

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 2023

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1. Introduction

1.1

The Department for Education (DfE) introduced the Service pupil premium (SPP) in April 2011 in recognition of the specific challenges children from service families' face and as part of the commitment to delivering the armed forces covenant. State schools, academies and free schools in England, which have children of service families in school years Reception to Year 11, can receive the SPP funding. It is designed to assist the school in providing the additional support that these children may need.

1.2

At Hermitage Primary School, our aim is to ensure that no child is disadvantaged at school in any way. Our focus with service children is to nurture their well-being to ensure that they achieve excellent outcomes both socially and academically so that they are well equipped to leave ready for the next stage of their learning.

1.3

Pupils in state-funded schools in England attract service pupil premium funding, at the rate of £320 per eligible pupil in 2022 to 2023, and £335 per eligible pupil in 2023 to 2024, if they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- one of their parents is serving in the regular armed forces (including pupils with a parent who is on full commitment as part of the full-time reserve service, and also pupils whose parent is serving in the armed forces of another nation and is formally stationed in England) – and they are recorded in the October school census as being a 'service child'
- they have previously been registered as a 'service child' in a school census since 2016 (see 1.4 below)
- one of their parents died while serving in the armed forces, and the pupil receives a pension under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or the War Pensions Scheme

This funding is primarily to help with pastoral support. It can also be used to help improve the academic progress of eligible pupils if the school deems this to be a priority.

1.4

DfE's ever 6 service child measure - The premium was extended, such that any pupil in reception to year 11, who has been flagged as a service child since the 2016 autumn school census, will continue to receive the premium (Ever 6 service child). Please see the ESFA's pupil premium grant guidance for more information. Ex-service personnel should tell the school if they left the armed forces within the last 6 years. Under the DfE's ever measure, schools will continue to receive SPP for up to 6 years for children whose parent(s) left the armed forces, provided the children were recorded as service children in a school census from 2016 onwards (prior to their parent(s) leaving the forces). The ever measure also applies when service parents' divorce or separate or when a service parent dies in service.

2. Policy

2.1

The purpose of SPP is so that as a school, we can offer mainly pastoral support during challenging times and to help mitigate the negative impact on service children of family mobility or parental deployment.

Being on exercise is a short term period (roughly up to a month away).

Mobility is when a service family is posted from one location to another, including overseas and within the UK.

Deployment is when a service person is serving away from home for a period of time. This could be a 6 to 9-month tour of duty (up to a year including pre-deployment training), a training course or an exercise which could last for a few weeks.

2.2

In order to support the pastoral needs of service children, we have the flexibility over how we use the SPP, as we are best placed to understand and respond to the specific needs of those pupils for whom the funding has been allocated. The funding can be spent on providing a variety of means of support, including counselling provision, nurture groups etc.

It may be appropriate that we also consider how to improve the level of and means of communication between the child and their deployed parents. Where necessary and possible, we may arrange 'zoom time' clubs. In addition, staff hours may be required to support the needs of service children when they join a new school as a result of a posting or when a parent is deployed, and these hours could be funded by the SPP.

Within schools which experience high levels of service pupil mobility, Mobility co-ordinators, Forces liaison officers, Parent support advisors etc. have been employed. These posts tend to work closely with the pupils and families when they move into the area or are due to leave. Such staff can also support pupils and families where a parent is deployed.

2.3

SPP should not be used to subsidise routine school activity (trips, music lessons etc.). Schools may choose to fund school trips just for service children, to help them enjoy their time at school and build a sense of a wider community and understanding of the role their service parent plays (e.g. with military specific trips). This is to help them cope with the potential strains of service life.

Schools are held to account for the spending of this funding through the focus in Ofsted inspections on the progress and attainment of their wider PP eligible pupil cohort.

3. Policy in Practise

3.1

What Service Pupil's experience at Hermitage Primary School:

Transition-In – This is Me!

Children who are new to Hermitage will have either 1:1 or small group sessions to create a 'This is me' booklet. This will detail who they are and what information they would like to share with us to ensure that we as staff get to know the child. This will allow us to discover their likes and dislikes as well as their family situations so the child feels settled as soon as possible.

Buddy system – Military Mates

Children will be paired with a fellow service child (where possible) within their phase (cross-phase if appropriate). This will allow the children to transition into the Hermitage family life and get to know some friendly faces.

Memory Makers – Scrapbook Stories

During longer deployments, children will get the opportunity to develop scrapbooks and diaries that they can show their parents on their return, highlighting their achievements and day to day school life.

Staff Mentor – Military Mentor

Children will be paired with a member of staff who has a military background. This allows the children to recognise that they have an adult to go to in school should they need to discuss any issues they are having. The mentor is responsible for checking in with the pupil regularly to ensure they feel comfortable, safe and welcome.

Transition out – Passport

On notification of a service families' departure, teaching staff will arrange for children to complete a passport style memory book. This will help the child transition to their new school with something they can share wherever they go next.

4. Expectations

4.1

Expectations of staff:

At Hermitage, we expect staff to support our service families. We know that they will be mindful of the home situation in which our pupils are living and the consequences this may present itself with. As a school, we endeavour to ensure that themes and material that are explored within class are sensitive to those of a service background. We will communicate regularly with parents, ensuring that they are aware of pastoral support that is in place as well as any behavioural changes or dialogue of particular importance.

4.2

Expectations of parents:

We expect that service families will maintain good communication with Hermitage. They are expected to keep us abreast of any developments of deployment or mobility as a matter of high importance. This will enable the school to put the essential provisions in place quickly.

4.3

Expectations of pupils:

We expect our children to be open with staff, working alongside mentors and peers to identify and articulate their emotions and experiences. They will engage with strategies that school and home put in place to support them through the what can be more challenging times.

4.4

Expectations of community:

We raise money for the Poppy Appeal annually by having these available for sale within the school. Members of the service community, both serving and veterans, are invited into school to speak to classes sharing their knowledge and experience. We acknowledge memorable dates such as Remembrance Day, VE day and other significant anniversaries.

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

Revision date	By	Summary of Changes Made
20 th February 2023	Georgia Harling	Update to VLT policy template, as well as changed from Guidance and Expectations to an actual policy.