

Forces students get tripled holding time

Families with an armed forces parent will be able to reserve a school place for 18 weeks in the capital under new plans to be considered by councillors.

It marks a change from existing rules, which allows parents to reserve a school place for six weeks if they are able to provide evidence that they will be transferred to the city.

The council would also be able to amend this amount of time at its own discretion on a case by case basis.

Edinburgh Council is signed on to the Armed Forces Covenant, which recommends that councils make accommodations for service personnel when delivering services.

In England and Wales, councils have a statutory requirement to reserve places in schools for forces families when school rolls allow it.

However, in Scotland, those rules do not apply, with decisions around holding school places for service families being at the discretion of each local authority.

The plans come as part of a wider schools admissions policy, which also includes an amendment to the rules for applying to council Catholic schools.

At present, the rules specify that baptised Roman Catholics will be prioritised for Catholic schools in their catchment

area, and prioritised for other Catholic schools in the city if their catchment school is full.

If families of baptised Roman Catholics turn down a place at a non-catchment Catholic school, or if there is not space for a non-baptised pupil at their catchment RC school, they will be placed in the non-denominational school in their catchment area.

Officers are proposing to clarify these rules to say that they specifically apply to students entering P1 and S1.

No changes are being proposed to the rest of the council's rules around school admission.

By Joseph Sullivan Local Democracy Reporter