

SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE

Emerging practice	Developing practice	Embedding practice
Schools with emerging practice will be actively reflecting on their activity and may be implementing actions to enhance their support, but to a small extent. School leaders will be beginning to raise awareness of what is needed to support Armed Forces children and young people more effectively and will be reflecting on the impact of their existing support strategies to strengthen these.	Schools with developing practice will be addressing this principle's question to a good extent, but this may be partial or yet to be enhanced through regular monitoring and evaluation. School leaders will have considered how they are addressing this principle's question and are taking steps to embark on a regular programme of reflection, monitoring and evaluation. Practice at this level is likely to be either not fully embedded or consistently applied by all staff, or both.	Schools with embedding practice will fully address this principle's question with well-established work that is routinely monitored and evaluated and showing evidence of impact. School leaders will have fully addressed this principle's question and regularly monitor, review and evaluate their strategies to demonstrate the impact. Practice at this level will be both embedded and consistently applied by all staff.

EXAMPLES FROM PRACTICE

6.1	To what extent do you provide support to Armed Forces families?	EMERGING DEVELOPING EMBEDDING
	- The Head of School works closely with staff from schools children move from before joining the school, gathering key information needed to ensure smooth transitions. As the school's SENCO, this also supports the transition of children with additional needs. In March 2023, prior to a large unit move that summer, the Head visited Dhekelia Garrison in Cyprus to meet, support and reassure families. - On arrival, a designated member of support staff, the school's Service Pupil Champion, acts as the main liaison for Armed Forces families, building strong understanding of individual family circumstances. She introduces herself to the new child/children and explains how she can help. - Pupils are able to access emotional literacy support (ELSA) should they become worried or anxious about moving schools. - If any child's emotional health and well-being needs are more complex, effective support is also signposted through social media and weekly coffee mornings. - Dates for parental meetings are offered flexibly to accommodate parents who may be on deployment, with the school's leadership sympathetic to reasonable term-time leave of absence requests due to such deployment.	
6.2	To what extent do you help Armed Forces families build strong relationships with each other and with the school community?	EMERGING DEVELOPING EMBEDDING
	- Staff prioritise the development and maintenance of a strong school community, with parents regularly invited in for assemblies and events. Serving personnel are also regularly invited into school to support its work, such as helping at fun days with military assault courses or hosting Remembrance events. - The Service Pupil Champion hosts weekly coffee mornings which are open to all parents and guardians. These offer an informal, relaxed way for military parents to meet others who have children at the school, and often include guest speakers or visitors such as staff from Voluntary Action Rutland and Royal British Legion. Parents report that these sessions help them connect with one another. They also help school leaders gather parental views. - School staff celebrate all families' cultures and ensure children attend any specific Armed Forces days and events. In 2023, these included a celebration at Kendrew Barracks as part of June's Armed Forces week and engaging with the Service children charity Never Such Innocence which ran poetry workshops.	

6.3

To what extent do you liaise with parents and if appropriate local Armed Forces personnel about deployment and mobility?

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- Military parents are regularly reminded of the importance of informing the school about deployments and any impending moves. Staff encourage them to use the school's Notification of Deployment form but are equally happy being told verbally of any deployments so that additional, bespoke support can be offered to their children.
- The school is represented at local Family Forces Forums, and strong relationships have been formed with the relevant regiments, their welfare officers and Rutland County Council's Armed Forces Champion. This ensures that school leaders usually know of upcoming deployments and moves allowing necessary preparations can be made. An Army Welfare Service member is a regular visitor to the school, supporting its weekly, after school Military Kids Club. The school's tailored pastoral support and school to school transition procedures are both strong and effective.

6.4

To what extent are deployments, separation or impending moves shared with all staff appropriately?

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- All staff are regularly updated about information regarding deployments, separation or impending moves. This is helped by being a small school and having clear internal communication systems in place.
- Information on the welfare of children, and any concerns, are routinely shared during weekly staff meetings during the dedicated 'safe and well' section. This often includes updates on forthcoming deployments or courses that parents are on.

6.5

To what extent do you support Armed Forces children to communicate with a parent when they are away?

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- With excellent technology solutions available, Service children have multiple options as to how to communicate with a parent while they are working away from home. Whilst the remaining parents normally manages this, staff will discuss it with affected children.
- Additionally, staff use different online platforms including Dojo and Tapestry, to share children's work, photos and achievements with any deployed parents so they can stay up to date with how their children's schooling is going. Children are also encouraged to compile special memories whilst their deployed parents are away so that these can be shared on their return. Scrapbooks linked to shared reading books from the charity Reading Force are also available.

SCHOOL LEADER ADVICE

Working with parents is vital in ensuring a smooth transition for our children. It supports the family as a whole and gives them a positive start in their new home and community. Moving house and going to a new school is a huge change for children, but it also massively impacts their families.

We hold a weekly coffee morning: this has been invaluable, as it gives parents a point of contact when they first start at the school and helps them feel like they belong to the wider school community.

●● My son was very nervous of what was to come from moving to yet another new location and new school. The headteacher came out to his school in Dhekelia in March last year to meet the children who would be attending the school. She brought along information on the school and spoke about the school to myself and my son. That helped him massively as from that short conversation he started to feel confident and excited for the future.

(Parent)