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Guidance

The Service Pupil Premium: what you need to know

Updated 23 July 2018

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Service personnel with children in state schools in England only have until 17 January 2019 to notify schools of their children's eligibility for the Service Pupil Premium (SPP).

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.

What could the Service Pupil Premium be used for?

Please see separate guidance in the 'Service Pupil Premium: examples of best practice (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/579866/20161221-DCYP_SPP_booklet_final_V3.pdf)' document.

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.

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 Pupil Premium eligible pupil cohort.

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). 