

SUPPORTING BEREAVED MILITARY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STAFF AT THE TIME OF REMEMBRANCE



Thank you for showing an interest in helping your students at the time of Remembrance. Bereaved children are often described as the forgotten mourners, so your support is appreciated.

SCOTTY'S LITTLE SOLDIERS:

Scotty's Little Soldiers is a charity dedicated to supporting children and young people (aged 0 to 25) who have experienced the death of a parent who served in the British Armed Forces.

Inspired by the experience of Army widow Nikki Scott, following the death of her husband Corporal Lee Scott in Afghanistan in 2009, the charity, which was set up in 2010, provides support and guidance to hundreds of bereaved military children and young people throughout their childhood and into adulthood.

Scotty's provides its members with access to bereavement support, outstanding development opportunities and the chance to smile again.

SIGNIFICANT DATES IN BEREAVEMENT:

There are many significant dates during the year that can impact on a child or young person's emotional wellbeing as a result of their bereavement. For our Scotty Members, and other children and young people who have experienced the death of a parent who served in the British Armed Forces, the lead up to Remembrance Day, and the day itself, can be a challenging and emotional time for them and their families.

Many of our Members have told us they don't feel their school understands how they feel. This can make them feel isolated and alone in their grief. We know that schools and colleges do their best to promote their student's wellbeing, however we are told that staff don't always know the best way to support a student who has experienced the death of a significant person in their lives. This guidance has been produced to help you to support those students for whom Remembrance is a particularly poignant time.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND FOR HELPING TO SUPPORT BEREAVED
BRITISH FORCES CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.**

If you know a child who has experienced the death of a parent who served in the British Armed Forces, please encourage their family to get in touch:

www.scottyslittlesoldiers.co.uk

OUR TIPS FOR TEACHERS

- Ask the student what support they feel they need and involve them in any plans being made to help them. Be clear about who is available and best placed to provide them with support when life feels overwhelming. We have created a special Scotty's Remembrance 'Time Out' card, which our members could use if your school agrees to it.
- Remember that a bereaved child's concentration levels can suffer due to their bereavement. This may mean they need a little extra help keeping up with their schoolwork.
- Please ensure the two-minute silence is observed in your school, preferably at the correct time. Our members tell us how proud they are during this moment, as they remember their parent with the rest of the nation. Some schools choose to hold the silence later in the day, as they find it easier. This can be incredibly upsetting for our members, as they feel their parent doesn't receive the recognition they deserve for their service to their country.
- Bereaved military children may not react well if other students or staff are being disrespectful during the silence. Please challenge such behaviour. It is important for peers and adults to learn and understand.
- Everyone mourns, yet we have had examples of our male Members being told to "man up" by staff when they get upset. Please be understanding of this issue and help every student to mourn without feeling judged or criticised. A bereaved child can sometimes struggle to keep their emotions 'in check' and may need some time out to regain their composure.
- Please be mindful of any lessons that may impact on a bereaved military child's wellbeing. Discussions about war, conflict and Remembrance may affect them. Please discuss any curriculum subjects with the student prior to a lesson so they know what to expect, or together you can agree that they should work elsewhere instead.
- If any student has a supply teacher during the time of Remembrance, please ensure they are made aware of the child's bereavement and the sensitivities associated with it.
- If a bereaved child has taken time off school or college, they can often be asked questions on their return. Their peers may not always understand why they didn't attend on significant dates. Please help the student to explain this and educate their peers.
- Many of our Members tell us that they have experienced bullying and received offensive remarks because of their bereavement. It can be incredibly demoralising at a time when the student is already in emotional pain. Please help your students deal with such challenges by offering them a safe space to come and talk.
- Encourage the student to tell you about their deceased parent and the work they did in the military. Listen to them. They are proud of their parent's military service and may want to share this information with you.
- Finally, recognise that Remembrance takes place every year. There is no 'getting over it' and their parent's death will upset and impact on the student for many years to come. They may feel different from year to year, so it is worth asking how you can best support them more than once as their answer could change over time.