

**Vanguard Learning Trust**



*As a group of local primary and secondary schools, Vanguard Learning Trust’s mission is to serve its local community by providing outstanding, inclusive education. We have a collective purpose and responsibility to provide effective teaching, through a curriculum based on equality of opportunity and entitlement that allows our students to shine both in and out of the classroom. Each school in the Trust has its own ethos, which also complements the Trust’s vision and values, and the common aspiration that all students can achieve their potential.*

**Service Pupil Premium Policy  
February 2025**

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

The Department for Education (DfE) introduced the Service Pupil Premium (SPP) in April 2011 to acknowledge the unique challenges faced by children from service families. This initiative aligns with the commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant. State-funded schools, academies, and free schools in England with service children from Reception to Year 11 are eligible to receive SPP funding, which is intended to provide additional support for these children.

### **1.2 School Commitment**

At Hermitage Primary School, our mission is to ensure that no child is disadvantaged in their education. We focus on fostering the well-being of service children to enable them to excel both socially and academically, preparing them for the next stages of their learning journey.

### **1.3 Eligibility and Funding**

Pupils in state-funded schools in England receive service pupil premium funding at a rate of:

- £320 per eligible pupil for 2022-2023
- £335 per eligible pupil for 2023-2024
- £340 per eligible pupil for 2024-2025

Eligibility criteria include:

- One or both parents serving in the regular armed forces, including full-time reserve service and armed forces of another nation stationed in England.
- Pupils previously recorded as a 'service child' in a school census since 2016.
- Children of a parent who died while serving in the armed forces and is receiving a pension under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or War Pensions Scheme.

The funding primarily supports pastoral care but may also enhance academic progress when deemed necessary.

### **1.4 Ever 6 Service Child Measure**

The SPP extends to pupils who have been flagged as a service child in any school census since 2016. Ex-service personnel should inform the school if they left the armed forces within the last six years. This measure applies even in cases of divorce, separation, or parental death in service.

## **2. Policy**

### **2.1 Purpose of SPP**

SPP is used to provide pastoral support during challenging times and to mitigate the effects of family mobility or parental deployment. Definitions include:

- Exercise: A short-term period (up to a month) away from home.
- Mobility: Relocation within the UK or overseas due to a service posting.
- Deployment: A longer absence (6-9 months, up to a year with pre-deployment training) due to duty, training, or exercises.

### **2.2 Support Strategies**

The school has flexibility in using SPP to address specific needs, including:

- Pastoral support (e.g., counselling, nurture groups)
- Improved communication (e.g., Zoom clubs for deployed parents)
- Staffing support (e.g., additional staff hours for transition periods)
- Military-specific roles (e.g., Forces Liaison Officers, Mobility Coordinators)

### 2.3 Restrictions on SPP Usage

SPP cannot subsidize routine school activities (e.g., general school trips, music lessons). However, military-specific trips to enhance service children's sense of belonging and community may be funded. Schools are accountable for their spending through Ofsted inspections, focusing on progress and attainment.

## 3. Policy in Practice

3.1 Listed below are some support strategies that may be adopted at Hermitage Primary School if we feel, alongside the children's parents, that these may benefit the development of each child in receipt of SPP:

#### Transition-In: This is Me

New students complete a 'This is Me' booklet in one-on-one or small group sessions to share personal details, interests, and family situations to help them settle in quickly.

#### Buddy System: Military Mates

Children are paired with fellow service children within their phase to foster friendships and ease the transition into school life.

#### Memory Makers: Scrapbook Stories

During extended deployments, children create scrapbooks and diaries documenting their experiences to share with their parents upon their return.

#### Staff Mentor: Military Mentor

Each service child is paired with a staff mentor with a military background, providing a trusted adult for regular check-ins and support.

#### Transition-Out: Passport

Upon notification of a family's departure, children complete a passport-style memory book to help them transition to their next school.

## 4. Expectations

### 4.1 Staff Expectations

Staff are expected to:

- Provide understanding and support to service families.
- Ensure curriculum content is sensitive to service-related experiences.
- Maintain regular communication with parents regarding pastoral support and any concerns.

### 4.2 Parental Expectations

Service families should:

- Keep the school informed of mobility or deployment updates.
- Work collaboratively with the school to support their child's well-being.

### 4.3 Pupil Expectations

Service children are encouraged to:

- Engage openly with staff and mentors.
- Participate in school support strategies to express and manage their emotions.

### 4.4 Community Engagement

The school engages with the broader community through initiatives such as:

- Raising funds for the Poppy Appeal.
- Inviting serving and veteran military personnel to speak in classes.
- Commemorating key military anniversaries like Remembrance Day and VE Day.

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to meet the needs of our service families effectively.

## 5. Resources

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-service-pupil-premium/service-pupil-premium-what-you-need-to-know>

<https://www.littletroopers.net/little-troopers-at-school/>

<https://www.readingforce.org.uk/>

<https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/things-to-do/campaigns-policy-and-research/best-practice-guides/support-for-service-children>

<https://aff.org.uk/advice/education-childcare/primary-secondary/>

## **Approval / Revision History**

<b>Revision date</b>	<b>By</b>	<b>Summary of Changes Made</b>
February 2023	Georgia Harling	Update to VLT policy template, as well as changed from Guidance and Expectations to an actual policy.
February 2025	Georgia Harling	Updated to reflect 2024-2025 monetary updates