

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

SERVICE CHILDREN POLICY

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OWNER	C&S Committee

Introduction

St Mary's Catholic Primary School warmly welcomes Service children and their families to our school and surrounding community. We are proud of our Service connections and celebrate the contribution that Service children make to the richness and diversity of our School. Whether a child's time at our School will be long or short, we are dedicated to ensuring that a child's experience of school life with us will be an enriching one academically, socially and emotionally.

St Mary's School is committed to supporting our Service children and families. We recognize that the volatility of Service life can place significant emotional stress on children, particularly before, during and after deployment. We are mindful of the emotional cycle of deployment and the common feelings and reactions that can occur at this time.

Our approach

Our strategies for supporting Service children include:

- Recognising and responding appropriately to the needs of Service children and their families.
- Using a whole-school approach to welcome new arrivals.
- Promoting opportunities both inside and outside the classroom to meet and interact with children in a similar situation
- Build strong partnerships with parents and carers and the community.
- Ensuring each child has access to extra emotional literacy support.
- Encouraging Service parents and children to utilise resources such as reward charts and deployment journals when a parent or carer is deployed outside UK.
- Helping children to keep in touch with absent parents or carers, including writing and photocopying work a child is proud of to be sent overseas.
- Inviting parents or carers returning from deployment to meet with their child's class teacher to see their child's work and talk about their child's progress.

During their time at St Mary's Primary School, Service children and their families can expect to:

- Meet the Headteacher and the new class teacher on first arrival.
- Receive a tour of our School, accompanied by current pupils.
- Be set up with a class learning partner.
- Have classroom and daily routines explained.

- Have their arrival celebrated through an announcement in the school newsletter and during whole-school assembly
- Receive an invitation to meet with our nominated Service Families member of staff within two weeks of arrival.
- Be introduced to other children from Service families, facilitated by the Service Families member of staff.
- Start work on activities tailored to supporting pupils moving in and out of school outside of normal admission times and having this reviewed within three weeks to ensure they are settling effectively.
- Have access to a range of support professionals and services, including our Service Families staff member, SENDCo and Emotional Literacy Support Advisor.
- Have access to information and resources specific to Service families.

Families are encouraged to develop and maintain an on-going communication with School so that we can focus our work on preventative and early intervention strategies. For us to be able to offer appropriate services, it is vital that parents or carers keep us informed concerning periods of deployment.

Transferring to a new school:

We aim to ensure that your child will move to their new school feeling positive and well-prepared. To help ensure a smooth transfer, we:

Ask that parents and carers inform us of a forthcoming move at the earliest opportunity.

Encourage children to share the exciting news of the imminent move with their friends and answer any questions.

Visit the website of the new school with your child.

Discuss your child's wishes regarding how they would like to say 'goodbye'.

Ensure that all paperwork for your child's new school is completed by the class teacher and all books and work are sent home with your child to take to their new school

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