

FORCES CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

Supporting
Armed Forces
families in
Scotland

November 2021



Toolkit for teachers



Introduction

Welcome to our toolkit, which has been developed to help you answer the questions you will have when a pupil from an Armed Forces family comes into your classroom.

Knowledge of these students and understanding them is critical in order to give these young people the knowledge, skills and resilience to reach their full potential while they are with you.

This toolkit aims to:

- Provide insights into Armed Forces children, which will help in your teaching and planning;
- Help improve outcomes for pupils;
- Provide professional development and resources.

The key areas covered are

- Who is an Armed Forces Child?
- Identification
- Challenges
- Inclusion
- GIRFEC
- Support
- Resources
- Glossary

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What is an Armed Forces child?

An Armed Forces child/young person has a parent, carer and/or close relative who is a member of the Armed Forces community. This community includes:

- Serving in HM Army, Royal Navy or Air Force;
- In full-time Reserve Service;
- Ex-Service personnel;
- A veteran who has been in Service within the past two years;
- A caregiver who has died while serving in the Armed Forces and the child/young person receives financial support under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme/War Pensions Scheme.

There are more than 10,000 Armed Forces children in Scotland, in schools in every local authority.



Why is it important to identify Armed Forces families?



Knowing if a child is from an Armed Forces family is crucial to helping that child on their learning journey.

Once teachers know that a child/young person is from an Armed Forces family, they can work with parents/guardians to build relationships, learn about a child's experiences, raise awareness among the school community, forge links with partner agencies and other Armed Forces families, and provide the necessary educational and pastoral support.

Schools can also use this data to more fully understand the effect of transitions on Armed Forces children/young people and their civilian peers. They will then be better placed to support positive mental health and wellbeing over issues such as separation, loss and mobility,

Once the local authority knows, it will be better able to provide the school with necessary resources to help teachers and staff engage with Armed Forces families.

This information will also help paint a Scotland-wide picture and inform decisions that help children/young people. Data about transitions (arrivals/departures) and the number of previous schools/early learning settings can help shape improvements.

Gaps in learning and support can be monitored, with attendance tracked in relation to deployment of family members.

Does your school's registration package ask whether the family is part of the Armed Forces community? This can help spark a conversation and develop relationships.

Does the school have teachers/staff who have knowledge of the Armed Forces community? Could you have a central point of contact for Armed Forces families and partner agencies?

SEEMiS

SEEMiS is an education management information system (MiS) which is in place across all of Scotland's 32 local authorities. It manages pupil records and tracks a range of datasets for every child in the country. An Armed Forces Family Indicator is available within this system. Schools must activate this in response to information provided by parents.

Teachers can check SEEMiS for the total number of Armed Forces families in a school and/or local authority.

Twelve Scottish local authorities have significant military bases within their boundaries: Moray, Midlothian, Argyll & Bute, Fife, Angus, Edinburgh, Western Isles, Glasgow, Stirling, Perth, South Ayrshire and Highland.

Challenges faced by Armed Forces children



Mobility/transitions

Children/young people from Armed Forces families may move home, area and even country often, disrupting not only their education but also their relationships with friends and family.

Leaving behind friends, making new ones and keeping in contact with friends and relatives from a distance are among the biggest challenges these youngsters face. There can be a great sense of loss at leaving not only loved ones but familiar surroundings.

Moving may mean adjusting to new cultures and/or languages, gaps in learning, differences in curriculum, exams, and limited sharing of information between schools about the child's learning history and needs.

There may be delays in getting [Additional Support for Learning](#) due to their needs not being identified. It can also take time for Armed Forces children and young people to settle in and understand school policies, and to form relationships with peers and adults as they do not know when they will move again.

Such transitions can take their toll and some children/young people find it difficult to manage their negative feelings, resulting in behavioural issues.

Deployment

Armed Forces children may also have to endure long periods of time separated from a parent/sibling who is away from home or deployed on active service.

This means that not only will the child miss their family member(s), but they may have serious concerns about the safety of those loved ones. Could any topics being covered in certain lessons, such as history or English classes, increase those fears?

An absent parent also means that parent and/or the child's remaining, at-home parent, may be unable to attend school events, while the return of a serving parent can mean adjustments for the family. Teachers should make efforts to include the absent parent as much as possible. Please note that a lone, at-home parent is not the same as a single parent.

Deployment can mean a tour at a defined Armed Forces establishment (a posting), an operational tour overseas, or being away on training.

While separated, Armed Forces children and young people are likely to have a range of emotions, including stress, confusion and fear, which can be compounded by the news and social media. If both parents are deployed, that will interrupt their homelife and they may be assuming greater responsibility within their household.

When a parent returns from a tour, there will be a process of readjustment for the whole family. It is not uncommon for Armed

Forces families to seek some time off school for their children during such periods of reunion. Service children will have a lot of adjustments to cope with in this period – even coping with a parent's bereavement or injury.

Other issues

- Managing emotions;
- Feeling insecure;
- Mental health and wellbeing;
- School staff not understanding the needs of a Service child;
- Bullying and stigma, linked to being viewed as 'different';
- Loss of identity, when a parent/guardian leaves Service and returns to civilian life.

However, Service children do also benefit from being part of the Armed Forces community. The challenges they face increase their resilience, and they can develop strong social, leadership and organisational skills. They are adaptable and can also have the experience of travel, foreign languages and cultures, which gives them a wider perspective than their civilian peers.

Every child is unique. Mobility, transitions, separation, loss and other Armed Forces family life experiences are not easy. It is essential to build relationships with each pupil to respond to their needs and strengths. Promote their development by supporting their mental health and wellbeing. Welcome them into your school and value the richness they bring and will share with others.

Getting to know your Armed Forces pupils

Being aware of the experiences of a Service child/young person is vital to ensure you offer them the best possible support and help them to settle in at your school.

You could have an informal one-to-one with a pupil, or with them and their parents. Perhaps you could turn a chat into a class learning activity –

although be careful to respect the pupil's privacy. Your student(s) should always feel the school is a safe place to share feelings and concerns. Speaking to your pupil(s) and their family members shows you are willing to listen and keen to form a relationship.



Try asking questions such as:

- What are your favourite subjects?
- What are your hobbies?
- Have you ever lived abroad?
- What makes you happy?
- What are you good at?

Check in with the child/young person a week and a month after their transition to discuss how they are settling in and how you can help them.

What is inclusion?

Inclusion is at the heart of Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence. Teachers have a duty to provide additional support for learning when any child or young person needs this, and a duty to help remove barriers to learning, participation and achievement.

Children from Armed Forces families face unique challenges and experiences that their civilian counterparts do not – and these can affect their education. Support and stability from teachers and schools can help them to settle in and thrive.

Scotland's vision for an inclusive education has four key features:

- ★ Present
- ★ Participating
- ★ Achieving
- ★ Supported



*Graphic courtesy of the Scottish Government

This toolkit will help you and your school to offer an inclusive approach which identifies and addresses barriers to learning for children from Armed Forces families.

How do I adopt an inclusive approach for Armed Forces pupils?

Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence is an inclusive curriculum. There is a duty to provide additional support for learning when any child or young person needs this, for whatever reason.

Armed Forces personnel and their families may have to move home often, which can present challenges for children and young people. The effect of many transitions can be coupled with cultural differences and, on occasion, negative attitudes and/or ignorance about the Service community.

A partnership approach between families, schools, local authorities, and Government and other agencies can help to overcome such barriers to learning. Here's how you can apply the Inclusion model to an Armed Forces child/young person:

Present

- **All children and young people should learn in environments which best meet their needs; should be fully engaged in the life of their school; and should receive a full-time education, including flexible approaches to meet their needs.**

By identifying children/young people from Armed Forces families and encouraging families to inform the school of their status, you can work together to provide necessary support and early intervention. Your student(s) may require extra tutoring to cover learning gaps in certain subjects, especially if they have moved from elsewhere in the UK. Think about:

- How can the school help new arrivals to settle in? Can staff help them to make friends? Can teachers make an effort to

learn about their interests and experiences, and meet with their families to learn about their home lives?

- What extra learning support can you offer? Homework classes? Tutoring? One-on-one lessons?
- Can you contact the child's old school to learn more about their learning journey so far?
- Can you assist and provide support should the family need to move again?

Participating

- **All children and young people should have their voices heard in decisions about their education; will have the opportunity to participate and engage as fully as possible in all aspects of school life; and should be enabled and supported to participate in their learning.**

Help students to participate in their education by speaking to them about their learning journey so far, their ambitions, likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses. Think about:

- Encouraging children/young people to join school clubs. Schools should try to be flexible over available places. Sadly, many clubs are often full when pupils arrive at different times of year, yet these engagements with peers are valuable in support of a child/young person's transition.
- Can you launch a mentor/buddy scheme for new arrivals?

Achieving

- **All children and young people should be achieving to their full potential and have access to a varied curriculum tailored to meet their needs.**

Identifying learning gaps and/or overlaps is crucial, particularly for older students who will soon be sitting exams. Think about:

- What has your pupil covered at a previous school?
- What have they missed that they will need to know?
- Do you have information from a pupil's previous school(s) about their learning journey?

Supported

- **All children and young people should benefit from the ethos and culture of the school, inclusive learning and teaching practices and relationships; should be given the right help, at the right time, from the right people, to support their wellbeing; should be supported to participate in all parts of school life; and should be supported to overcome barriers to learning and achieve their full potential**

All Scottish schools are committed to [Getting It Right For Every Child](#) (GIRFEC). Tailored support during transitions can help an Armed Forces child/young person to cope with new experiences and challenges. By law, education authorities must identify, provide and review pupils' [additional support needs](#), which can arise in the short or long-term as a result of family circumstances, the learning environment, or health and/or wellbeing needs. Think about:

- Looking into whether an Armed Forces family is entitled to Additional Support for Learning (ASL) to help them as they settle in.
- Can you assist with specialist tutoring if their learning has been disrupted?

Getting it Right for Every Child and the UNCRC

All Scottish schools, early learning centres and childcare settings are committed to [Getting it Right for Every Child](#) (GIRFEC). This is Scotland's national approach to improving the wellbeing of children and young people.

GIRFEC is based on children's rights and its principles reflect the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC), which is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in the world.

The Convention – a legally binding international agreement – has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life and set out all the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights to which all children are entitled. You can read Unicef's summary of the articles [here](#).

Every child has rights, regardless of ethnicity, gender, language, religion, abilities or any other status. This includes rights relating to health and education, leisure and play, fair and equal treatment, protection from exploitation and the right to be heard.

All of the rights are linked and no right is more important than another.

GIRFEC aims to make sure children and young people can receive the right help at the right time, so they grow up feeling loved, respected and safe, and can fulfil their potential. GIRFEC's principles and values are based on children's rights.

GIRFEC's approach:

- Child-focused – the child/young person and their family are at the heart of decision-making and the support available to them.
- Wellbeing – considering the wider influences on a child/young person and their developmental needs, ensuring the right support is offered.
- Tackling needs early – identify concerns/issues promptly to avoid bigger problems developing.
- Joined-up working – children/young people, parents and services collaborating to benefit and boost wellbeing.



Getting it Right for Forces Families

To help teachers successfully adopt and implement the GIRFEC approach for children from Armed Forces Families, the ADES NTO has helped to create the Getting it Right for Forces Families (GIRFFF) network.



The group aims to help teachers in Scotland understand what it is like to be a child from a military family and direct educators and schools to further support.

The advice includes:

- Sharing best practice, activities and programmes with other schools which have pupils from Armed Forces families;
- Learning more about the challenges of transitioning between schools, especially when moving country;
- Talk to the family and child/young person to get to know them and find out about their learning experiences;
- Be ready to support the family ahead of any move/deployment/Service duty;
- Approach the local authority for resources and ideas;
- Work with the family to determine what kind of support the child/young person needs, and for how long.

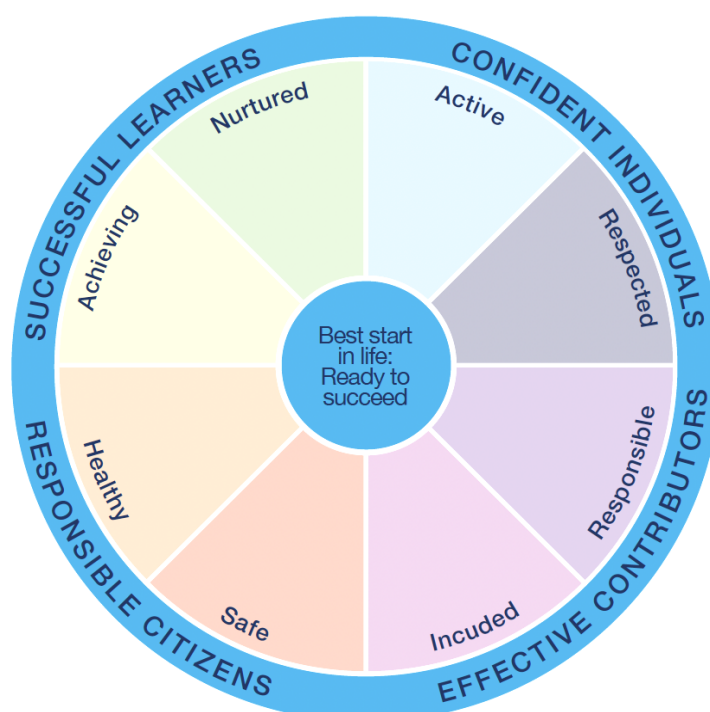
It is hoped that GIRFFF schools will more fully understand the impact of transitions on Armed Forces children and their civilian peers, and that this will support positive mental health and wellbeing, especially during periods of separation or loss.

A more joined-up approach will also more effectively monitor

and record gaps in learning, support and attendance, as well as build relationships with families.

How do I look out for the wellbeing of Armed Forces pupils?

Wellbeing is at the heart of GIRFEC and GIRFFF, and is measured using eight indicators. A child's wellbeing is influenced by



everything around them and their different experiences and needs. The unique challenges faced by Armed Forces children can affect their wellbeing, meaning teachers should try to offer the necessary support.

*Graphic courtesy of GIRFEC/Scottish Government

Schools should try to ensure Service children/young people are:

- **Active:** Having opportunities to take part in play, recreation and sport, which contribute to healthy growth and development.
- **Respected:** Able, with parents and carers, to be heard and involved in decisions that affect them.
- **Responsible:** Opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles at home, in school and in the community.
- **Included:** Help to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities, with children/young people accepted within the community in which they live and learn.
- **Safe:** Protected from abuse, neglect or harm.
- **Healthy:** Having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare, and support to make healthy, safe choices.
- **Achieving:** Being offered support and guidance in learning and in the development of skills and confidence.
- **Nurtured:** Having a supportive and caring place to live.

Every child is unique and there is no set level of wellbeing that children should achieve. Teachers can use the wellbeing indicators to identify what help a child or young person needs, and help them access the right support.

The wellbeing indicators connect and overlap. For example, a health problem may affect the activity levels of a child or young person. When considered together the different wellbeing indicators paint a broader picture of a pupil's life.

What are the differences in curriculums and exams across the UK?

Education is devolved across the UK and each of the four nations has its own curricula and exam system. Local authorities are responsible for providing school education. All schools are inspected and all children have a legal right to a school place.

What year group will a child be in?

Children in Scotland can start primary school from the age of four, depending on their date of birth (see the comparison chart with the rest of the UK on the next page), and there are also different enrolment and term-time dates.

In Scotland, children start in Primary 1 and progress to P7, then move up to secondary school. The secondary curriculum is in two phases – a broad, general education in S1-S3 then in the senior phase, S4-S6, pupils choose more specific areas of study.

The school year is broken into three terms. In Scotland, the autumn term runs between August and December; spring term is between January and March/April and the summer term begins in April and ends in June. Term dates will vary between local authority areas.

Schools in Northern Ireland, England and Wales generally start the autumn term in September. NI also breaks up for the year in June, while schools in England and Wales will stay open until the third week of July.

This table shows the comparative school years within the different state education systems of the UK:

	Scotland		England/Wales	Northern Ireland	
Birthday between:	1 Sept -29 Feb	1 Mar -31 Aug	1 Sept-31 Aug	1 Sept -1 July	2 July -31 Aug
Age	School year	School year	School year	School year	School year
4-5	P1	Nursery	Reception	P1	Nursery
5-6	P2	P1	Year 1	P2	P1
6-7	P3	P2	Year 2	P3	P2
7-8	P4	P3	Year 3	P4	P3
8-9	P5	P4	Year 4	P5	P4
9-10	P6	P5	Year 5	P6	P5
10-11	P7	P6	Year 6	P7	P6
11-12	S1	P7	Year 7	Y8	P7
12-13	S2	S1	Year 8	Y9	Y8
13-14	S3	S2	Year 9	Y10	Y9
14-15	S4	S3	Year 10	Y11	Y10
15-16	S5	S4	Year 11	Y12	Y11
16-17	S6	S5	Year 12	Sixth form	Y12
17-18	-	S6	Year 13	Sixth form	Sixth form

Curriculum differences across the UK

In Scotland, all children aged 3-18 learn under the Curriculum for Excellence, which places learners at the heart of education and aims to give them the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to thrive. At CfE's core are four key capacities which are designed to help children and young people become:

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Responsible citizens
- Effective contributors

There are eight curriculum areas:

- Expressive arts
- Health and wellbeing
- Languages
- Mathematics
- Religious and moral education
- Sciences
- Social studies
- Technologies

Literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing are particularly important. Pupils in P1, P4, P7 and S3 complete Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) in literacy and numeracy. There is no pass or fail.

The curriculum in England is organised into blocks of years called Key Stages. Literacy skills are tested at:

- Age 5, the Early Years Foundation Stage;
- At the end of the first year of primary school;
- At the end of Year 2 (Key Stage 1) and Year 6 (Key Stage 2);
- At the end of Key Stage 4 in secondary school (GCSEs).

Wales largely follows the same structure as England. However, children aged 3-7 follow the Foundation curriculum and are assessed at the beginning and end of the phase. Pupils in Years 2-9 also take annual reading and numeracy tests.

Northern Ireland's curriculum is similar to that used in England and Wales but pupils take 'Levels of Progression' assessments at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 (P4, P7 and Y10).

Exams and qualifications

Scotland's examination system is different to that of the rest of the UK. The national qualifications are:

- National 1-5
- Higher
- Advanced Higher
- Scottish Baccalaureate

National 5s are equivalent to the GCSE exams taken by pupils elsewhere in the UK. National 5 courses are made up of units and a course assessment, and are graded A to D or "no award". Students sit these exams in S4 (Year 11).

National 5 certificates at grade A to C are broadly equivalent to GCSE grades 4 to 9. GCSEs were once graded A* to G, but this has been replaced by a scale numbered from 9 (the highest) to 1.

Scottish Higher grades accredit learning in the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence and may be achieved after one year's study, at the end of five years of secondary school. In contrast, A levels take two years of study, at the end of seven years of secondary education.

Highers are taken in S5-S6 and in further education colleges. Highers usually take a year, with pupils progressing to Advanced Highers a year later. All are graded A to D or "no award".

A Scottish Baccalaureate is a group award consisting of a coherent group of current Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications, in addition to an Interdisciplinary Project.

Scottish Baccalaureates offer increased subject specialisation, enabling candidates to develop knowledge, skills and qualifications in expressive arts, languages, science or social sciences, and other transferable skills, which will enhance progression opportunities and offer added breadth and value.

UCAS points

UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) points are a way of measuring the relative value of school qualifications across the UK. A numerical score is assigned to grades that can be achieved in each type of qualification. The higher the grade, the higher the number of points.

Some universities and colleges will make offers based on the total number of points earned by pupils. A grade-based offer, for example, ABB, means a student must achieve a certain combination of grades, while an offer based on UCAS points (such as 120) allows a student to use any combination of grades to meet the threshold.

What grades are worth in UCAS points:

Higher	UCAS points
A	33
B	27
C	21
D	15

Advanced Higher	UCAS points
A	56
B	48
C	40
D	32

A Level	UCAS points
A*	56
A	48
B	40
C	32
D	24
E	16

In addition to national qualifications, young people in Scotland can study vocational qualifications. These include Foundation

Apprenticeships, which offer knowledge and skills directly related to employment. More information on these can be found [here](#).

Children and young people also have opportunities to learn and develop skills for the world of work through the 'Developing the Young Workforce' programme. Learn more about this [here](#).

Additional Support for Learning

Additional Support for Learning (ASL) in Scotland is not the same as Special Educational Needs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. A child is said to have additional support needs if they require more, or different, help with their learning than what is normally provided. This can be short- or long-term assistance.

Children and young people from Armed Forces families may need additional support to help them overcome barriers to learning which arise due to the nature of their parents' work and Service. They may need support to overcome issues related to frequent mobility and transitions, interrupted learning, bereavement and parental separations.

Other areas of the UK use 'Statements of Need' which spell out a child or young person's special educational needs and the support they require. If a child moves to your school from elsewhere in the UK, such a document will be useful when assessing how you can best help your new pupil.

Enquire is the Scottish advice service for ASL. For more information about educators' role in ASL, [visit Enquire's website](#).

Supporting Armed Forces pupils: The Armed Forces Covenant

The [Armed Forces Covenant](#) is a promise from the nation which guarantees fair treatment for those who Serve, and have Served, in the Armed Forces, and for their families.

This includes ensuring that Armed Forces children and young people have the same access to, and standard of, education as any other citizen.

The Armed Forces in Scotland, the Scottish Government, local authorities, schools and other partners work to ensure that Armed Forces children and young people are not disadvantaged by the Service of their parent/guardian.

They collaborate as part of the Scottish Armed Forces Education Support Group.

Local authorities and the Armed Forces community are urged to work together to establish area-specific covenants. This helps foster public support and understanding of the Service community, and recognises the sacrifices they make.

For more on local authorities, the Covenant and how this helps teachers and schools, [find out more](#).



What kinds of support can teachers offer children from Armed Forces families?

Teachers who are responsive to the specific needs of Armed Forces children/young people can better support them and help them settle in and succeed. Extra help you can offer includes:

- Help for deployed parents to be involved, e.g., virtual parents' evenings;
- The ability to contact a deployed parent virtually during class time, if necessary;
- A quiet space pupils can go to if they feel anxious;
- Permitting special family time when needed, including granting absences during term times;
- A specific mentor/school contact, preferably one who understands the military;
- Forge home-school links and supportive relationships with families to ensure they feel valued and involved;
- Pastoral provision to support mental health and wellbeing, and use of play therapy and mindfulness for those children who experience loss, change or separation;
- Targeted literacy and numeracy programmes to accelerate progress;
- Extra help to catch up in lessons;
- Help to establish relationships with other Forces children at the school/local schools.

Teachers and schools could also consider some of the following ways to help Armed Forces children and young people, and their families, to become a welcomed and valued part of the school community.

Transition team building

Consider partnering with other schools which have students from military families. The NTO and Army Cadet Force can help you to establish relationships and share skills and learning. This will also help pupils to connect with other Armed Forces children/young people (if they wish to) who understand the challenges they face. They can engage in activities/learning together – benefiting their communication and teamwork skills as well as their wellbeing.



Welcome/induction packs

A 'Welcome to our school and community' information brochure/newsletter for new Armed Forces families would help arrivals settle in. This could contain information about the school, curriculum, holiday dates, teachers and other staff.

Are there clubs/sports teams pupils can join at your school and/or in the local area? Is there a youth club in the community? What additional support services are offered by your school? What pastoral care can pupils access? Where is the nearest library? Are there family-friendly museums, galleries and other attractions nearby? Think about what information you can provide to help new arrivals settle in. Clubs are urged to be flexible when it comes to offering places, as many Armed Forces children will move at different times of the year.

Forces families liaison officer

Have a specific staff contact for pupils and their parents/ guardians, to help provide a link between school and home. Strong awareness of the life of an Armed Forces child is key to offering effective support.

Develop clear policies and be transparent

Have a strategy for the use of dedicated resources, including funding when available. Monitoring Armed Forces children's outcomes and the effect of spending on these can determine how best to direct support in future.

Devise a support strategy

Create an action plan for supporting Armed Forces families and make this accessible – share it on the school website, for example. Assess the effect of this and amend it as and when you find what works best for your Service pupils.

Additional tutoring/peer-to-peer 'buddy' system

Could the school offer catch-up sessions? Could a peer act as a 'buddy'/mentor? This could be particularly helpful to young people arriving mid-term or later in their education journey and who will soon be sitting exams.

Parent/guardian questionnaires

Ask carers to answer a few questions about their experiences and concerns to help you determine the support needed for a child/young person. This must be voluntary and you must adhere to regulations on data protection.

Who is the ADES National Transitions Officer and how can she help teachers?

Carolyn MacLeod is the sole 'enabler' of support for Armed Forces children and young people in Scotland's schools. She is dedicated to helping educators meet the specific needs of Forces families and to improving pupils' wellbeing and outcomes.

Carolyn, a former teacher, helps to manage and guide the oversight of Armed Forces children moving into, within, and out of Scotland – from Early Years through to Primary and Secondary Schools, and then on to further destinations. A key part of her role is identifying and addressing the specific challenges faced during periods of transition to mitigate the impact of mobility and deployment.

The strategic role of the National Transitions Officer (NTO), on behalf of the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland ([ADES](#)), is as the central locus of support and advice for Armed Forces children and young people in Scotland.

The NTO works with schools, local authorities, children's services partners and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to shape policy and practice, ensuring the unique needs of Armed Forces children are highlighted and considered.

Carolyn liaises with the Scottish Government and national bodies as a representative of the MoD to help ensure equitable education provision and continuous improvements in the education experiences and outcomes of Forces children.



The NTO contributes to the delivery of the MoD Firm Base – the secure home front that sustains the Armed Forces, supports training and deployment, and ensures the support of the public – and is a member of the Scottish Government's Scottish Armed Forces Education Support Group (SAFESG). The NTO also contributes to relevant Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Groups.

Carolyn collaborates with all 32 of Scotland's local authorities via each council's dedicated Lead Officer for Forces Families, who is a member of the ADES Armed Forces Working Group, which helps shape policy and guidance.

The NTO also has a forum of headteachers (from schools with Tri-Service families) who work in collaboration and pass on advice and best practice to their teachers and staff.

To contact Carolyn or a member of the ADES Armed Forces Working Group, please email info@forceschildrenseducation.org.uk

Every local authority has a liaison with the ADES National Transitions Officer and you can contact them for advice.

What additional guidance and help is available for teachers and schools?

- Advice and resources are available from the [Forces Children's Education](#) website, which is created, maintained and regularly updated by the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES) and the NTO. Here you will find a number of informative downloads, lists of partner organisations and useful websites.
- The [Supporting Learners: Children and Young People from Service Families](#) guide by Education Scotland is a professional learning resource to support the aims of raising the achievements of all learners, narrow gaps in inequalities and build confidence in the Scottish education system.
- Seek support from the MoD's [Directorate Children & Young People](#) (DCYP), which was established in 2010 to provide a single MOD focus for all issues related to Armed Forces children and young people.
- The HIVE Information Service shares information on behalf of the chain of command to the Armed Forces Community. HIVE Information Support Officers have excellent links with Service and civilian agencies. Scotland's Hive office is based in Leuchars, Fife. Email leucharshive@armymail.mod.uk
- [Forces Children Scotland](#) is Scotland's Armed Forces children's charity. It aims to help Service children reach their full potential and can provide financial assistance, resources, advice and training for teachers.

What financial support is there for schools?

Children and young people in Scotland are supported in their learning and development in accordance with the Curriculum for Excellence and Scottish Government policies.

While there is no Service Pupil Premium (more details below) in Scotland, Scottish Government funding takes account of factors such as mobility and is fully inclusive of Armed Forces families.

The Scottish Government, local authorities and schools all provide funding and support to Armed Forces children and young people who require additional support.

Armed Forces families moving to Scotland may ask you about the Service Pupil Premium. This UK Government funding, worth £310 per pupil, is available only in England and is to help provide the additional support that Armed Forces children and young people may need.

However, as previously stated, Scottish Government funding is no less effective or valuable as it already takes into account additional support needs such as mobility and underachievement.

Schools can also apply for financial aid from the Ministry of Defence's Education Support Fund (see [find out more](#)).

What support is available to teachers and schools from local authorities?

Councils and the Armed Forces Covenant

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 places a duty on local authorities to identify, provide for and review the additional support needs of pupils. For Armed Forces children and young people, this support includes addressing issues such as interrupted learning, mobility and transitions, and dealing with separation and/or bereavement.



All 407 local authorities in mainland Great Britain and four councils in Northern Ireland have pledged to uphold the Armed Forces Covenant. Every council also has a Community Covenant to help support Armed Forces families in the area and nurture understanding.

Local authority projects that will benefit Armed Forces families can apply for financial support from the [Covenant Fund](#). This has been used for things such as building new nurseries and paying for activities.

Every local authority is urged to identify a contact person who will assume responsibility for education issues related to Armed Forces children and young people. Teachers can reach out to this champion for advice.

The ADES NTO also meets with these contacts and other partners, such as Education Officers and Headteachers, to create a network of communication, and to share good practice and resources.

This network includes the ADES Armed Forces Working Group (Local Authority Education Officers), which comprises professionals from local authorities and schools who have significant experience of supporting Armed Forces children and young people.

There are also ADES Armed Forces (Local Authority) Project Coordinators, who share their experience, resources and best practice.

A list of the Scottish local authorities with an Armed Forces Covenant Partnership can be found [here](#).

Admissions

Every local authority has its own admissions policy and can advise schools about authorising term-time absences or late admissions for Armed Forces children and young people.

Your Armed Forces pupils may, on occasion, need flexibility and support when it comes to their attendance at school.

The operational needs of the Armed Forces and often unpredictable demands of Service can prevent families from living together, spending time together, and taking holidays outwith term times. Armed Forces families may seek authorised absences from school for the purposes of reuniting the family.

The educational needs of children and young people will always remain a priority when making such decisions.

Scottish Government guidance states family holidays can be recorded as authorised absence in exceptional circumstances, such as when a parent's employment means school holidays cannot be accommodated – as is the case for military service.

MoD Firm Base

Many local authorities also support the Ministry of Defence Firm Base initiative, which aims to boost relationships between councils and the Armed Forces community, and to develop the delivery of policy and funding to support the military community. Council representatives will attend group meetings and can work with schools to improve ties and offer advice to teachers. Your local authority can provide more information on Firm Base groups in your area.



What national support is available for teachers?

The MoD Support Fund

The [MoD Education Support Fund \(ESF\)](#) is there to help schools to mitigate the effects on Service children whose parents are subject to frequent mobility/deployment.

This funding can be used for things such as staffing and training, to provide community support to help build and maintain relationships between schools, local authorities and Service families, and to provide educational resources.

Schools who wish to apply to the ESF are strongly advised to discuss bid ideas with the ADES National Transitions Officer, Carolyn MacLeod. You can email her at nationaltransitionsofficerades@gmail.com



The Forces Children's Education website

The [website](#) is full of clear and accurate information for educators and Armed Forces families, with resources added regularly.

Forces Children's Education was created by the Association of Directors of Education (ADES), in conjunction with the Scottish Government, local authorities and the Ministry of Defence.

The site is managed by the ADES NTO and her team, who are dedicated to helping educators meet the specific needs of Forces families and to improving pupils' wellbeing and outcomes.



Forces Children's Education is a recipient of a bronze award from the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme, which recognises commitment and support from UK employers for defence personnel.

Education Scotland

Education Scotland is the national body for supporting quality and improvement in learning and teaching.

It has created a professional learning resource to support practitioners who work with children and young people from Armed Forces families. It is also helpful for local authorities.

[Download this resource here.](#)

What additional resources are there for teachers and parents?

To support Service children in education, the following could be useful to families and educators:

Books

- *How Big Are Your Worries Little Bear?*, by Jayneen Sanders. This picture book aims to help children manage and overcome anxiety and fearful situations
- *The Huge Bag of Worries*, by Virginia Ironside. A book to help ease concerns during stressful times.
- *The Invisible String*, by Patrice Karst. This best-seller helps readers to cope with separation anxiety, loss, loneliness and grief.

Toys

- [*Huggable Heroes*](#). This British firm turns a photo of an absent loved one into a handmade and cuddly replica doll that helps with separation anxiety.
- *Worry Monsters*. Children can write down their worries and feed them to this cuddly friend.

Other ideas

- *Weighted blankets*. The evenly distributed weight creates a 'grounding' effect that helps to reduce feelings of anxiety and stress.
- [*Fink Cards*](#). These thought-provoking question cards have been designed to spark conversations about mental health.

Armed Forces Glossary (Tri-Service)

Armed Forces Personnel: Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen serving with HM Forces (Regular or Reserve)

#	Royal Navy definition	Army definition	Royal Air Force definition
1	Forces Child	A child under 18 dependent upon a member of the Armed Forces (parent, step-parent or guardian)	Same
a)	(Education definition) Armed Forces Child: A child or young person with a parent, step-parent or carer in the Armed Forces		
2	Armed Forces mobility	A requirement of all Armed Forces personnel to serve wherever the operational need requires	Same
3	Transition	Period of time at which move is made from civilian life to military life and vice versa	Transition also takes place between military units upon assignment
b)	(Education definition) Transition: Period between schools (eg Nursery to P1, P7 to S1) or between class stages (P2 to P3) Forces Child: Moving from school to school, at any stage. Transition from Infant to Primary School, Primary to Secondary School and Secondary to Post-school		

#	Royal Navy definition	Army definition	Royal Air Force definition
4	A Welfare Issue	A welfare issue is a serious problem affecting a Service person's ability to perform their duties either UK based or overseas	Same
5	Divisional Officer	Unit Welfare Officer	(RAF) Officer Commanding Personnel Management Squadron (OC PMS) & Warrant Officer Commanding Personnel Management Squadron (WO PMS)
c)	(Education definition) Welfare Officer: Supports families and schools with pupils' absences		
6	Royal Navy & Royal Marines Welfare (RNRMW)	Unit Welfare Office – the location/ site where the welfare team support the Welfare Officer, a drop-in centre for service personnel and families	The RAF team responsible for all aspects of welfare support and community provision for the RAF community (Serving personnel and their families)
7	X	X	Service Community Support Officer (SCSO) – A dedicated full- time reserve position with a focus on supporting the RAF community (Service personnel and their families) with accommodation and deployment related matters
8	Base/Base Port/Air Station	Garrison – name given to large community, including military buildings and facilities	Station – name given to a Royal Air Force operational base

#	Royal Navy definition	Army definition	Royal Air Force definition
9	Ship/ Submarine/ Squadron	Battalion – an Army unit that has more than three companies	Wing/Squadron – the RAF organisational structure within a Station or within a local community setting (eg Reserves Squadron)
10	Deployment/ Patrol	Deployment – periods when Service Personnel are sent overseas on operational service	Same
11	Draft/ Assignment/ Appointment	'Posting' – personnel are sent to another military location to serve with that unit	Assignment
12	Draft/ Assignment/ Appointment	Trickle Posting – when an individual is posted away to another unit as opposed to the whole battalion moving (an individual transfer)	No equivalent within the RAF – All Service Personnel assigned individually
13	Same	Accompanied Posting – Personnel assigned to another unit and take their spouse and family with them to that new location	Same
14	Same	Unaccompanied Posting – personnel chooses to go to another unit location alone, while leaving spouse and family settled in home location	Same
15	Deployment	Tour – a 'tour' relates to the period of duty wherever a Service person is sent	This may be a 'tour' at a defined military establishment (eg, a posting), an operational tour overseas or an extended period of training at an alternative location

#	Royal Navy definition	Army definition	Royal Air Force definition
16	Support Crew	Rear Ops (operation) – the small body of personnel left on duty at home military establishment (home base) while the main body of personnel are sent away on operational tour	Rear Party
17	Post-Operational Leave (POL)	Post-Operational Tour Leave (POTL)	Leave is given to personnel on their return from an operational tour to allow for rest and recuperation
18	JCCC Joint Casualty & Compassionate Centre	The MoD organisational structure that provides a focal point for casualty administration and notification and request for compassionate travel (for those personnel serving overseas) in respect of member of the British Armed Forces	Same
19	Royal Navy & Royal Marines Welfare (RNRMW)	Army Welfare Services (AWS) – the principle, professionally-trained Welfare staff and Social Workers for Army personnel	SSAFA is the independent contractor responsible for delivery of personal, family and social work services for the RAF
20	SSAFA – Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Families Association	Emotional, financial and practical help is provided and available for any currently serving, or any who have served, and their family. Community volunteers provide trained 'befriending' support	X
21	Royal Navy Families	Family Federations. Army Families Federation – organisations that provide an independent voice for families world-wide on any aspect of Military life, Housing, Education	Royal Air Force Families (RAF-FF)

#	Royal Navy definition	Army definition	Royal Air Force definition
22	Potentially Vulnerable (Education)	Term used by Department of Education (DoE, England) in relation to Service Children	Same
23	DIO – Defence Infrastructure Organisation	MOD department responsible for the provision of all infrastructures on military bases and for the provision of accommodation for service families (see SFA)	Same
24	Married Patch/ Married Quarters	Service Family Accommodations (SFA) sometimes referred to as the 'Patch' – MOD providing housing for Service personnel and their families which may be located within a military unit (also known as 'behind the wire') or embedded in the local community	Maintained under contract by Carillion-Amey and allocated to entitled personnel upon assignment order
25	HIVE	A Civil Service provided information and signposting service for the Armed Forces community	Used by the Service community as a first point of contact for all enquiries regards accommodation, schools, local provision and information regarding 'next' posting location

Contact details

Carolyn MacLeod, National Transitions Officer
nationaltransitionsofficer@gmail.com

Forces Children's Education website
www.forceschildrenseducation.org.uk



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