



Ministry
of Defence



Department
for Education

Guidance

Service Pupil Premium: what you need to know

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Applies to England

Publication for Scotland

[\(https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/\)](https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/)

Publication for Wales

[\(https://www.sscecymru.co.uk/schoolsandlocalauthorities/funding/default.htm#\)](https://www.sscecymru.co.uk/schoolsandlocalauthorities/funding/default.htm#)

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Service personnel with children in state schools in England (reception-age to Year 11) should notify schools of their children's service status so they are recorded before the autumn census (first Thursday in October) to qualify for Service Pupil Premium (SPP).

What is Service Pupil Premium?

The Department for Education (DfE) introduced 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](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-covenant-supporting-information) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-covenant-supporting-information>).

State schools, academies and free schools in England with children of service families (reception-age to Year 11) are eligible for SPP funding. SPP helps the school give additional support that the service child may need. It is currently worth £340 per service child.

Eligibility criteria

Pupils are eligible for SPP if they meet one 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)
- they have been registered as a 'service child' on a school census in the past 6 years (see below the 'DfE's ever 6 service child measure')
- 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
- one of their parents is in the armed forces of another nation and is stationed in England

DfE's ever 6 service child measure

The premium was extended so that any pupil in reception to Year 11 who has been flagged as a service child in the last 6 years will continue to

receive the premium.

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 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.

Please see the [ESFA's pre-16 schools funding guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authorities-pre-16-schools-funding) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authorities-pre-16-schools-funding>) for more information.

Purpose of the SPP

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

- Family mobility: when a service person is posted from one location to another, including overseas and within the UK, resulting in separation from their family or moving of the family home.
- Separation: occurs when a service person is assigned to an unaccompanied location, or the family choose to remain at home when the service person is deployed, resulting in their weekly/monthly commutes home and/or extended periods away.
- Parental deployment: 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 SPP differs from the Pupil Premium (PP)

SPP helps schools provide mainly pastoral support for service children. The Pupil Premium (PP) was introduced to raise attainment and accelerate progress within disadvantaged groups.

Schools should not combine SPP with PP funding: the spending of each premium should be accounted for separately, but schools can claim for

both SPP and PP for the same child if they are eligible for both.

What SPP is used for

For examples of what schools are doing with SPP, visit: [Service pupil premium: examples of best practice](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-service-pupil-premium/service-pupil-premium-examples-of-best-practice) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-service-pupil-premium/service-pupil-premium-examples-of-best-practice>).

Schools have flexibility over how they use the SPP, as they are best placed to understand and respond to the specific needs of their pupil the funding has been allocated to.

The funding could be spent on:

- support, including counselling
- clubs, e.g. 'skype time,' to help to improve means of communication between the child and their deployed parent(s)
- helping children to develop scrapbooks and diaries, highlighting their achievements and daily school life
- nurture groups
- after-school activities that support the specific needs of armed forces children, e.g. resilience-building out-of-hours childcare for service children which is supported by the [Wraparound Childcare Scheme](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/childcare-for-service-children) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/childcare-for-service-children>)

SPP should not be used to subsidise routine school activity, e.g. trips and music lessons. However schools may choose to fund school trips just for service children to help them build a sense of wider community, understand the role their service parent plays (e.g. with military-specific trips) and help them cope with the potential strains of armed forces family life.

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

Additional roles may be required to support the needs of service children when they join a new school, including:

- mobility coordinators - for schools with high levels of service pupil mobility
- forces liaison officers
- parent support advisers

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