

WINDSOR SCHOOL RHEINDAHLEN CLOSURE IN JUL 2013

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND QUESTIONS AND ANSWER PACK (FEB 11)

BACKGROUND

The BORONA Programme Board has confirmed that following the Ministerial Announcement on Internal Germany Rebasings that will see the Rheindahlen Military Complex vacated by summer 2013, and despite the decision to delay the move of 7 and 16 Sig Regts from Elmpt to UK until 2015, that it is in the best interests of the student population for Windsor School to close in summer 2013. A prime consideration has been to ensure the quality and breadth of secondary education to be provided to those young people within the current dependency; equally important has been the requirement to give parents, and those to be posted in, sufficient notice for them to make informed decisions about their children's education.

Following the closure of Windsor School, SCE will not provide termly boarding, but will continue to provide weekly boarding in Germany at King's School Gütersloh and Prince Rupert School (PRS) Rinteln. JSP 342 (SCE Education) at Para 1202 recommends a one way travelling time to a secondary school of 90 minutes on a daily basis and 120 minutes for weekly boarders, though pragmatically these times can be (and at times are) exceeded. In considering the possible options we have been keen to ensure that young people are not disadvantaged; that they are able to follow the course of study that best suits them; and that a wide range of options is available. Throughout this process we have been conscious that:

- *Following the closure of Windsor School it will not be possible for all current and potential pupils to attend an SCE school.*
- *Pupils must work to recognised UK public examinations so as not to limit their later education options.*
- *Some children may prefer to follow a vocational training path rather than academic study.*
- *Children (and parents) may wish for children to continue to live at home with their parents.*
- *Recommended travelling times to school are contained in JSP 342 (The Education of Service Children).*
- *Although Windsor School will close in 2013, some pupils will need to start a course of study at an alternative establishment in 2012 to a public examination in 2014 (when Windsor will be closed).*

To account for the factors above and to provide a suitably broad range of options in addition to enduring SCE provision, HQ SCE has visited a number of International Schools to find ones that provide the UK curriculum (taking GCSE and A level courses), and have a typically British school ethos. It is accepted that International Schools have a primarily academic focus and do not provide the range of vocational courses that SCE offers.

Windsor School currently provides secondary day schooling for the West of Rhine military community plus weekly and termly boarding for pupils from across NW Europe. The student dependency is made up of 3 main groups:

- ***Elmpt based pupils.*** *Day pupils largely from 7 and 16 Sig Regt based in Elmpt that will remain to 2015 and will require secondary schooling from 2013 to 2015, (plus a few from Mönchengladbach that may remain beyond 2015).*
- ***BFG boarders.*** *Weekly or termly boarders from the 3 enduring Garrisons (Gütersloh, Paderborn, Bergen-Hohne), that have chosen Windsor School for personal reasons to provide continuity of education; primarily having started a phase of education at the School for their parents to subsequently be posted within Germany.*
- ***European Support Group (ESG) boarders.*** *Weekly or termly boarders from the ESG detachments across NW Europe. (SHAPE, Brunssum, Ramstein).*

FUTURE OPTIONS POST 2013

HQ UKSC and HQ SCE have jointly developed a number of options to provide secondary education for Windsor pupils that mirrors current choice, recognising that it will be for parents to choose the option that best suits each individual child. These options will largely commence in 2013 but a small number may start in 2012, to public examination (GCSE, A level) in 2014 and are:

- Attend as day pupils an appropriate International School that meets HQ SCE criteria and provides the UK curriculum, and which MOD will fund.
- UK Boarding with Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) for military personnel, or Boarding School Allowance (BSA) for UKBCs.
- UK education, with elected unaccompanied service or private arrangements.
- For Elmpt based pupils attend as weekly boarders an SCE school in Germany (King's School Gütersloh or PRS Rinteln). HQ SCE has forecast that vacancies at King's from 2013 will be approx 20 boarding places with further boarding places at PRS.

Choice of Options. UK boarding with CEA or BSA, or elected unaccompanied service remain unchanged options in all cases. Outside of that it has been decided that:

- **Elmpt Pupils** will be within acceptable travelling times, and will have a choice of:
 - King's Gütersloh or PRS Rinteln as weekly boarders.
 - St George's International School Duisburg as day pupils.
- **BFG Boarders.** BFG boarders will have a choice of attending an SCE school in Germany as a day pupil or as a weekly boarder.
- **ESG Pupils** will be restricted by the excessive weekly travelling time to any of the future SCE boarding options and will attend as day pupils a local International School at:
 - **SHAPE.** St John's International School / British School of Brussels.(tbc)
 - **Brunssum.** St George's International School Aachen.
 - **Ramstein.** Neustadt International School.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

There a number of sources of information concerning education which parents are able to draw on:

- **Service Children's Education.** Windsor School. Mil: 94872 2412; Civ: 02161 4722412 who should normally be the first point of contact and who will be able to advise parents on the most appropriate education path for individual children.
- **Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS);** a Tri-Service organisation which is a constituent part of Dir of Children and Young People and funded to provide information and support to Service families and eligible MOD civilians on all aspects of the education of their children in the UK and overseas, with particular emphasis on UK boarding choices. Contact details are:
 - HQ CEAS. Mil: 94344 8244; Civ: UK 01980 618244; Email: enquiries@ceas.detsa.co.uk.
 - CEAS Parent Partnership Officer Germany(JHQ) Bernie Lynch. Mil: 94872 6426; Civ 02161 4726426
- **Army Families Federation** Germany who have a specialist education adviser with wide experience of schooling for Service children. (Herford Office); Mil: 94882 3180; Civ: 05221 9953180; Email: germany@aff.org.uk

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Q1. When will Windsor School finally close?

A. The BORONA Programme Board has decided to close Windsor School at the end of the summer term of academic year 2012-13, which means Windsor School will close in July 2013.

Q2. Why has it been decided to close Windsor School, and what is the SCE view ?

A. The MOD remains committed to providing good education opportunities for all military families based for service reasons outside the UK. Because of the importance of public examinations (GCSE and 'A' Level) one of the main factors that we have considered in coming to a decision is the need to maintain a good standard of secondary education for all pupils. The closure of HQ UKSC and the move of the new Germany Support Group to Gütersloh Garrison in 2013 will mean that beyond summer 2013 the student population at Windsor School will be small. The SCE view, which we support, is that a secondary school with a very small number of pupils would struggle to provide the right environment and the breadth of education options that our young people need and deserve, and that in those circumstances very small class sizes would not be conducive to good learning. In addition, the remainder of the RMC will close in 2013, resulting in an unattractive and potentially dangerous environment for schoolchildren. For these and other reasons we have decided that secondary education can be better provided elsewhere and we will do all we can to ensure that our young people are not disadvantaged.

Q3. Why have you made the announcement so early ?

A. We have always been conscious of the need to give current and prospective parents as much notice as possible so that they can make informed choices for their children, and the closure date was announced in summer 2010. As many soldiers are on a 3 year postings cycle, we wanted to make the announcement then so that anyone with secondary aged children posted to Elmpt from late in 2010 (and whose children might be due to start secondary school in 2010) could be sure that they would be able to complete a full 3 year tour without affecting their children's schooling. Conversely, anyone posted to 7 or 16 Signal Regiments in 2011 (and therefore may be in Elmpt to 2014) would be aware that secondary education at Windsor School would not be available for the whole of that posting, and able to decide what was best for their children.

Q4. Why has the decision to close Windsor School in 2013 been made now if the two Signal Regiments will now remain in Elmpt to 2015 ?

A. As explained above, our primary concern has been to maintain the high standards of secondary education we can offer to our young people, and it has become clear that this would be put at risk if Windsor had been extended to 2015. There are a number of factors, including:

- The quality of education offered in a much reduced school would fall.
- The small school roll would not be conducive to good learning.
- Teaching staff may move should they be offered an alternative position, further affecting the quality of education offered.
- The curriculum that could be taught would be limited, and might disadvantage some pupils.
- The German authorities have no plans for further use of the RMC so the estate is likely to rapidly deteriorate. To leave Windsor School and the boarding house isolated in the RMC would leave students in a dilapidated estate and raise serious concerns over pupil safety.
- It would be very expensive to maintain the boilerhouse, sewage works and other essential infrastructure solely for Windsor School.
- It would have proved very difficult for pupils to take up 14-19 Agenda education opportunities within SCE.

Q5. How will these plans be affected by the Strategic Security and Defence Review (SDSR) that aims to move the British Army from Germany by 2020 ?

A. The SDSR has made it clear that Programme BORONA involving the closure of Rhine Garrison and with it Windsor School, will be unaffected by the SDSR, so the closure date of 2013 is unchanged. We clearly await the full details of the SDSR, particularly as it may affect the Elmpt based Signal Regiments, and therefore we must have a plan that is flexible should the requirement change – we believe that our proposals retain that necessary flexibility.

Q6. Potentially how many secondary aged pupils are there from 7 and 16 Sig Regiments and from the European Support Group (ESG) ?

A. This obviously varies each year, but we would normally expect there to be around 70 pupils of secondary age within 7 and 16 Sig Regts who attend Windsor as day pupils plus a further 70 from the ESG that attend as weekly or termly boarders. Our proposals are based on these numbers.

Q7. When will the final intake of pupils be ?

A. Because of the high turnover of pupils that is a feature of all SCE schools brought about by the military postings cycle, Windsor School will continue to accept pupils until Easter 2013. The high degree of turbulence that this would entail is not recommended, but we understand the pressures that service life places on parents and families, and will do all we can to accommodate parental wishes, though in such a case parents will understand that attendance at Windsor School will be possible only for a single term.

Q8. What about children undertaking public examinations such as GCSE and 'A' levels ?

A. The last intake to complete the full 2-year public examination timetable in Windsor will start in 2011 to take public examinations in summer 2013. Anyone now in the middle of study to take a public examination will of course be able to complete that phase of education at Windsor School.

Q9. But what about children starting GCSE or 'A' levels in 2012 ?

A. Those pupils starting a course of study in 2012 for public examination in 2014 (when Windsor will be closed) will have the option of starting at another education establishment in 2012, but as in all cases it will be for parents to decide what is best for their children, and how it fits into the postings cycle.

Q10. Why can you not provide secondary schooling at Elmpt or Wildenrath ?

A. We have considered that option but the technical requirements for a successful secondary school are much greater than for a primary school. A secondary school requires a range of laboratories and specialist facilities that none of the current primary schools have, and we believe it would be prohibitively expensive to try to recreate a secondary school for a small number of pupils, and for what would be a relatively short period of time.

Q11. What alternative secondary schooling options do you see being available after Windsor School has closed ?

A. We understand that decisions on secondary schooling are very important for young people and that all children will have their own particular situation and requirements. For this reason we want to be able to offer parents a wide choice of secondary school options, recognising that the ultimate decision will be made by the parent and in the best interest of the child. The MOD intends to offer a wide range of secondary school options including:

- Unaccompanied service with children remaining in current schools in UK.
- Weekly boarding at SCE King's School Gütersloh or Prince Rupert School Rinteln.
- Attendance as day pupils at an International School that meets SCE criteria and offering the UK curriculum.

- Boarding in UK using Continuity of Education Allowance or Boarding School Allowance for UKBCs.

Q12. Where can I find out more about Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) ?

A. CEA is a long term commitment and the rules on CEA are complicated, with implications or later postings. Before deciding on CEA parents should ensure they have a complete understanding of the impacts. Parents must contact CEAS iaw JSP 752 Ch 9 Sect 1 Para 09.01.03, but can find out about CEA from Unit Admin Offices, and there is also a good source of information through the Army Families Federation website at www.aff.org.uk.

Q13. Are International Schools not selective, and would children attending them be able to follow the full UK curriculum ?

A. HQ SCE have visited the International Schools that have been considered for our young people, and have confirmed that the schools selected meet the standards set by SCE and in a British style environment. The schools are fully comprehensive offering GCSE and A level courses or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses and have no selection or entrance examination requirements for English-speaking pupils. It must be pointed out that the International Schools are more academically focussed and do not provide the range of vocational courses that SCE provide as part of the UK Government 14-19 Agenda.

Q14 Why has the decision of which International School to use for SHAPE not yet been taken?

A. The scoping work at SHAPE has not yet been completed but soon will be. The decision will take into account the appropriateness of the education offer at the two schools, commuting times and cost. As soon as the decision is finalised it will be promulgated to the SHAPE community.

Q15. So what about vocational courses that SCE provide in Germany ?

A. SCE will provide vocational courses in Germany as part of the Government's 14-19 Agenda, and precise plans are being developed. Pupils who wish to follow the vocational training route would be best served within an SCE environment which might entail weekly boarding, allowing them to combine both academic and vocational courses at the same school. It will be apparent that ESG pupils attending an International School will not be able to follow the vocational route, and may need to consider other options.

Q16. What boarding will SCE be able to offer in the future ?

A. Worldwide, Windsor School is the only termly SCE boarding facility, and on the closure of Windsor SCE do not intend to reprovide it elsewhere. SCE now also provides weekly boarding facilities in Germany at King's School Gütersloh and Prince Rupert School Rinteln and these are currently both planned to remain. Where travel distances make it possible there will be an option for Elmpt pupils to take up weekly boarding places at King's or PRS depending on the availability of boarding facilities at the 2 schools. Beyond summer 2013 there will be no SCE termly boarding.

Q17. What options are proposed for ESG pupils and why can they not board at an SCE school ?

A. This boils down to geography and travelling times. As stated above SCE will not provide any termly boarding, and so ESG pupils would have to board weekly. The single journey time from bases such as SHAPE and RAMSTEIN to King's School Gütersloh would be in excess of 6 hours, and clearly not sustainable on a twice weekly basis. ESG pupils will attend a good local International School which will allow them to live at home but still receive a British style education, though as noted above they will not be able to follow the vocational option.

Q18. Have pupils previously been obliged to board at SCE schools in Germany ?

A. Yes they have. For a number of reasons the preference for SCE and for many parents is for children to attend secondary school as day pupils. This has not been possible for those isolated detachments such as at Ramstein and SHAPE who have always had to board, so this is nothing new. Additionally, when Edinburgh School Münster closed in the mid 1990s under BAOR Drawdown, secondary pupils from Osnabrück were obliged to weekly board at Prince Rupert School, Rinteln and pupils from Dülmen at Windsor School. Secondary pupils from north Münster are currently weekly boarders at King's School in Gütersloh, and pupils from Dülmen continue to weekly board at Windsor School.

Q19. How will the decision to close Windsor School be communicated to parents, and to parents posted in subsequently ?

A. We will use all available means such as School Newsletters, BFBS TV and Radio, the Rheindahlen Bulletin, Sixth Sense, and the AFF Journal. Separately we will make sure that the postings branches in the Army Personnel Centre are aware of the decision so that they can inform all parents due to be posted to the area that SCE secondary education will not be available in RMC beyond July 2013, thereby allowing parents to make early informed choices about postings and childrens' education. Royal Signals soldiers provide the largest number of children and the Signals Officer in Chief (Army) has agreed with the decision to close Windsor School in 2013, and he will take steps to minimise the number of secondary aged dependants posted to Elmpt during the period in question.

Q20. What will happen to families that do not want to send children to boarding school ?

A. For all pupils there will be options that do not entail boarding. For the Elmpt based units this will be through attending the International School at Duisburg.

Q21. We understand that changes in the Law will mean that from 2013 children will have to be in some form of education or training to age 17; what arrangements will there be in Elmpt for 16-17 year old children and in particular those who do not want to remain in school ?

A. In line with the Government's 14-19 Agenda, from 2013 children must be in some form of education or training to age 17; parents will have a legal responsibility to ensure this, which will be monitored by the Children and Young People's Board. Schooling options have been explained above, but parents must be aware that there will be only limited opportunities for vocational training in Elmpt from 2013 for children who wish to follow that course. Parents are advised to contact SCE (through Windsor School) or CEAS to ensure that they are able to make an informed decision.

Q22. Will there be any financial help for parents who decide to board their children ?

A. The MOD offers Continuity of Education Allowance for military personnel wishing to send their children to boarding school in UK within certain eligibility criteria, and this will remain unchanged. For those parents who choose to board their children at an SCE school in Germany where education is provided free of charge there will be no additional financial assistance; weekly transport to and from the chosen school will be provided at no cost to parents.

Q23. If children have to board in Germany, how will they be transported to school ?

A. The Garrison Transport Officer will provide transport to and from an SCE boarding school in Germany. It is too soon to say exactly how this will be provided; transport home will be provided on a Friday afternoon, while transport from home to school may be on a Monday morning or on a Sunday evening.

Q24. And what about transport to International Schools ?

A. This will also be provided free of charge locally in the same way that Elmpt based pupils are currently transported to and from Windsor School each day.

Q25. What uniform requirements are there for the International Schools ?

A. This varies with each school, but is in line with the current uniform requirements at Windsor.

Q26. What plans are there for Brüggem School in Elmpt and Andrew Humphrey School in Wildenrath ?

A. Current plans are that Brüggem School and Andrew Humphrey School will continue to operate as Primary Schools unchanged until 7 and 16 Sig Regts return to UK in 2015. The majority of children from the two Signal Regiments are under 11 and so will be unaffected by the closure of Windsor School, though clearly parents of children reaching secondary age will have to decide which secondary school option is best for their child.

Q27. What about children with parents based in Ayrshire Bks Mönchengladbach ?

A. The number of parents with children is likely to be quite small by 2013, and in the same way as other affected parents, they will have to decide on another schooling option. Primary aged and KS1 pupils will be able to attend SCE schools in Brüggem or Wildenrath from 2013 to 2015, but on the closure of Elmpt in 2015 SCE education will no longer be available. Ayrshire Bks(S) will become an ISODET from 2015, and units expected to be based there are already aware of the absence of SCE education opportunities.

Q28. What about the Primary and Key Stage 1 schools remaining in JHQ ?

A. Primary education will be available in the RMC as long as the population requires it, and until summer 2013 when relocations from the RMC will be largely complete. From 2013 to 2015 primary education will be provided in Rhine Garrison at Brüggem or Wildenrath. On current plans after 2015 there will be no SCE schooling available in Rhine Garrison.

Q29. Who can advise me about the best options for my children ?

A. This is an important point, as all children will have particular needs and wishes that this Q&A cannot answer. We would advise that the first point of contact should be through children's current SCE school and for those moving up to secondary school from Windsor School. Advice is available from 3 main sources: from SCE through children's current schools and from Windsor School that will continue to recommend the most appropriate courses; from the MOD's Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS); and the Army Families Federation (AFF) Education Specialists who can research specific questions. Initial contact details are:

- Windsor School Mil: 94872 2412; Civ: 02161 4722412
- CEAS HQ UK Mil: 94344 8244; Civ: UK 01980 618244; Email: enquiries@ceas.detsa.co.uk.
- CEAS Parent Partnership Officer Germany(JHQ) Mil: 94872 6426; Civ: 02161 4726426
- AFF Germany Mil: 94882 3180; Civ: 05221 9953180; Email: germany@aff.org.uk

Q30. Have the Education authorities in Stafford been made aware of the extra pupils that will move when 7 and 16 Sig Regts move to UK and when this will happens will there be sufficient places for our children ?

A. This is some way off, but our experience of the move of HQ ARRC personnel to Innsworth has been that the UK Education authorities have reacted positively to the relocation of units to UK, and that the numbers likely to move will not cause a major problem provided that the authorities

are warned in advance. The BORONA Programme Team is already engaged with the authorities in Stafford and over the next four years will develop the detail of future education provision.

Q31. Will personnel with secondary aged children not be allowed to serve in 7 and 16 Signal Regts ?

A. That will not be the case, as we do not wish to disadvantage either soldiers or their children. Signal Officer in Chief (Army) will restrict the number of secondary aged pupils posted to Elmpt, but personnel with secondary aged children will still be able to serve in Elmpt if there are career implications and that is their wish, though they will understand the secondary education options that will be available.

Q32. What arrangements are being made for children with disability and special needs ?

A. There will be only limited facilities in the future and each case will need to be considered separately to account for the specific needs of the child. Children with disability and special needs should be registered with the Children's Education Advisory Service at HQ Land Forces (Mil: 94344 8244; Civ: 01980 618244; e-mail: enquiries@ceas.detsa.co.uk. or on DII at LF-CEAS-&GROUP@mod.uk) in accordance with JSP 820 and AGAI 108. Where the requirement exists, parents are strongly advised to register as above in order that the needs of the child are fully met.

Q33. Where can I find more information about boarding school options ?

A. There are a number of sources of information; from the CEAS at HQ Land Forces Mil: 94344 8244; Civ: UK 01980 618244; email: www.mod.uk/ceas, and from the Army Families Federation website: www.aff.org.uk. The AFF site has a series of links to other sources of information and contact details for Lucy Park the AFF's Education, Childcare and Adult Learning Specialist.