

# Service Pupil intervention & Support

## What is a Service Child?

A Service Child is a child that has a parent, or step parent, who is serving, or has recently served, within the Military Services.

There is a large diversity of military services within the local area; we have children from each community. A complex set of unique circumstances are often involved when dealing with a 'service child' and this results in a challenge when defining them as a group. In addition, due to the need for confidentiality, we are unable to share specific details of parent's military links or specifics about deployments. Finally, retirement from the Services does not end a child's entitlement to Service Child status; they remain classed as such for 6 years. Therefore if they are a service child when they enter Year 7 they generally remain a Service Child throughout their time here.

## How many Service students do we have?

We have around 30-40 in each year group. They are therefore a substantial sub group.

## What is the Service Child coordinator's role?

- To work with students & families ensuring that external impacts, from parent's employment choices, on their well-being, welfare and academic development, are mitigated as best as they can be.
- Primary focus is on the pastoral and welfare needs of the students plus that of their families too.
- As pastoral and academic lives of students are intertwined, there is a need to support Heads of Year with their understanding of the external impacts on the students, their progress and performance.
- To produce reports for the DFE, external agencies and the MOD as requested.

This work has identified that many of the children are outstanding students despite their complex situations. However, there is always a need for strategies to address where this is not the case. There are also some students who are greatly impacted by their parent's employment and substantial support is needed and given.

## Who do we work with?

We work with the students, their families and a number of external agencies, including military welfare organisations and the military themselves. We work closely with the national organisation MKC Heroes (a group developed by students from across the City of Plymouth). We were the first Secondary School within this group – and are often used as an exemplar school by Plymouth City Council as well as military welfare groups across the country. The students are proud of this work.

## How is this funded?

Service Pupil Premium money has been enhanced through successful bid applications made to funding bodies, including the MOD.

## Why do we need to work with service children?

The Government has signed a Covenant with the Military that says they will support our Service personnel and their families in all aspects of life.

## What does Heroes in Plymstock School do?

We have a support package including mentoring, fundraising opportunities, rewards and challenges. The motivation behind the support package has come from students and parents.

We have built a reading support programme alongside Reading Force (a military reading organisation). This KS3 venture always has good student engagement.

Other key activities include:

- Mentor Training. This increases our ability to support each other.
- We raise money for our chosen military charities and attend local events.
- Weekly support sessions are run by student mentors with support from outside agencies.

### **What do the students want you to know?**

“We do not want to be treated differently. We just want people to know and try to understand that sometimes we struggle”

“My dad is away for all the family birthdays this year and Christmas. We miss him. We don't get to talk to him much because he is off radar most of the time. I miss him most when I argue with mum or get stuck on my homework.”

“My dad is away every Sunday to Friday night. When he is here I want to spend time with him so sometimes I don't get my homework done if it is set on a Friday and due in on a Monday. I wish teachers understood this.”

“My dad helps me with my homework so when he is away I find it hard to keep up. Mum is sometimes too busy with my brothers to help me.”

“I often worry about dad being deployed. When he was away last time I was very scared he would not come home.”

“When dad is away my family shrinks. I don't like it. But I get used to it. When dad comes home he changes things. I don't like that either.”

### **How can you help me to help the young people?**

Always be aware of the service children in your teaching groups – use SIMS to check this.

Please be mindful of how your curriculum might impact service children in your teaching group. Check the service child make up of your class; if in doubt of appropriateness please speak with TJW.

If you are made aware of information regarding deployments or concerns from home please let TJW know as that enables appropriate support to be made available.

There is no clear single strategy to use with a Service Child – each child is an individual – and their situation may change, sometimes at short notice, so please ask TJW about any information held that may help you manage them in your classroom.

Please do not ask students about their service status, or their home situation.

If a student is behaving differently to their normal please let TJW know.

Most of the students like to be treated as everyone else. For many being busy is good and it should be 'business as usual' in school as we are often a place of continuity when home life rarely is.

Being a service child is not a justification of poor behaviour and the rules apply to them as they do with all students, but please do consider their external impacts.

**Please do contact TJW if you have any concerns or questions. [twilkins@plymstockschool.org.uk](mailto:twilkins@plymstockschool.org.uk)**