

Robert Wilkinson Primary Academy

Supporting Service Pupils and their Families

Here at Robert Wilkinson we recognise that Service pupils and their families face unique challenges: frequent moves; changes in home, school and friends; and long periods of separation from loved ones. This can mean that at times some pupils and their families require additional support. We appreciate the unsettled nature of Service life, particularly with regard to your child's education.

Our focus is to provide a smooth transition of Service children at any time during the school year. To aid this process we have implemented an induction programme ensuring close liaison between you as parent(s) and the school staff who will be directly responsible for your child's education and welfare.

Our Aims

- To help pupils and parents feel welcomed, valued and secure in their new school and environment
- To understand the impact that military lifestyle has on you as a family and never underestimate the effect of frequent changes on your home, family, work and your child's education
- To provide opportunities for you to express your expectations and potential concerns for your child
- To be sensitive to your individual needs
- To provide the necessary support to your child and family to facilitate a smooth transition when moving on from Robert Wilkinson
- To provide additional support to your child during times of mobilisation and deployment
- To familiarise your child with the school environment, expectations and routines quickly so that they can integrate as seamlessly as possible

How will we support Service pupils and families moving into our school?

- We encourage regular contact and communication during the transition process and will assist where required. This may be, for example, filling out forms or dealing with City of York Council
- We will liaise actively with the Armed Forces welfare personnel and the local authority to encourage communication
- We will provide new pupils and their families with personal support when they arrive at Robert Wilkinson, both in school and the wider community as required
- We will ensure transfer records received are complete and chase missing information if required
- We encourage children to bring examples of their work from their previous school. Our interest in what they have done previously helps staff/pupil interaction, is particularly reassuring for children
- On admission, we will discuss how to ensure smooth transition and provide opportunities to outline expectations and potential concerns
- We will provide a tour around the school and meet the new class teacher

How will we support Service pupils and families whilst they are at Robert Wilkinson?

- Our pastoral lead practitioner works at Robert Wilkinson to support all our children. We also employ a Service Family Champion who works directly with the children of service families for one afternoon a week. We also have access to Service Family Liaison Officer who works with military families who feel they would benefit from support and acts as a bridge between the school and the Forces. The Liaison Officer offers neutral, confidential support and a listening ear outside the chain of command if you have concerns about your child, or need advice or guidance.
- Staff will meet with your child on a regular basis over the first few weeks to ensure that they are settling and happy. We will provide any additional support they require to facilitate them settling into the school and its routine; progress will be reviewed and reported back to you after the first few weeks. We have an 'open door' policy for all parents, so please do not hesitate to speak to your child's teacher at any time if you have any concerns or queries.
- As a matter of priority, we will work with your child to identify any gaps in their education. If required, your child will receive additional support to address any areas of need. Any assessments will be handled sensitively to ensure that your child does not have a stressful start to their new school
- The welfare of your child is of utmost importance to us and we have staff who are fully trained to provide social and emotional support to vulnerable children
- We encourage Service parents to register with The Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) (explained at Appendix A) if your child has Special Educational Needs. We will work efficiently and quickly to meet the SEND of Service children, under the direction of the school's Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator (SENDCO).
- During periods of transition and deployment a designated member of staff will be on hand to work with your child (if required and after consultation with you as parents). The aim is to provide your child with a safe and secure environment enabling them to express any concerns, or simply have 'reflection time' to mitigate the effects of mobilisation.
- During periods of deployment, we will provide an environment so that your child can communicate with absent parents, for example, using email, writing e-blueys or by making and sending arts/craft items, greeting cards and other items

How do we use the Service Pupil Premium to support Service pupils?

Robert Wilkinson uses Service Pupil Premium in a variety of ways to support the pastoral care of children, the transition to/from different schools and other issues associated with Service life.

We have a Pastoral Lead worker who works with children providing social and emotional support for vulnerable children and/or children in receipt of Pupil Premium/Service Pupil Premium.

We run lunchtime groups and nurture groups for specific pupils, as well as providing learning support where needed.

We arrange visits for our Service children to participate in celebratory and commemorative events at Ripon Cathedral and York Minster.

* Please see Appendix B for further details about Service Pupil Premium

How will we support Service pupils and families moving out of our school?

- We encourage regular contact and communication during the transition process and will assist where required
- We will liaise with your child's new school to ensure that all requirements for the transition are met
- We will ensure that your child's school records are up-to-date and of a high standard
- When we are notified that your child is moving onto another school, we will communicate directly with the school and send their records onto their new school.
- Prior to moving on from Robert Wilkinson, we will work with your child to create a 'Memories' book to take with them to their new school. We aim to capture their time spent at our school and look, for example, at the new school, area or country.

How will we facilitate the effective communication between the Armed Forces and school?

We understand the importance of effective communication between the Armed Forces and our school. The Service Families Liaison Officer the crucial link between school, Service families, the Armed Forces and the wider community.

Key contacts

Debi Henson (Service Family Champion): mrshenson@robwilk.co.uk Tel: 01904 555160

Helen Smith (School Office Manager): slt@york.gov.uk Tel: 01904 555160

Rebekah Dixon (Service Families Liaison Officer): rebekah.dixon@york.gov.uk Tel: 01904 555421

Army Welfare Service, York Garrison: Tel: 01904 882053

HIVE, Imphal Barracks, York: Tel 01904 676234

CEAS Helpline: enquiries@ceas.uk.com Tel: 01980 618244 (Military 94344 8244)

Capt. MJ Adair (Unit Welfare Officer)

Appendices

Appendix A

The CEAS (Children's Education Advisory Service) is a tri-service organisation funded by the Ministry of Defence (MOD). It was established to provide information and advice, to all service families (and eligible MOD civilians), about access to educational provision and services available to children, in the UK and around the world.

CEAS offer a registration service for Service children with special educational needs, which enables us to support you in securing the right educational provision for them.

Further information on the CEAS can be found online: www.gov.uk/childrens-education-advisory-service

Appendix B

What is the Service Pupil Premium?

The Department for Education 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 and is currently worth £300 per service child who meets the eligibility criteria.

Eligibility criteria

Pupils attract the SPP if they meet the following criteria:

- one of their parents is serving in the regular armed forces
- they have been registered as a 'service child' in the school census at any point since 2011, see footnote ¹
- one of their parents died whilst serving in the armed forces and the pupil receives a pension under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or the War Pensions Scheme
- pupils with a parent who is on full commitment as part of the full time reserve service are classed as service children.

The purpose of the Service Pupil Premium

Eligible schools receive the SPP so that they can **offer mainly pastoral support** during challenging times and to help mitigate the negative impact on service children of family mobility or parental deployment.

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, a training course or an exercise which could last for a few weeks.

How Service Pupil Premium differs from the Pupil Premium

The SPP is there for schools to provide mainly pastoral support for service children, whereas the Pupil Premium was introduced to raise attainment and accelerate progress within disadvantaged groups.

Schools should not combine SPP with the main Pupil Premium funding and the spending of each premium should be accounted for separately.

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

Schools might also consider how to improve the level of and means of communication between the child and their deployed parents. Some schools have introduced 'Skype time' clubs, whilst other schools have helped children to develop scrapbooks and diaries that they can show their parents on their return, highlighting their achievements and day to day school life. 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 Service Pupil Premium.

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.

SPP should not be used to subsidise routine school activity (trips, music lessons etc.), however, 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) to help them cope with the potential strains of service life.

1. Ever 5 service child measure. The premium was extended in 2015/16, such that any pupil in Reception to Year 11, who has been flagged as a service child since the January 2011 census, will continue to receive the premium (Ever 5 service child).