

St Thomas à Becket Primary School – Supporting Service Families Strategy

Vision Statement

At St Thomas à Becket Primary School, we recognise the unique contributions and experiences of children from service families. We are committed to creating an inclusive, understanding, and nurturing environment that supports service pupils socially, emotionally, and academically. Through tailored support, celebration, and strong relationships with families, we aim to help every service child thrive and feel a strong sense of belonging.

Objectives

- To ensure service pupils feel valued, supported, and connected within the school community.
- To raise awareness and appreciation of service life across the school.
- To provide emotional support and practical strategies for children during times of deployment, transition, or change.
- To celebrate the identity and resilience of our service children throughout the year.

Key Initiatives

1. Festival of Friends Participation

We proudly take part in Wiltshire Council's Festival of Friends, giving service children a chance to connect with peers from across the county. This provides training to staff as well as opportunities for children.

2. Service Pupil Group

We run a dedicated Service Pupil Group, which meets half-termly and is supported by a named staff member and/or a governor with responsibility for service children. Activities include circle time for sharing experiences and emotions, peer-led support and games to build connection and input into school events and activities relevant to service life.

3. Deployment Support: Wristbands and Comfort Teddies

When a parent or carer is deployed or away on extended training, children are offered a 'camo' wristband to wear as a symbol of connection and strength. They may choose a comfort teddy or soft item to keep at school or home. Staff are discreetly informed so they can offer additional emotional support.

4. Celebratory Events

Each April, we celebrate the Month of the Military Child, recognising the strength and resilience of our service children. We also commemorate Armed Forces Day in June.

5. Transition and Mobility Support

We understand the impact of frequent moves on service children. New pupils are welcomed with a tailored induction and a class buddy. Children preparing to leave are supported with memory books, transition activities, and personalised goodbyes. Records and pastoral notes are transferred sensitively to receiving schools.

6. Staff Awareness and Training

All staff receive annual training on the needs of service children, including the effects of deployment, separation, and mobility. The Service Pupil Lead, Chloe Stobbart, monitors engagement and wellbeing and works with staff to provide responsive support.

At St Thomas à Becket, we are proud to walk alongside our service children, celebrating their strength, supporting their journey, and helping them to flourish—wherever life takes them.