



‘FESTIVAL OF FRIENDS’ SERVICE PUPILS’ PROJECT 2019/20

Dear Headteacher,

Now that Armed Forces Covenant funding has been secured for this project, the following provides an overview and the commitment expected of participating schools. If you would like your school to be included, please complete the pro-forma at the end and return it to me at matt.blyton@northyorks.gov.uk by **Friday 27th September**.

WHAT IS THE FESTIVAL OF FRIENDS?

It is a model of collaborative activity for supporting Service children in North Yorkshire and York schools, in association with the two universities in York. Its aim is to develop and share good practice, whilst also encouraging Service children and their parents to consider the benefits that Further and Higher Education can have post 16.

It is aimed at ANY school that has Service pupils on its roll, but will be particularly beneficial to the MANY schools which educate just small numbers of Armed Forces children, since these schools may not have given much focus on this potentially vulnerable group in the past. However, schools with large cohorts of Service children are also encouraged to take part in order to trial new national resources, run improvement projects and share their considerable experience. The year-long project will culminate in the actual Festival: an awards ceremony in early September 2020 (**provisionally Thursday 17th September**), hosted by one of the universities, for school staff, pupils and their parents. The ceremony will be preceded by campus tours, an exhibition showcasing some of the school improvement projects and food!

HOW WILL IT WORK?

Working alongside the Service Pupils Champions, I will provide training and support, for up to five **Area Service Pupil Coordinators (ASPCs)**. These school leaders will be willing and able to coordinate and chair four **Area Network meetings** across the year (in November, February, April and June) involving link staff members in participating schools. Those schools providing the ASPCs will be given up to four days’ supply cover to allow their coordinator to attend four half-day training sessions, as well as to administer and organise the network meetings. Teachers aspiring to senior leadership positions might make particularly effective ASPCs, although senior leaders would be also welcomed (if they can commit the time). We are currently looking for two ASPCs for the coast and the Bedale/Dishforth/ Thirsk areas – please let me know if interested.

WHAT WILL A SCHOOL’S COMMITMENT BE?

We are currently recruiting primary, secondary and special schools to the project (30 so far), all of whom will need to identify someone on their staff to act as each school’s **Armed Forces Champion (AFCs)** to attend the four above-mentioned network meetings (which we envisage will be twilight sessions to prevent teaching cover being needed). AFCs might be senior leaders, teachers or support staff members, depending on the school’s context. The important consideration in choosing this person is that he or she will be able and willing to:

- Attend four twilight training / network sessions;
- Disseminate key messages from the network meetings to their school colleagues;
- Oversee a school-based improvement project;
- Join the university celebration event.

WHAT WILL THE FOCUS OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS BE?

The funding secured comes with very clear terms and conditions, including an interim evaluation and the writing of an end of project report of 2000 words, with supporting evidence of impact. I will therefore use some of the funding to publish a booklet of school case studies at the end of the year, to be launched at the awards event.

The covenant grant has been awarded to cover three things:

- Supporting children from Armed Forces families;
- Promoting positive mental health;
- Military and civil integration.

Whilst there will be a great deal of flexibility in the focus of each school's improvement project, we will be offering financial prizes in the following three categories – **anticipated to be £500 per winning primary and secondary in each category (i.e. 6 winners), and associated £200 runners-up awards.** The three categories will be:

1/ Welcoming ethos. Projects aimed at growing awareness and understanding of Service families and their lifestyles amongst teachers and civilian pupils in order to improve Service pupils' health and wellbeing (the Growing Up in North Yorkshire findings from 2018 being a key reference source);

2/ Supporting integration. Projects aimed at developing and promoting effective practices for improving the integration of Service and civilian pupils and families, to raise educational outcomes of the school's Service pupils.

3/ Promoting progression. Projects focussed on promote the progression of Service children e.g. from primary to secondary or into further (FE) / higher (HE) education.

Please note, it is NOT a requirement to enter a project into the awards scheme. Some schools may feel that they are very early stages of developing their practices for this group of children so couldn't develop a case study for an award – that is fine. Examples of some projects run in a similar Hampshire LA Festival included **'The Adventures of Nelson the Sailor Bear' book project; MJS Troopers Diversity Exhibition; Wellington Troupers After School Club; and Knitted Deployment Dolls.**

WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

- Get involved by completing the pro-forma below and sending it to me by Friday 27th September.
- Identify a willing school-based Armed Forces Champion and explain the project to them – they can contact the Service Pupils Champions if they have any questions.
- Publicise your involvement to the whole school community, ensuring you use the Covenant logo at the top of this letter in communications.
- Meet with your school-based champion after they have attended the first Area Network meeting (early November) to finalise your school improvement project, and facilitate him / her to lead it.

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact me, Nickie Young or Jess Greenhalgh.

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FESTIVAL OF FRIENDS 2019/20

School Acceptance form

Name of school _____

Name of school's Armed Forces Champion _____

Armed Forces Champion's email address & contact number _____

By signing this acceptance form to join the project, the school agrees to identify an Armed Forces Champion who will:

- Attend four twilight training / network sessions across the academic year;
- Disseminate key messages from these network meetings to their school colleagues;
- Oversee a school-based improvement project.

The school will also invite representative pupils and parents to attend a university celebration event ('the festival') at the end of the project, anticipated to be in September 2020.

Signature of Headteacher: _____

Date: _____

Please email the completed form to matt.blyton@northyorks.gov.uk