

12. Education

All requests for Diplomatic/Consular/Official staff assigned in New Zealand, and their officially recognised dependants, to attend an educational institution in New Zealand should be directed to Protocol Division in the first instance, using an MFA 605 form.

12.1 Entry into State and Private Primary and Secondary Schools

In New Zealand there are state and private school systems. Individuals are free to choose which system they wish to use. The Education Act 1989 provides for free enrolment and education at state primary and secondary schools for New Zealand children between the ages of 5 and 19. Attendance is compulsory from 6 years of age until the age of 16 years. The majority of children start formal schooling at age 5.

Access conditions to schools in New Zealand for the dependants of Diplomatic/Consular/Official staff are explained in more detail below. Conditions for private schools, including tuition fees and other details, are determined by each school and may be discussed directly with the administrations of the schools.

12.2 Domestic Student Status

In normal circumstances International students who wish to study in New Zealand, at state or private institutions, must pay international student fees.

However, Diplomatic/Consular/Official staff, and their officially recognised dependants (including spouses, and dependants up to the age of 21 years) may apply to attend any institution on the same basis as New Zealanders, by being granted "Domestic Student Status".

The Ministry of Education has instructed educational institutions that they may enrol a student under the Domestic Student Status provisions applying to Diplomatic/Consular/Official staff, and their officially recognised dependants, only once they have sighted a letter from Protocol Division confirming that the applicant is entitled to Domestic Student Status. To obtain this letter, Diplomatic/Consular/Official staff should apply to Protocol Division, using form MFA 605.

To be granted Domestic Student Status, the Diplomatic/Consular/Official staff, and their officially recognised dependants should note schooling and tertiary study must be undertaken in the same city where the principal officer resides. Exceptional circumstances maybe granted and will be reviewed by Protocol Division upon submission of the MFA 605.

Domestic Student Status must be re-confirmed for each year of study, by using form MFA 605. This should be done before the start of the school/academic year, in order to confirm continued eligibility for that year.

12.3 School Zoning

In many areas of New Zealand, schools are bound by zoning rules. This means that many schools are able to accept only children who reside within the school's designated residential zone. No exceptions to these zoning rules are made for Diplomatic/Consular/Official staff and MFAT cannot intervene.

12.4 Enrolment at Tertiary Institutions

In addition to the above provisions, enrolment at a tertiary educational institution in New Zealand is subject to the standard entry requirements of each institution. Diplomatic/Consular/Official staff themselves are not permitted to enrol in full-time courses of study.

Should a Diplomatic/Consular/Official staff member wish to undertake study, this is restricted to part-time study only and the part-time study should relate to their work. Part-time study is defined as approximately 15 hours per week.

12.5 Dependants 21 Years of Age and Over

Dependants of Diplomatic/Consular/Official staff, apart from spouses, who are 21 years of age or over are not eligible for Domestic Student Status.

A dependant who turns 21 years of age during the course of study in New Zealand will be entitled to Domestic Student Status for the remainder of the calendar year in which they turn 21. Thereafter, they must pay full foreign student fees for their ongoing study.

Where a dependant of a Diplomatic/Consular/Official staff member turns 21 years of age during a course of study, and will therefore lose their Domestic Student Status at the end of that calendar year, officers are urged to discuss this with the tertiary institution concerned, before undertaking that course of study so as to clarify what the liabilities for full international student fees will be once Domestic Student Status ends.

12.6 Study Following an Officer's Departure

Where a dependant of a Diplomatic/Consular/Official staff member wishes to remain in New Zealand to continue study following the completion or termination of the officer's assignment, Protocol Division must be informed in the first instance. Persons in these circumstances will retain their Domestic Student Status for the remainder of the calendar year in which the officer's assignment is completed or terminated. Officers are urged to discuss this with the tertiary institution concerned so as to clarify what the liabilities for full international student fees will be once Domestic Student Status ends.

12.7 Student Visas

In addition to the above requirements, a dependant of a Diplomatic/Consular/Official staff member who wishes to remain in New Zealand to continue studies beyond the termination or completion of the officer's assignment must apply, at least one month prior to the officer's departure, for a student visa. Applications for student visas must be made directly to Immigration New Zealand. Standard student and immigration fees will be payable.

12.8 Student Loans

New Zealand Government student loans are not available to Diplomatic/Consular/Official staff or their dependants.

* * *