSP Liaison or education point of contact (POC) at your gaining command/ new location or the NDSP Instructional Systems Specialist (ISS) for the area. The NDSP Liaisons and ISSs can provide information on available schooling.

**GATHERING INFORMATION**

Gather information about the educational options available and what you are entitled to. Visit the NDSP website and talk with your NDSP Liaison, NDSP ISS and other families in location about the educational options available and their experiences. Keep in mind that each child is different, and thus each experience is different.

**CHECK THE DATA**

Almost all schools are rated in the UK using the OFSTED Report. OFSTED is the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills in the UK. The UK schools report directly to Parliament which are independent and impartial. The Parliament inspect and regulate those providing education and skills. View Reports at: http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/schools/for-children-and-young-people/find-school-inspection-report

**NDSP REQUIREMENTS**

Once you have decided on a school, Sponsors must complete the NDSP Online Orientation, and then complete an NDSP Family Budgeting Tool. These resources have been designed to help you understand NDSP including enrollment, school options, DSSR, reimbursements, authorized expenses, etc.

**NDSP ENROLLMENT**

Enroll in NDSP by registering online. The link is provided at: www.dodea.edu/ndsp

**NDSP AUTHORIZATION**

NDSP will process the enrollment through the NDSP Student Online Registration system and send an email notification to the NDSP Liaison/POC and sponsor upon finalizing the enrollment. Approval for the enrollment of an eligible minor dependent of a DoD sponsor must be obtained from DoDeA NDSP office prior to enrolling a child in a non-DoD school.

**REIMBURSEMENT**

Families may have schools direct bill NDSP, or they can pay up front and submit invoices for reimbursement. Please see the Reimbursements section on our NDSP webpage for further details. http://www.dodea.edu/nonDoD/Procedures-For-Reimbursement-Information.cfm
Types of schools

Schools can be broken into two categories in the UK: Private Independent School, or tuition free schools often called, “state schools.”

A public school has opposite meanings in the two countries. In the US this is a government-owned institution supported by taxpayers. In England the term strictly refers to an ill-defined group of prestigious private independent schools funded by students’ fees, although it is often more loosely used to refer to any independent school. Independent schools are also known as private schools. The UK use of the term “public” school is in contrast with “private” education, i.e. to be educated privately with a tutor.

Ninety-three percent of children in the United Kingdom attend government or NDS (NDSP) ISS really helped us to understand the differences. We ended up choosing an academy for our child and it was a great experience.

We were overwhelmed with the many types of schools in the United Kingdom. The NDSP ISS was a great experience.

In the US, a magnet school receives government funding and has special admission requirements: pupils gain admission through superior performance on admission tests. The UK has city academies, which are independent privately sponsored schools run with public funding and which can select up to 10% of pupils by aptitude. In the US 36 Local Education Authorities retain selection by ability at age 11. They maintain grammar schools, chiefly those that were grammar schools long before the advent of state education.

In the US, a magnet school sometimes called a high school and increasingly an academy. In areas where there are no grammar schools the comprehensives likewise may term themselves high schools or academies. Nationally only 6% of pupils attend grammar schools, mainly in 4 distinct counties. Some private schools are called grammar schools, chiefly those that were grammar schools long before the advent of state education.

An academy in the education system in England is a type of school that is independent of Local Education Authority control but is publicly funded, with some private sponsorship. It is roughly equivalent to the American charter school. Academies are expected to follow a broad and balanced curriculum but with a particular focus on one or more areas. Current specializations include science; arts; business and enterprise; computing; engineering; maths and computing, modern foreign languages; performing arts; sport; and technology. Academies can select up to 10% of students by aptitude for the school’s specialization. Although academies are required to follow the national curriculum in the core subjects of maths, English and Science, they are otherwise free to innovate, although they still participate in the same Key Stage 3 and GCSE exams as other English schools (which means they teach a curriculum very similar to maintained schools, with small variations).

Another source of confusion is the different usage of the word college. In the US this refers to a post-high school institution that grants either associate’s or bachelor’s degrees, while in the UK it refers to any post-secondary institution that is not a university (including Sixth Form College after the name in secondary education for Years 12 and 13, the 6th form) where intermediary courses such as A Levels can be taken and GCSE courses can be retaken.

Private / Independent Schools: To get a place at a private school, you should apply direct to the School Admissions Secretary who will provide you with information about the school and the admissions process. Often your child will have to take an entrance test prior to being accepted at the school, which will assess their current attainment level and help the school to place your child in the right class.

Edubase (also known as the School Lookup) is a database maintained by the Education Department that lists all educational establishments from nurseries to colleges in England. Families can use the Edubase Establishment Finder to search for school details by name, location or type. http://www.education.gov.uk/edubase.
Special Education

In the UK systems, special education is called a Special Education Needs (SEN); the system is somewhat similar to what we have in America, but there are distinct differences.

Children with special educational needs can be taught in a range of different educational settings, according to their needs. Mainstream government schools are able and encouraged to accommodate special needs children, when appropriate, by calling on a wide range of available specialists and auxiliary support. Schools working with statemented students operate under a government Code of Practice that is analogous to, but much weaker than, the federal IDEA in the US.

Children in the UK who face barriers to their learning will often require additional educational intervention to support their learning. This may include what is commonly referred to as Wave 2 or Wave 3 intervention. Wave 2 intervention consists of time limited support for a child, focusing on a particular area of difficulty. This support is provided, within the classroom, with the view to accelerate progress and address misconceptions that may have developed. Wave 3 intervention consists of more individualized support.

If a child has not made progress despite such differentiated teaching he or she would usually be supported by a staged method of support outlined in the 2001 SEN Revised Code of Practice. A meeting would usually be arranged between key school staff such as the child’s class teacher and SENCo (special educational needs coordinator), parents and the child. Key learning objectives would be agreed and a plan made for the provision necessary to achieve these. The Code of Practice recommends an Individual Education Plan as a means of recording and reviewing this. That level of support is known as School Action and would usually result in additional support being made available for a child, such as a few hours working with an adult each week. If a child’s needs are greater or (s)he has not made sufficient progress in response to a School Action level of support then a School Action Plus level may be appropriate. This is similar to School Action but usually includes a greater level of resource and additional advice from appropriate professionals from outside the school, such as an educational psychologist or speech and language therapist.

If a child or young person’s parent(s) or educational setting believe that his or her needs cannot be met by the school’s resources they can apply to their local authority to carry out a Statutory Assessment of Special Educational Needs. If this is agreed the Statutory Assessment can lead to a Statement of Special Educational Needs. This is a document which summarizes the child or young person’s needs, what learning objectives need to be addressed and what provision is necessary to achieve this. The local authority is responsible for the provision on the Statement and will provide funding and advice to the educational setting to ensure this happens.

Unlike the US, in the UK, an LEA can limit services according to its budget, even if those services are listed as necessary on your child’s statement. Service availability varies widely between LEAs. Some therapeutic services, such as speech therapy are expected to be handled by a child’s health care provider.

School placements in the UK run the gamut from residential schools to specialist schools to full inclusion in mainstream schools. There are more residential options available than in the US system due to the English tradition of public schools (American readers may be confused by this term in the UK, “public schools” are privately owned and run, while government schools are those run by the LEAs).

If your child has special needs, contact your NDSP ISS at ndsp.education.europe@eu.dodea.edu as soon as you learn that you may transfer to the UK.

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If your child has special needs, contact your NDSP ISS at ndsp.education.europe@eu.dodea.edu as soon as you learn that you may transfer to the UK.
Choosing a School

Whether tuition-free state schools, or tuition paying independent schools, there are a lot of options in the UK.

Moving overseas can be overwhelming and filled with so many decisions. No decision will be more important than finding a school to meet your child’s needs. Take the time to make an informed decision—the quality of your child’s education WILL impact his/her future. You will never regret the time you invested in making the right decision and providing the very best education for your child.

Tuition-Free State Schools

All parents in the UK have a right to express a preference for a school and to give reasons for their preference. You may be given your preference but you may not.

Remember that you are looking for a school for your own particular child. They will have their own individual needs and strengths.

Start by making a list of the things you want to consider. These will be different for every child and family. Some considerations may include: size of school, extracurricular activities available, religious affiliation, transportation availability, single sex or coed, academic performance records, etc. It is good to speak with other families that have children at schools you are considering; however, it is important to balance those opinions with the facts and your personal experience visiting the school. Every child is different and what is good for one child may not be good for another.

Each LEA must publish a ‘composite prospectus’ with information about all the schools in their area. Most LEAs produce a separate guide for primary and secondary schools. A new guide is produced in September each year. It will tell you how and when to apply for schools.

The Guide will tell you details of all the schools in the area including: type of school, single-sex or mixed, whether the school is selective—and how students are selected, and any religious character the school has. The Guide will also tell you how many children each school takes in each year and how it allocates places under its oversubscription (when a school is full) criteria. You can get a guide from the local LEA office, or online. You can also apply to a school in a different county or borough from the one where you live. You will need to get a copy of the schools’ Guide from that LEA.

Visiting schools

Reports and guides are great, but the most important thing to do when choosing a school is to visit them—preferably during the school day. Visit the playground, the cafeteria and a classroom. Make a list of questions to ask or things to look out for. For instance: Is the school welcoming? Do the students seem happy and relaxed? Are you able to speak to the children? Are the staff approachable? How do they interact with the children? How does the school involve and inform parents? How does the school vary the teaching for children of different abilities?

Tuition Paying - Independent Schools

Searching for a tuition-paying or “independent school” is similar to finding a tuition free state school, with some exceptions. In addition to all of the elements to consider when choosing a tuition-free school, you must consider a lot of the financial aspects of tuition paying schools. For example, What is the tuition? What does it include? Will my education allowance cover the tuition, fees, and transportation? What fees does the school charge that are not allowable under NDSP that I will be responsible for? Is there any required specialized equipment? What are the specifics of the schools’ contract? On the following pages you will find a great checklist to help guide you as you go through the process of choosing a school.

NDSP does not endorse any one search site—we are providing various resources to assist you in your search.

1. The Independent Schools Council http://www.isc.co.uk/
2. Directgov Schools Finder http://schoolsfinder.direct.gov.uk/
4. Find My School: http://www.findmyschool.co.uk/
5. Office of Overseas Schools: http://www.state.gov/m/a/os/155623.htm
6. SchoolsSearch: http://www.schools-search.co.uk/
7. EdulBase: http://www.education.gov.uk/edubase
Choosing an International School Checklist

The following checklist is designed to help you make an informed decision about the right school for your child. It is important to ask questions and to ask for documentation to back up any claims a school makes. The following are some factors you may wish to consider in your quest:

YOUR CHILD

- Does the school have planned activities to assist your child in a positive start to school?
- Are new students assigned “buddies”?
- What are the class sizes (not the same as student-teacher ratio)?
- Does the school allow parents to volunteer in the classrooms or to eat lunch with their children?
- How does the school deal with bullying?
- What programs are in place for drug and alcohol prevention?
- What student-support services are available for individual counseling or university acceptances?
- Are the students actively engaged in learning?
- How often will you receive information concerning your child’s progress?
- Is the school a for-profit school?
- How many years has the school existed?
- What is the annual tuition and what is included in the tuition? Is the cost of tuition, transportation and fees within your Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) education allowance for the city listed on the sponsor’s orders? Please be aware that you will be responsible for any fees incurred above the DSSR rate.
- Check your DSSR rate here: http://aoprals.state.gov/Web920/location.asp?menu_id=95/
- What calendar does the school follow? Consider the impact on your child’s transition. Special attention is needed especially if you are transferring to the southern hemisphere.
  - If the school follows a southern hemisphere school schedule, what is the policy or procedure for placing children in a particular grade?
- How does the school place children? Do they place them according to age only? Do they do placement testing? Do they use incoming transcripts?
- Is it accredited? What is the reputation of the accrediting institution(s)?
- Is the campus a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment?
- What is provided for new students and their parents?
- What is the “feeling” or “tone” of the staff? Are they friendly and professional?
- Are all the teachers certified, including ESL teachers?
- What are the expectations for staff about students of high ability, special needs, ESL, other areas?
- How long on average does the school retain its teachers?
- What percentage of teachers has earned advanced degrees?
- What percentage of instructional assistants holds university degrees?
- Does the school support professional development, so teachers learn and apply “best practices”?
- Is time dedicated for teachers to meet as teams to jointly plan curriculum and assess each child’s needs?
- Is the curriculum broadened with “best practices” around the world, so students can be well prepared for their next school?
- How does the curriculum compare with a U.S. Public school curriculum?
- Are there any courses not offered by the school that a child would need to graduate from a high school in the United States?

THE SCHOOL

- Is the school a for-profit school?
- How many years has the school existed?
- What is the annual tuition and what is included in the tuition? Is the cost of tuition, transportation and fees within your Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) education allowance for the city listed on the sponsor’s orders? Please be aware that you will be responsible for any fees incurred above the DSSR rate.
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  - If the school follows a southern hemisphere school schedule, what is the policy or procedure for placing children in a particular grade?
- How does the school place children? Do they place them according to age only? Do they do placement testing? Do they use incoming transcripts?
- Is it accredited? What is the reputation of the accrediting institution(s)?
- Is the campus a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment?
- What is provided for new students and their parents?
- What is the “feeling” or “tone” of the staff? Are they friendly and professional?
- Were all questions answered in a straight-forward manner with documentation readily offered for claims?

STAFF

- Are all the teachers certified, including ESL teachers?
- What are the expectations for staff about students of high ability, special needs, ESL, other areas?
- How long on average does the school retain its teachers?
- What percentage of teachers has earned advanced degrees?
- What percentage of instructional assistants holds university degrees?
- Does the school support professional development, so teachers learn and apply “best practices”?
- Is time dedicated for teachers to meet as teams to jointly plan curriculum and assess each child’s needs?
- Does the staff seem happy?

FACILITIES

- How long does it take for your child to get to school? Is transportation provided?
- Does the school provide lunch? Breakfast? What is the cost? Is it included in the tuition? NDSP does not reimburse for meals. If the cost is included in the tuition, NDSP will subtract the amount of lunch out of the tuition and that will not be paid.
- Are all facilities state-of-the-art and well maintained?
- How are the computer resources and wireless technology in use in the classroom?
- Will I be required to purchase a personal computing device for my child? If so, what is the cost?
- Does the school provide different facilities, such as libraries (books), cafeterias, and sport areas for different grade levels?
- What facilities are open to family members?
Applying to Schools

Timing is everything when applying to tuition free or tuition paying schools. Start researching and application process early.

Tuition Free State Schools

Local education authorities must now have “co-ordinated admissions.” This means that you fill in a single form (Common Application Form) instead of applying separately to lots of schools. Many LEAs have online applications.

Secondary school applications are co-ordinated across LEAs. You only fill in one form even if you are applying to schools in more than one LEA. You must be allowed to express at least three preferences and put them in order. If schools have more applicants than places then the oversubscription criteria will be applied. If you would qualify for more than one school you will be given the school you ranked highest.

You will be given a single offer of a school on national offer day at the beginning of March. If you do not meet the criteria for any of your preferences you will be offered an alternative school, usually the school nearest to your home that has places.

Primary school admissions work in the same way as secondary admissions. However, there is no national offer day so check with your LA to find out when they will make primary school offers.

If your child is changing schools or you want to apply for a school outside the usual time of entry, this is referred to as “in year” or “casual” applications. This might be because you have moved, or because you feel your child needs a different school. Make sure you apply in writing, as some schools may try to discourage in-year applications. Any decision on admission must be made by the admission authority, not the Head, the school secretary or anyone else. In year admissions are co-ordinated by the LEA so you will need to fill in a common application form. You will be able to list at least 3 preferences. You may need to fill in a supplementary form for some schools so check with the local authority. If the school you want has a place available in your child's year group it has to admit your child. The only exceptions are for selective grammar schools. Even if schools tell you they are full, you can still apply and, if turned down, you must be allowed to appeal.

Fair Access Protocol

All tuition free state schools must have a Fair Access Protocol to ensure that - outside the normal admissions round - unplaced children, are found and offered a place quickly, so that the amount of time any child is out of school is kept to the minimum. This is why every local authority is required to have in place a Fair Access Protocol, developed in partnership with local schools. It is expected that all parties will act with a sense of urgency to identify a school place for any child who has had difficulty securing one or who falls under the Fair Access Protocol. All schools, including Academies, are expected to respond to requests from local authorities to admit a child under Fair Access Protocols within seven calendar days.

Waiting Lists and Appeals

Every school must have a waiting list for applications made during the normal admissions round. The list must be kept open until at least the end of the autumn term after the new intake has started. Some schools also keep waiting lists for in-year admissions. Ask for your child’s name to go on the waiting list for any school you have applied for. Children are ranked on the waiting list in the same order as the school’s oversubscription criteria. The waiting list must not give priority to children based on when their names were added to the list. It is important to remember that your place on a waiting list can go up or down. As soon as places become available they must, except in limited circumstances, be filled from the waiting list, even before admission appeals have been heard. If you have not been given your preferred school you can appeal for any of the schools for which you applied. You can appeal for as many as you like.

Tuition Paying Independent Schools

Independent schools, like state grammar schools, are free to select their pupils, subject to general legislation against discrimination. The principal forms of selection are financial, and academic, with many administering their own entrance exams - some also require that the prospective student undergo an interview, and credit may also be given for musical, sporting or other talent. Entrance to some schools is more or less restricted to pupils whose parents practice a particular religion, or schools may require all pupils to attend religious services.

The majority of UK schools will require your child to pass entrance tests as well as be interviewed in order to consider them for admission. Some non-selective schools might consider admission on the basis of references from the previous school and say three years school reports. Entrance tests vary by school and age group. At ages 11 and 13, they are generally called the Common Entrance Test. They may be a standard test or one set by a group of schools or set individually by one school. In any case each school sets its own pass mark – the more selective (academically) the higher the required score. At age 16 entry there are different requirements. For example, most schools will require a minimum of 6 grade Bs in GCSEs – some now asking for As in the subjects to be taken at A level. On top of this some schools will additionally require tests in the subjects to be taken in the sixth form and this includes the IB Diploma Program.

Never underestimate the importance or timing of entrance tests. Most will be taken between 6 to 9 months before entry.
Boarding Schools
In the United Kingdom

Boarding school is not a popular educational choice in the United States, however, overseas boarding school is a very popular school option for the British and International students.

For many American families, boarding school is not an educational option that they may be familiar or comfortable with. In many overseas locations, however, boarding school is widely accepted and utilized as early as age seven. In NDSP, however, boarding is never an option until the sixth grade (minimum) even if the DSSR authorizes an away from post rate.

Not all students in NDSP are eligible to attend boarding school utilizing the “Away from Post” education allowance. However, NDSP does allow families that are not authorized an “Away from Post” education allowance rate the option of using their “At Post” education allowance to offset or pay the cost of a boarding school. Families wishing to exercise this option need to be mindful that there is no reimbursement for transportation to and from school. When the Away from Post education allowance is authorized, families should work with their command for student education travel. It is best to investigate how the travel arrangements work prior to choosing any boarding school.

Boarding Schools in the United Kingdom

A boarding school is a residential school where pupils live and study during the school year. There are approximately 500 boarding schools across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Most UK boarding schools teach a mix of international pupils and local UK pupils. ‘Boarders’ are pupils who live at the school. ‘Day pupils’ live with their families and return home at the end of the school day. This mix helps to create a good social atmosphere.

Most UK boarding schools are co-educational, teaching both boys and girls (classes are mixed, but accommodation is separate). There are many single-sex schools too.

In addition to British boarding schools, there are many American boarding schools in England as well.

Prior to enrolling in any boarding school, you should check with NDSP to ensure you have the entitlement to boarding school.

Source: http://www.educationuk.org/global/articles/uk-boarding-school-system/

Considering Boarding School?
Make an Informed Choice!

When choosing a boarding school, there are additional criteria to consider.

- What is the admission process and criteria?
- Does boarding close during holidays? Are there any options for children who cannot go home?
- What is the cost to travel to the school?
- What is the uniform requirement and cost?
- What academic support is available for students if they need help?
- How are children supervised?

Find out more about Boarding Schools

The following websites are resources on boarding schools. DoDEA/NDSP does not endorse any website, school, or service. These links are provided as potential resources only.

http://www.boarding.org.uk/
http://www.sbsa.org.uk/
http://www.boardingschools.com/find-a-school/search-tools/a-z-school-list.aspx
http://www.boardingschoolreview.com/articles/category/6/subcategory/53
Supplemental Education

NDSP offers a variety of supplemental education to assist children in achieving academic success.

My son was struggling in math. I had no idea until half way through our tour that NDSP could help! If your child is struggling, call your NDSP ISS.

Supplemental instructional support may be reimbursed up to the allowable rate but must be pre-approved by the Area NDSP Education Instructional Systems Specialist (ISS). In addition to the “Base School” educational allowance, $4,100 per student – per school year may be authorized only for the following reasons:

Foreign Language

The approved school offers its curriculum in a language that the child does not know well enough in order to progress in the curriculum. Students attending a school where the language of instruction is other than English may be authorized tutoring in the foreign language up to the maximum allowable rate of $4,100. Approval for supplemental instruction must be based on documented education need. Materials required for language instruction/tutoring must also be approved in advance. Authorized services are based on the language proficiency and age of the child.

Gifted Education

Students may qualify under the DoDEA criteria for supplemental instruction or materials for gifted education by submitting documentation from the previous public or private school’s gifted education program or the current public or private school’s assessment. Parents must submit evidence to support requests for assessments. The maximum allowable rate for supplemental instruction for gifted education is $4,100.

Tutoring

The child requires assistance in basic classes:

1. In grades K-3, the student requires compensatory/supported instruction because he/she is not progressing or performing within the normal developmental range.
2. In grades 4-12, the student is failing or in jeopardy of failing (this includes AP and IB courses).
3. The approved school requires additional instruction to enable the child to enter a grade or remain in the same grade in the school.
4. The child, upon returning to post along with his/her family subsequent to an authorized / ordered evacuation, requires additional instruction to successfully complete the current school year.

The sponsor and school must submit documentation in evidence of a request for supplemental instruction. This may include current grade/progress reports and narrative description of current functioning from the teacher. Additional information may be requested.

Approvals are generally for up to an eighteen week period. Requests for extended tutoring must be accompanied by a progress report for the previous period of authorized assistance.

Tutoring time is based on the age of the child and the curricular areas being addressed. Tutoring is generally authorized for one to five hours per week. Tutoring will not be authorized to assist in completing homework. Tutor.com is available for free for military families.

Supplemental Course Work

There are times when the school a child attends does not provide instruction in academic subjects generally offered by public schools in the U.S. for students in grades 9-12 (i.e., English, United States History, United States Government, Geometry, Algebra) and the student will have no other opportunity to complete the courses prior to graduation. In such instances, the child may utilize the supplemental funding of $4,100 to take these courses via DoDEA Virtual School, another virtual school of your choosing, home school, or correspondence.

Remember, all supplemental services must be pre-authorized. NDSP cannot reimburse for expenses a family incurred without prior approval from the area NDSP ISS.

HOMEWORK HELP

Tutor.com is available for fee for dependents of military service members and DoD civilians (DoD civilians in overseas locations only). Log on to access a live tutor 24 hours a day at no cost to you.

US COURSES

When the school your child attends does not offer subjects regularly taught in U.S. public schools, contact your NDSP ISS.
UK School System vs. American Primary Grade level comparisons

Key Stage 1 = Year 1 = age 5/6
Year 2 = age 6/7

Compulsory subjects:
- English
- Maths
- Science
- Information and Communication Technology
- Design and Technology
- Art and Design
- History
- Geography

Schools often also teach:
- personal, social and health education (PSHe)
- citizenship
- modern foreign languages

Tests and assessments
Year 1 phonics screening check
The check will take place in June when your child will read 40 words out loud to a teacher. You’ll find out how your child did, and their teacher will assess whether he or she needs extra help with reading.

Kindergarten = age 5/6
First Grade = 6/7

Compulsory subjects:
- English
- Maths
- Science
- Technology
- Art/Music
- Social Studies (History, Geography)
- Physical Education

Schools often also teach:
- personal, social and health education
- citizenship
- modern foreign languages

Tests and assessments
- At the end of kindergarten students are assessed for phonemic awareness and reading level. The exact assessment used varies by school.

Key Stage 2 = Year 3 = age 7/8,
Year 4 = age 8/9,
Year 5 = age 9/10,
Year 6 = age 10/11

Compulsory subjects:
- English
- Maths
- Science
- Information & Communication Technology
- Design and Technology
- Art and Design
- History
- Geography

Schools often also teach:
- personal, social and health education
- citizenship
- modern foreign languages

Tests and assessments
Key Stage 2 tests cover:
- English reading
- English grammar, punctuation and spelling
- Maths (including mental arithmetic)
- Science (only schools selected to participate in a national sample)

2nd grade = age 7/8,
3rd grade = ages 8/9,
4th grade = ages 9/10,
5th grade = ages 10/11

Compulsory subjects:
- English
- Math
- Science
- Technology
- Art/Music
- Social Studies (History, Geography)
- Physical Education

Schools often also teach:
- personal, social and health education
- citizenship
- modern foreign languages

Tests and assessments
- Standardized state testing usually starts at the third grade in most states. Depending on the state laws, students can be retained if certain benchmarks are not met on these assessments.
UK School System vs. American Middle & Upper Grade level comparisons

Key Stage 3 = Year 7 = age 11/12,
Year 8 = age 12/13,
Year 9 = age 13/14

Compulsory subjects:
- English
- maths
- science
- history
- geography
- modern foreign languages
- design and technology
- art and design
- music
- physical education
- citizenship
- religious education
- information and communication technology (ICT)

Schools can develop their own ICT curricula or follow the programmes of study.

Compulsory subjects:  
- English
- Math
- Science
- Technology
- Social Studies (History, Geography)
- Physical Education

Schools often also teach:
- personal, social and health education
- citizenship
- modern foreign languages
- Art/Music

Tests and Assessments

None

Grade 6 = age 11/12
Grade 7 = age 12/13
Grade 8 = age 13/14

Key Stage 4 = GCSE = Year 10 = age 14/15,
Year 11 = age 15/16

During Key Stage 4 most pupils work towards national qualifications - usually GCSEs.

Compulsory Subjects:
- English
- maths
- Science
- Other subjects may include:
  - Art
  - Technology
  - Humanities
  - Technology
  - People and Society-related Subjects
  - Modern Foreign Languages
  - Business Studies
  - Physical Education
  - Media Studies
  - Others depending on individual school

Tests and Assessments

GCSE’s are chosen at the end of year 9 and are chosen based on success in courses in Key Stage 3. The GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) is a public examination in specified subjects for 16 year old school children. The examination is cumulative and is done at the end of year 11 with results available in early August.

9th grade = ages 14/15,
10th grade = ages 15/16

Compulsory subjects - to meet a four year graduation plan:
- English – four years
- Math – Algebra, Geometry, Alg. II
- Science – Biology, Chemistry, Physics
- Physical Education
- Health
- Foreign Language
- Fine Art - (can be one of the following - Art, Choir, Drama, Humanities)
- Career and Technology
- Electives

Tests and Assessments

Standardized state testing usually starts at the third grade in most states. Testing is completed once a year. Depending on the individual state laws students can be retained if certain benchmarks are not met on these assessments.
Key Stage 5/A-Levels

Year 12 = age 16/17,
Year 13= age 17/18

A-Levels: The Advanced Level General Certificate of Education— a set of exams taken during the end of secondary school at about 18 years of age prior to moving on to University.

To qualify for A-levels students must successfully complete GCSE’s. Students choose between 3 and 5 subjects depending on the school and the individual students success at GCSE.

A-Levels are usually split into six parts, each with its own exam. Most students study three A-Levels, and one AS level. An AS-Level is the first of half of an A-Level (year 12).

An AS-Level can be studied on its own but to get an A-Level the second half (year 13) must also be completed. The second half of an A-Level is an A2-Level.

A Levels are a requirement for universities in the UK (is the equivalent to an American High School Diploma- however, A-levels are very rigorous and are similar to all AP course work in the United States)

College-Entry Requirements

11th grade= ages 16/17,
12th grade= ages 17/18

Compulsory subjects - to meet a four year graduation plan:

- English – four years
- Math – Algebra, Geometry, Alg. II
- Science – Biology, Chemistry, Physics
- Physical Education
- Health
- Foreign Language
- Fine Art- (can be one of the following- Art, Choir, Drama , Humanities)
- Career and Technology
- Electives

Tests and assessments

Depending on the individual state laws students take mandatory state tests, and/or exit exams.

Educational Options in the British System after the age of 16

After year 11 a student can opt to remain at school, transfer to a college, or to leave education and seek work or start an apprenticeship. Those who stay at school enter Years 12 and 13. These years are traditionally known as the Sixth Form (Lower Sixth and upper Sixth), and require students to specialize in three to five subjects for their A Level exams. In ever-increasing numbers students are taking more vocational courses at college such as a Business and Tech (BTEC) or other such qualification. This is an unusually specialized curriculum for this age group by international standards, and moves have been made to increase the number of subjects studied. After attaining the relevant A Level qualifications, the student can apply to enter university.

In the UK, a college usually means a place where students over the age of 16 are trained for a particular subject or skill, earning a qualification that is not usually an academic degree. People studying for an academic degree go to a university. In the US, a college is a place where students can earn a bachelor’s degree, and a university offers both bachelor’s degrees and advanced degrees.

A sixth form college is a school for students between the ages of 16 and 18 that offers A-level courses.

COLLEGE ENTRANCE

Getting into US universities is possible from the British system. US universities are familiar with GCSE and A level qualifications but, unlike the UK uni system, acceptance at a US uni is not conditional on the A level results - especially since A level exams are not even taken until several months after US letters of acceptance go out. Instead, the US universities will generally ask for GCSE’s and AS level results, along with an indication of academic progress in the final (A2) year.

There is much debate over what constitutes an equivalent American high school diploma. Students should contact colleges they are interested in to see what their requirements are. If the colleges NDSP spoke with, and the counselors we contacted stated that it is common for colleges to accept 5 GCSE passes at grade C or higher in lieu of an American diploma (without Honors or Advanced Placement’ (AP) classes). This may be sufficient for a student to gain entry to some less selective US colleges and universities. However, the student will have to wait until he/she is 17 years old to apply.

If a student with good GCSEs definitely intends to go to a US university, and wants to apply to more competitive universities, s/he should either complete A levels or the International Baccalaureate, or should attend an American high school that offers AP classes. The IB curriculum is especially recommended if the student might be applying to other countries for higher education (besides the US and UK). Selective US universities will have the same entry expectations as UK universities.
Students in the UK start studying in Year 10 for their GCSE exams which they take in various subjects at the end of Year 11. GCSEs stand for General Certificate of Secondary Education. After a successful completion of GCSE courses, students go on to take their A Levels, which stand for Advanced Level, at college. A Levels are generally a two-year course, with AS levels obtained within the first year. Basically students can choose whether they continue their education after turning sixteen years of age by taking their A levels at 6th Form College, also known as a technical college.

In secondary schools, GCSE courses are taken in a variety of subjects, which are usually decided by the students themselves in Year 9 (age 13-14); however, increasingly more students from schools in England are deciding in Year 8 to study their chosen subjects in Year 9 raising the question as to whether the exams are becoming easier to pass. Typically though, study of chosen subjects begins at the start of Year 10 (age 14-15), although some subjects start earlier, for example Maths, English and Science, mainly because these courses are too long to be taught within the traditional 2 years; final examinations are then taken at the end of Year 11 (age 15-16). In Northern Ireland, these age groups are designated as one Year higher, so that Year 9 elsewhere is equivalent to Year 10 in Northern Ireland, and so forth. The number of subjects a student studies at GCSE level can vary. Usually somewhere between eight and ten subjects are studied, though it is not uncommon for more, or fewer, subjects to be studied.

In secondary schools, GCSEs are compulsory in the core subjects and are taken by 14-16-year-old students. The only requirement is that in state schools, English, mathematics, science and physical education must be studied during Key Stage 4 (the GCSE years of school). At the end of the two-year GCSE course, candidates receive a grade for each subject examination that they have sat. The passing grades, from highest to lowest, are: A* (pronounced ‘A-star’), A, B, C, D, E, F and G. Grade U (ungraded/unclassified) is issued when students have not achieved the minimum standard to achieve a pass grade; the subject is then not included on their final certificate.

GCSEs are part of the National Qualifications Framework. A GCSE at grades D-G is a Level 1 qualification, while a GCSE at grades A*-C is a Level 2 qualification. As one would expect, GCSEs at A*-C (Level 2) are much more desirable and insisted on by many employers and educational institutions. Level 1 qualifications are required to advance to Level 2 qualifications. Likewise, Level 2 qualifications are required to advance to Level 3 qualifications.

Students can also receive an X grade which signifies that they have only completed part of the course.

A Levels

A Levels are academic qualifications that are recognised by employers and universities in the UK and throughout the world. Whether you want to go to university or you hope to go straight into a career such as Accounting, A Levels are for you. One advantage of A Levels is that you can combine a range of different subjects rather than focus on just one. So, you could study Film Studies and Drama and Theatre Studies alongside English Language and Psychology, or you could study History and Art alongside Law and Environmental Studies; the choices are almost endless.

A Levels are two-year qualifications. In the first year, students take AS Levels, usually studying four subjects. In the second year students take their A2 Levels. These are more difficult than AS Levels and a student would specialize in either three or four subjects. An AS Level and an A2 Level combined make a full A Level.

There are additional certifications which can be taken such as BTECs, which are specially designed for students with learning difficulties and other special needs.

For students with learning difficulties, an injury/repetitive strain injury (RSI) or a disability, help is offered in these forms:

- Extra time (the amount depends on the severity of the learning difficulty, such as dyslexia, disability, injury or learning in
difficulties and other special needs.

- A different format exam paper (large print, Braille, printed on coloured paper, etc.)

- A ‘reader’ (a teacher/examiner can read out the words written on the exam, but they cannot explain their meaning)

- A different room (sometimes due to a disability a student can be placed in a room by themselves or with selected others; this also happens when an amanuensis is used, so as not to disturb the other candidates. All exam rooms are covered by separate dedicated invigilators.)
NDSP strives to provide transition support to all families in the program. How can we help?

1. NDSP develops and implements strategies and support mechanisms to mitigate any challenges or differences in education systems and to ensure educational continuity and on-time graduation. NDSP offers:
   • Assistance with education planning to ensure students will graduate on time
   • Options for academic support (i.e. tutoring)
   • Supplemental coursework opportunities to ensure US graduation requirements can be met
   • Consultation with families on educational differences

2. NDSP ensures that students with special needs are placed in educational programs that can meet the needs as identified in their Individual education Plans (IEP).
   • Consultation with current school counselor and teacher to discuss and determine ongoing needs and to identify any supports that may be needed for transition
   • Determine schools that can meet the student’s needs
   • Facilitate transition into new school (i.e. group meeting)
   • Determine if additional supports are needed and provide as appropriate
   • Conduct annual reviews

3. NDSP provides resources and opportunities for families in order to increase understanding of the unique differences in the American and foreign education systems, and shapes expectations for a smooth transition.
   • NDSP ISSs are available for consultation, discussion, and questions at any time!
   • NDSP Online Orientation: An online in-depth orientation to NDSP for parents. Upon completion, parents will understand NDSP, they will how to get reimbursed for tuition, what fees are covered, what they can expect in an overseas education and more.
   • NDSP Guide to Finding a Non-DoD School: A comprehensive step-by-step guide for parents when they are researching schools (includes what needs to be considered in terms of funding)
   • NDSP Guide to Education in the UK: an online magazine that provides families with the unique differences in US and UK education systems.

NDSP Transition Support

Parents have a large role in making their experience in NDSP a positive one. Parent responsibilities in the NDSP include:

• Ensure overseas screening is done (new families coming in).
• Complete the NDSP Online Orientation.
• Research schools in the area – consult with NDSP as necessary, and use the resources provided (NDSP Guide to Choosing an Non-DoD School).
• Choose a school
• Read (but do not sign yet) the school’s contract and understanding your responsibilities (withdrawal notice requirements, fees, expenses for field trips, lunches, uniforms, personal computing devices, etc).
• Complete the NDSP Family Budgeting Tool (a sponsor guide is provided to assist you with this). This tool will help sponsors understand what their financial responsibility will be.
• Enroll online and provide all required supporting documentation (valid orders, birth certificates, IEPs, school fee schedule, school calendar).
• Sign school contract if required.
• Work with NDSP ISS to obtain pre-approval for any supplemental services needed (failure to do so will result in NDSP’s inability to pay).
• Submit requests for reimbursement to NDSP invoices.

When we moved from Canada to the United Kingdom, the NDSP ISS in the Europe office not only helped us find a school that could support my son’s special needs, but continued to check in on us to see how he was doing. I felt supported through the whole experience.

• Provide NDSP with any tour extensions, adjusted DERO/PRD.
• Lastly, but certainly most important: Approach your new host country and the educational setting with an open mind. It will be different from what you are used to in the United States; however, different does not equate to worse or better. There will be some things you like more, and other things that you miss about the US education system. Just being in a foreign country and exposing your children to a new culture, a different style of education and the opportunity to see the world is an education in itself - and one that most children do not have the opportunity to benefit from.
School Sports
In the United Kingdom

People in the UK love sport with a passion – which probably explains why so many sports were created in the UK, over the age of 14, unless you have specifically chosen a sports course, this probably won’t be part of your curriculum, but you will still have plenty of opportunities to get active after classes.

Many colleges and universities run sports social clubs where you can try out activities such as mountain climbing, rowing, football, diving, tennis, cricket, dance, aerobatics, judo, yoga and much more. Many also have their own sports facilities, such as a gym, running track and football pitches.

Whether you want to watch some of the best sport in the world, or get active yourself, the UK is the place to be. You will find that sport plays a big role in the schools as well. Please be aware of the costs because NDSP does not reimburse for sports or sport travel.

Student sport

Schools, colleges and universities in the UK take sport seriously. As well as being healthy, sport can also lead to a fantastic career and can help you to develop confidence, team-skills and perseverance.

At school, pupils below the age of 14 have sports lessons as part of the curriculum. Most schools also run optional after-school sports clubs for enthusiasts. For students over the age of 14, unless you have specifically chosen a sports course, this probably won’t be part of your curriculum, but you will still have plenty of opportunities to get active after classes.

Many colleges and universities run sports social clubs where you can try out activities such as mountain climbing, rowing, football, diving, tennis, cricket, dance, aerobatics, judo, yoga and much more. Many also have their own sports facilities, such as a gym, running track and football pitches.

Sport in the community

Outside your campus, many towns and cities have council-owned sports facilities, which are usually very good value for money. Private gyms and sports centres can be more expensive, but if you shop around you can find good deals.

If you are keen to make friends, you will find plenty of sports social clubs up and down the country, for example, cycling clubs, running clubs or hiking groups. These are usually free of charge to join. Have a look on noticeboards in your local library, shop windows and in your local newspaper.

Adventure sports

Adventure-lovers will adore the UK. Bungee-jumping, surfing, sky-diving, horse-riding, white-water rafting, rappelling, mountain-climbing, diving, pot-holing, ice-skating, para-gliding or even skiing… you will find lots of centres across the UK offering courses and sessions for all, from beginners to experts.

Spectator sports

Across the UK you will find world-class sports events, such as the Ryder cup for golf, the Formula 1 British Grand Prix for motor-racing, the Grand National for horse-racing and Wimbledon for tennis. Each weekend, you can also experience the thrill of the game by going to a football, cricket or rugby match.

New Opportunities for Students

One of the greatest benefits about going to school in another country is learning the culture. Part of that is learning about the games, sports and activities the people do for fun and for competition. While many schools have sports that American students are familiar with such as golf, tennis, football (soccer), swimming, and hockey, there are many opportunities for American students to learn new sports and skills.

Cricket is popular game for children and adults. It is a bat-and-ball game played between two teams of 11 players on a field at the centre of which is a rectangular 22-yard long pitch. Each team takes it in turn to bat, attempting to score runs, while the other team fields. Each turn is known as an innings.

The bowler delivers the ball to the batsman who attempts to hit the ball with his bat far enough for him to run to the other end of the pitch and score a run. Each batsman continues batting until he is out. The batting team continues batting until ten batsmen are out, at which point the teams switch roles and the fielding team comes in to bat.

In professional cricket the length of a game ranges from 20 overs of six bowling deliveries per side to Test cricket played over five days.

Cricket was first played in southern England in the 16th century. By the end of the 18th century, it had developed into the national sport of England.

Rugby

Rugby is a free-flowing game that features a combination of strength, speed and strategy to move a ball into opponents territory. Rugby is a full-contact sport yet players wear little or no protective gear. Rugby evolved from football (i.e. soccer) and is often called the ‘game played in heaven’. Many boys that played American football really love Rugby, and then find it a great way to meet new friends.

Source: http://www.whatisrugby.com/rugby-basics/rugby-overview/
The IB is another challenging curriculum found in 3,632 schools in 146 countries to offer the four IB programs to approximately 1,116,000 students. There are 134 schools offering IB programs in the UK.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment.

The IB offers four programmes for students aged 3 to 19. The programmes can be offered individually or as a continuum by IB World Schools.

• The Primary Years Programme (PYP) for students aged 3 to 12 started in 1997 and is now offered by 1,063 IB World Schools.

• The Middle Years Programme (MYP) for students aged 11 to 16 started in 1994 and is now offered by 1,010 IB World Schools.

• The Diploma Programme for students aged 16 to 19 started in 1968 with first examinations in 1970 and is now offered by 2,453 IB World Schools.

• The Career-related Certificate (IBCC) for students aged 16 to 19 is a new programme within the IB.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

Why IB?

IB programmes are recognized around the world and ensure an increased adaptability and mobility for IB students.

• The curriculum and pedagogy of IB programmes focus on international perspectives of learning and teaching, while insisting that students fully explore their home culture and language.

• IB World Schools must undergo an exhaustive authorization process in order to offer one or more of the programmes, which includes a study of the school’s resources and commitment to the IB mission and philosophy.

• IB teachers participate in a wide variety of professional development opportunities to constantly update their knowledge and share their expertise with colleagues around the world.

• Many students graduating from the Diploma Programme find that it enhances their opportunities at tertiary institutions. The IB works closely with universities around the world to gain recognition for IB programmes.

• The core components of IB programmes encourage students to participate in creative and service-oriented activities, while at the same time emphasizing the importance of reflection on a personal and academic level.

Students whose parents are continually moving around the world because of their profession, especially military and DoD families, will find the IB is clearly a great solution. A child is able to transfer easily into any school which undertakes the IB, and follow a curriculum, which allows them to continually progress.
If we move to the UK and are not located near a DoDDS school, what are our options?

Families in NDSP have a variety of school choices based on the type of orders they are assigned, grade level of their children, and the DSSR of their location. The following is meant only as a guide to some options. It is important to familiarize yourself with all entitlements and options available in this guide and on the links.

- British School offering American curriculum
- International Baccalaureate programs
- Online high school education such as DoDEA Virtual School: http://virtual-hs.dodea.edu/
- Home based education
- British School- State-free and is local
- British School- Public- what we in America refer to as Private School- must pay tuition
- British School – Private- not automatic enrollment- must apply and then compete for positions.

Will there be an American School system available to us in the UK?

Check out the list of International schools in the UK that offer American education: british-schools.uk.html or http://www.english-schools.org/britain/

What is a Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma?

To learn more about the program, curriculum, and philosophy visit: http://www.ibo.org/diploma/

Can my child start an IB program in the UK in the middle of the year or in the middle of high school if they didn't start out in an IB program?

Each school is different: contact the individual school and find out about admission requirements and recommendations.

Do US universities accept an IB Diploma?

http://www.ibo.org/country/US/

What schools in the UK offer an IB diploma program?

https://www.ibo.org/school/search/index.cfm?programmes=DIPLOMA&country=GB&region=&find_schools=Find

What schools in the UK offer an IB Early Years program?

https://www.ibo.org/school/search/index.cfm?programmes=PYP&country=GB&region=&find_schools=Find

What schools in the UK offer an IB Middle Years program?

https://www.ibo.org/school/search/index.cfm?programmes=MYP&country=GB&region=&find_schools=Find

Which system would be best for my high school age child if he/she is planning on going back to the states for university?

The main difference between the US education system and the British education system falls in the last two years; in the US that would be junior and senior year and in England it is called A-levels. In the American system students must take a four year core group of courses that include English Language/writing and literature), Math, Science, History, Foreign Language, PE/Health, Fine Arts and Technology. Three to Five A-Levels are chosen by the student and may not include any English or Math- students. The courses are chosen based on how well they tested at the GCSE level (the equivalent to freshman and sophomore years in the US). For this reason if your child chooses to do A-Levels they may not be ready to perform in an American university- especially if they have taken no Math, English or Science.

Students who choose to do A-Levels should augment their GCSE courses with a balance of courses from the DoDEA Virtual School or other accredited online school to ensure a well-rounded education.- required in a standard American University degree program.

If the English school does not have an American curriculum then an IB curriculum is best suited for transferring over to the American University system. However, an IB curriculum is historically rigorous and may not be suitable for all students. A family planning to transition back to the US to attend an American University should weigh their options carefully and be certain they understand the difference. Contacting the potential US University may yield clarity as well in terms of course selection.

DoDEA Virtual School is an example of an online independent high school within the DoDEA system. The Dodea Virtual School follows an American style education curriculum with a wide variety of course offerings. The DoDEA VS is free as well. You can learn more by following this link: https://content. dodea.edu/VSHS/Official_DVHS_Website/index.html

It is important to note, students must choose a graduation option; they cannot be enrolled in a full time VS and another tuition paying school and expect two diplomas. It’s one or the other.

Which system would be best for my high school age child if he/she would like to apply for British University?

If your child decides that they want to attend a British University any of the systems would prepare them for admissions to a school in the UK. However, they will have to decide whether to apply as an international student or a resident UK student. If applying as an international student most universities will require scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) scores and at least a few AP scores- for this reason the American curriculum system, DoDEA or IB programs are best.

It is advisable to do the research as many universities in the UK require extremely high scores.

If your child has lived in the UK for a total of three years then they are eligible to apply as a UK resident. If they have completed GCSE and A-Levels they will apply via the University and College Admission Services http://www.ucas.ac.uk/ the common application site for all UK residents applying to university.

Attending a UK university may affect a child’s ability to gain employment in America after graduation; especially if the degree requires US certification (nursing, teaching, social work, law, accounting, medicine, etc.). Students are strongly urged to research carefully prior to attending a UK university if they plan on returning to the states to live permanently and work in their field of study.

UK School System vs American Schools grade equivalents:

- Key stage 1- Year 1= Kindergarten equivalent- Ages 5/6
- Key stage 1- Year 2= 1st grade equivalent – Ages 6/7
- Key stage 2- Year 3= 2nd grade equivalent-Ages 7/8
- Key stage 2- Year 4= 3rd grade equivalent-Ages 8/9
- Key stage 2- Year 5= 4th grade equivalent-Ages 9/10
- Key stage 2- Year 6= 5th grade equivalent-Ages 10/11
- Key stage 3- Year 7= 6th grade equivalent-Ages 11/12
- Key stage 3- Year 8= 7th grade equivalent-Ages 12/13
- Key stage 3- Year 9= 8th grade equivalent—Ages 13/14
- Key stage 4- Year 10 (GCSE)= 9th grade equivalent—Ages 14/15
- Key stage 4- Year 11(GCSE)= 10th grade equivalent-Ages 15/16
- Key stage 4- Year 12(A-Level)= 11th grade equivalent-Ages 16/17
- Key stage 4- Year 13(A-Level)= 12th grade equivalent-Ages 17/18
- Middle years – Years 7, 8 and 9 (often referred to as Middle Years or the equivalent to our Middle School)
- 9th and 10th grade High School equivalent= GCSE
- 11th and 12th grade High School equivalent= A levels (also referred to as 6th form college- this is NOT university level- more like AP level courses)
- A levels are done in 2 consecutive years- the first year is considered AS level and students have formal exams that they take at the end of that year- part of these exam scores are counted towards their next year’s scores. The second year is called A2 and this is the end of formal high school education.
- To apply for university students must pass all course exams at the end of the year(A2)- scores are not given until late August for AS and A2. This can be a issue for student’s applying to university in the states as they tend to apply in late winter or early spring and would only have access to their AS scores.
Students applying for university in the UK are at an advantage as the UCAS system is based on the A2 scores, and so students do not get acceptance letters until after all scores are reported at the end of August. However, if their A2 scores are lower but the A2 scores are good then some universities are willing to renegotiate application status and admissions.

- Year 12 and 13 or 11th and 12th grade equivalent - College (this is like a tech school program with training and apprenticeships in things like Auto Mechanics, Cosmetology, Computer Tech) these students finish with a diploma but is not the equivalent of A levels but is considered equal to a High School Diploma - just without the AP or rigorous course work.

When we move back to the states and my child finishes Year 9 does that mean they will be in 10th grade?

No, Year 9 is the equivalent to the American 8th grade

What if my child is 5 and the British school places him/her in Year 1 does that mean they are skipping Kindergarten?

No, Year 1 is the equivalent to the American kindergarten year

Are British Schools considered accredited like schools are in the states?

Yes- the official body for accrediting British Schools is Ofsted: http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/

How will schools in the states interpret credits for my child coming in from an English school during GCSE or A-Levels?

GCSE exams are given twice - once after year 10 (9th grade equivalent) and then again after year 11 (10th grade equivalent). Each of the courses that the student receives a GCSE score for will equate to a 1.0 credit for the year. Credits in the USA are given based on the Carnegie Unit-120 classroom hours equals 1.0 credits. 60 classroom hours equals .5 credits. Students in the UK spend almost the same amount of time in each course as the students in the states and therefore the credits are very similar. If your child is transferring in to a school where they want proof of time in class you will have to contact the British School and request that they send the stateside school a run-down of how many hours per week is spent per course and how many weeks in their school year. Historically speaking, it is generally about the same amount of time that our students spend per course. A-Level exams are also given twice: once after year 12 (11th grade equivalent and at the end of year 13 /12th grade equivalent) Scores are not available until the Fall, however. Carnegie units for these courses are the same as stated above for GCSE’s.

What if we leave in the middle of the year and end of year exams will not be completed?

If you leave in the middle of the year during GCSE or A-levels, prior to the end of year exams, students still may receive credit but it will depend on the receiving schools interpretation.

It is imperative that you keep all of the term reports and have them copied and sent with the letter from the headmaster stating the dates of attendance at the British School (on school letterhead). Make sure you do your homework and check with the stateside school PRIOR to leaving.

Interpreting GCSE results and A-level results. Letter grades are given for all GCSE and A-Level exams – A, B, C, D all considered passing. E, F and U are considered failing grades.

If you leave the British System and return to the states or to another international school your child’s GCSE and or A-Level exam scores should be acknowledged and are applicable for transferring in grades. Local policy will apply as to how many credits, their weight on GPA, etc.

If we move from the states to the UK at the end of our child’s 9th grade or 11th grade year will the British School allow them to start GCSE’s or A levels?

Moving into the UK system in the middle of 9-12th grades presents the most challenges. However, with a lot of documentation and proof of successful completion of courses in the states (report cards, transcripts, standardized state tests, PSAT or Pre- ACT scores) a UK school might be willing to assess their skills and place them in their appropriate year level. Again, this will depend on the headmaster/administration/registration processors and how they interpret incoming records.

Families should investigate IB programs or American school systems and really understand their options prior to accepting the assignment when transitioning into the UK systems; especially during US grades 9-12.

If my child does not do well on their GSCE exam’s will they be eligible for A levels?

To continue on to A-levels, students must successfully pass some or most of their GCSE exams. However, each school is different and interpretation varies from school to school.

If my child does not do well on their GCSE exam’s and are recommended by the school to attend “College” is this the same as university?

NO, the term “College” in England is the same as we look at Vocational or Technical Schools in the states. It is considered completion of a diploma in the UK. However, a diploma is not the same in the UK as it is in the US. A diploma in the UK is the equivalent to a vocational certification in the US.

The UK College Vocational Programs may be good for students who are not on a traditional university track for post-secondary education. The programs are vast and students can become certified mechanics, beauticians, technicians, electricians, plumbers etc. However, these certifications may only be applicable in the UK and not in the United States. Students may have to attend a full certification program to be certified to do the equivalent work in the US.

If my child chooses to go to a local UK “College” instead of doing A levels is this the equivalent to a high school diploma?

No. Students will receive a diploma but that is not the same as our High School Diploma; it is a vocational certification and will not fulfill the graduation requirements for a full High School Diploma. Students going this route should also take courses with the Do-DEA Virtual High School or another accredited secondary school to augment their vocational program. However, dual enrollment is not authorized at tuition paying institutes. Students must choose one graduation outcome.

When we go back to the states - what paperwork should I take with me to help them understand how to interpret what credits they should receive? What kind of report cards do students receive in English Schools?

Students in primary school receive hand written or computer generated term reports three times a year- these reports are written by the classroom teacher and are quite detailed reports on their progress in all courses. The reports contain different information from year to year and may differ from school to school.

Students in middle school years (year 7-9 equivalent grades 6-8) receive hand written or computer generated term reports three times a year- the reports are written by classroom teachers and are quite detailed reports on their progress in all courses. The reports contain different information from year to year and may differ from school to school.

During GCSE and A-levels- students are given written reports by teachers throughout the year. These reports will tell you if your child is “on target” to get a certain grade on the end of year exams or not. However, these reports are not what give students credit for courses. The reports that students receive after their exams will grant students credit.

Parents should save all reports. British schools do not have the equivalent to our official records and or transcripts. The only records you will have will be your child’s term reports and any testing results that you have received.

Three weeks prior to moving (or more) you should go to the school and ask them for a letter on school letter head that states the dates/years that your child attended as well as a signature of the Headmaster or Assistant Headmaster with contact information. If the school does keep copies of term reports – you should request that a copy be made of all of the reports and place them with the letter in a sealed envelope and sign the back and date it as this is about as official as it will get. You should also ask for copies of course descriptions, class schedules, etc. Anything you may need to help the receiving school evaluate the type of curriculum and classes your child received while in the UK.

What if we leave in the middle of the year and end of year exams will not be completed?

If you leave in the middle of the year during GCSE or A-levels prior to the end of year exams- students still may receive credit but it will depend on the incoming schools interpretation. This is why it is imperative that you keep all of the term reports and have them copied and sent with the letter from the headmaster stating the dates of attendance at the British School (on school letter head). Make sure you do your homework and check with the stateside school PRIOR to leaving.
What school records should I hand carry or send via PDF to the British School to help make my child’s transition to a British School easier?

Suggested information:
• Your child’s latest report card.
• A copy of the transcript even if it is an unofficial copy.
• Course descriptions for each and every course on the transcript—these can usually be found on the school district’s website. Ask a counselor at the school where to find this information if you cannot find it on their website.
• Explanation of the grading scale used at the last school—ie/ 90%-100%= A, 80%-89%= B etc.
• ALL standardized state tests as well as any PSAT and SAT or ACT score sheets available.
• Copies of any special education paperwork. This should also be sent to your EFMP coordinator prior to your arrival for screening.

What if my child is in Special Education, 504 or has significant accommodations or modifications?

You should be screened through the exceptional family member program (EFMP) prior to arrival for special education or 504 plans. In the UK—the Individualized Education Plan or IEP is called SEN— for more information see: http://www.education.gov.uk/popularquestions/childrenandfamilies/specialeducationalneeds

Contact ndsp.education.europe@eu.dodea.edu if you have specific questions about special education services in the UK.

My child is in a gifted program—do the British schools have programs to meet their needs?

Gifted Education is different from school to school. Some gifted younger students qualify for Grammar School which is looked at as education for bright students. Most tuition paying schools have some sort of program to address giftedness in younger students. During secondary school the gifted programs are similar to those in the states—students take more advanced courses and or AP/IB coursework. NDSP families may be eligible for a gifted supplement. Send a copy of their gifted eligibility statement and scores on educational or standardized assessments to ndsp.education.europe@eu.dodea.edu to check for eligibility.

What is an Instructional Systems Specialist (ISS) and who is mine?

The Europe office has three ISS positions which handle all of your education questions. They have split the UK into thirds by dividing caseloads by the sponsor’s last name. All can be reached at ndsp.education.europe@eu.dodea.edu.

Where do ask questions about entitlements, funding, eligibility, payments, etc.?

Ndsp.invoices.europe@hq.dodea.edu

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Government Organisations
Department for Families,
Children and Schools (DFCS)
Teachers Training Agency
GTC
National Curriculum
OCA (National Qualifications)
Literacy
Numeracy
OFSTED
National Grid for Learning
Home Office

Resources
Learn UK
BBC Education
Just for Teachers
Teachers Web
Teachersnet
Teachernet
Primary Resources 1
Primary Resources 2
Primary Resources 3

Information on Education
Schools
Times Educational Supplement
Guardian Education

Examination Boards
AQA
Edexcel
OCR

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

www.dfcs.gov.uk
www.canteach.gov.uk
www.qte.org.uk
www.nc.uk.net
www.qca.org.uk
www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/literacy/
www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/numeracy
www.ofsted.gov.uk
www.ngl.gov.uk
www.homeoffice.gov.uk

www.learn.co.uk
www.bbc.co.uk/education/home
www.justforteachers.co.uk
www.teachersweb.co.uk
www.teachers.net
www.teachernet.co.uk
www.primaryresources.co.uk
www.teachingideas.co.uk
www.topical-resources.co.uk

www.schoolsnet.com
www.tes.co.uk
www.educationunlimited.co.uk

www.aqa.org.uk
www.edexcel.org.uk
www.ocr.org.uk