

# **Improving educational outcomes for children and young people from travelling cultures**

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# Contents

<b>Contents</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Ministerial Foreword</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Section 1. Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
Guidance purpose and development	4
Scotland's Travellers	6
The educational context	8
The Traveller educational experience – the evidence	11
<b>Section 2. Leadership and Management</b>	<b>14</b>
Local authority strategic leadership and management	14
Leadership and management in schools	16
Leading improvements in schools	16
Self-evaluation for self-improvement – using intelligence and data to measure impact on learners	21
Leadership of learning and staff development	25
Management of resources to promote equity	27
<b>Section 3. Learning Provision</b>	<b>29</b>
Curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment	30
Personalised support	37
Involving Traveller families in learning	40
Transitions	42
<b>Section 4. Annexes</b>	<b>46</b>
Annex A. The policy and legislative context	46
Annex B. Sources of information, advice and support on specific matters related to Travellers	51
Annex C. Reflection	53
<b>Responding to this Consultation</b>	<b>55</b>

# Ministerial Foreword

[To be added post-consultation prior to final publication]

## Section 1. Introduction

- Guidance purpose and development
- Scotland's Travellers
- The educational context
- The Traveller educational experience – the evidence

### Guidance purpose and development

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to schools, including early learning and childcare settings (ELC<sup>1</sup>), and local authorities about how they can support Traveller children and young people and their families to engage in school education so as to improve their life outcomes. It:

- sets out the context for supporting Traveller children and young people and their families,
- encourages an understanding of the challenges they face in engaging with the education system, and therefore,
- supports schools and local authorities to offer effective, inclusive approaches.

#### Why is guidance necessary?

This guidance has been developed as a direct response to the very real concerns about the achievement of educational outcomes, and therefore life outcomes, by Traveller children and young people. The Scottish Government is committed to enabling all children and young people to reach their full potential and, as is evidenced within this document, Traveller children and young people's educational outcomes are among the worst in Scotland. This guidance is intended to support those working with Traveller children and young people in Scotland's schools and communities in improving educational outcomes over time.

#### Who is this guidance for?

While primarily aimed at schools (including ELC) and local authorities, the guidance will also be useful for health and social care practitioners, those who can support transitions from school, including further and higher education institutions, CLD (Community Learning and Development) organisations, and others who provide support to Traveller families with children. The guidance will also be of use to local authorities when developing their Traveller Education strategies. Traveller families may also find it helpful in providing clarity on Scottish education and to understand how they can best support their children through school.

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<sup>1</sup> The term early learning and childcare settings therefore encompasses settings previously known as nursery classes, pre-school centres, day nurseries, community nurseries, nursery schools etc. and also now includes childminders.

## How to use this guidance

This document is divided into four sections.

- Section 1 provides an introduction which sets the context and provides some evidence of the educational outcomes and educational experience of Traveller children and young people in Scotland.
- Sections 2 and 3 focus on areas for improvement most relevant to Travellers. The information is loosely based around two of the categories for quality indicators used in How Good is Our School 4 (HGIOS4)<sup>2</sup>:
  - Leadership and Management – in schools and classrooms, and also in the wider local authority.
  - Learning Provision – which focuses on educational approaches, as well as the importance of family engagement.
- Section 4 comprises annexes, including a summary of the legislative and policy context and information on further resources.

## How this guidance was developed

The guidance was developed by a diverse working group comprising representatives from local authorities who support Traveller families, including an EAL (English as an additional language) expert, a Traveller teacher, and a head teacher, as well as a health practitioner, and third sector representatives. The group was able to bring a range of perspectives to the guidance, and drew on their wide experience of engaging with Travellers in many different settings. The guidance recognises that the contexts for delivering services for Travellers will vary widely between teachers, schools, and local authorities and therefore signposts to many other sources of guidance and support.

## Terms used in this Guidance

**'Traveller(s)'** is used to refer collectively to those with a mobile lifestyle and/or culture, including, but not exclusively, European Roma, Scottish Gypsy/Travellers and Showpeople or Showmen.

**'School'** should be considered to include early learning and childcare (ELC) provision, unless otherwise specified.

**'Parent'** should be considered to be those with parental responsibilities, including carers.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/Frameworks\\_SelfEvaluation/FRWK2\\_NIHeditHGIOS/FRWK2\\_HGIOS4.pdf](https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/Frameworks_SelfEvaluation/FRWK2_NIHeditHGIOS/FRWK2_HGIOS4.pdf)

## Scotland's Travellers

### The diversity of mobile communities' culture, history and lifestyles

Travelling communities in Scotland are not a single group. There are many different groups. Each is defined by its different history, culture and lifestyle. While each group is made up of extensive family networks, these may have little or no connection with other Traveller groups. Central to each community is its right to self-identity, and to be recognised and respected by the society it lives in. **The different groups may have very different educational experiences and outcomes but what they do share is family lifestyles, which are essentially built around a mobile tradition.**

Some Traveller groups, such as Scottish Gypsy/Travellers and European Roma, will be recognised in law as minority ethnic groups and are therefore afforded legal protection from discrimination on grounds of race under the Equality Act 2010.

When there is concern about use of terminology, or with understanding with which Traveller group a family identifies, it is important to gain information through the family. Written references to Traveller groups should always capitalise the first letter, e.g. 'Gypsy/Traveller', 'Roma', 'Traveller' or 'Showpeople'.

Further information on the most common Traveller groups in Scotland is provided below.

**European Roma** - The recent enlargement of the European Union enabled the Roma to come to the UK from many new European Union countries such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria. Importantly, families will generally identify themselves first in national terms and then as Roma e.g. Slovak Roma or Romanian Roma.

Most families have travelled with the aim of finding work and to seek a good education for their children. The majority also seek to escape violence, racism and discrimination in their countries of origin. Roma are the most impoverished and marginalised ethnic minority in Europe with an estimated population of between 10 and 14 million<sup>3</sup>. They are a very diverse group with many different national and ethnic subgroups.

Roma settle in large groups of extended family networks. Group pride is strongly related to the traditions that arise from specific trades such as horse traders and basket weavers. Key to any Roma family's economic and social survival is its strong sense of responsibility for all family members.

In the UK, Roma tend to be drawn to specific areas. For many families, being able to access better education for their children is one of the factors in the decision to

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<sup>3</sup> See

[https://pure.strath.ac.uk/portal/files/39688102/Sime\\_etal\\_roma\\_families\\_engagement\\_with\\_education.pdf](https://pure.strath.ac.uk/portal/files/39688102/Sime_etal_roma_families_engagement_with_education.pdf)

migrate. They often have negative experiences of education in their home countries. Scotland's more inclusive system means they often find education a positive experience and therefore Roma children are more likely to attend school.

**Scottish Gypsy/Travellers** identify themselves variously as Gypsy/Travellers, Gypsies, or simply as Travellers. Regardless of whether families currently live a mobile lifestyle or are 'settled' in a house, they continue to identify with the travelling community and have a strong commitment to the maintenance and development of their Traveller identity, lifestyle and culture.

Young people become part of the extended working families from an early age and assume adult roles and responsibilities. Gypsy/Traveller young people, therefore, may not easily adapt to the stark contrast of age-specific grouping in schools.

Scottish Gypsy/Travellers share many cultural features with European Roma communities, such as a belief in the importance of extended family bonds and family descent, a preference for self-employment, and a strong commitment to a nomadic lifestyle. Other cultural practices, such as the common preference to marry within the community, a choice many families make to withdraw children from school at an early age, or not engaging with formal education at all, were and are ways of maintaining their cultures and lifestyles as different from non-Traveller settled communities.

**Showpeople** bring fairgrounds to locations across the UK. Many Showpeople also travel further afield to attend European fairs. Wherever they travel there is an expectation that the whole family will contribute towards the life of the fair. Showpeople make up a business/cultural community who self-define in terms of their livelihoods. Showpeople's distinctive identity is built on their tradition of bringing entertainment and other services to local communities. Scottish Showpeople share in this strong cultural identity and have a long, proud history of living and working in Scotland. In recent years Show families have recognised the importance of education to their future livelihoods and many have adapted their children's travelling patterns to accommodate school terms.

### **Social attitudes**

The Scottish Government recognises that, as a group, Gypsy/Travellers experience widespread discrimination and marginalisation. The [2010 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey](#) found widespread discriminatory attitudes towards Gypsy/Travellers and that public attitudes had changed little, if at all, since 2006.

The Survey included two sets of detailed questions relating to employment and personal relationships. It showed:

- 46% of respondents considered that Gypsy/Travellers would be unsuitable as primary school teachers
- 37% said they would be unhappy if a close relative entered into a long-term relationship with a Gypsy/Traveller

The portrayal of Gypsy/Travellers in the media can provide a stark reflection of the deep-rooted prejudices held towards this community. Amnesty International's [research](#)<sup>4</sup> into media reporting of Scottish Gypsy/Travellers found that a significant number of articles, which appear in the print media perpetuate prejudicial views of Scottish Gypsy/Travellers. Similarly, in 2016, Article 12 [reported](#)<sup>5</sup> that 'a vast majority [of media articles] fell within the categories of negative, discriminatory and racist'.

## The educational context

Given the background, context and evidence set out in this Introduction, it is clear that tensions remain between the maintenance of a mobile tradition and culture and the need to ensure that the children and young people can access an education that allows them to reach their full potential.

Mobility is a feature in today's society and it is becoming more common for children and young people to move between homes, towns and countries and therefore for children and their families to experience multiple transitions between schools. Traveller families' lifestyles are essentially built around a mobile tradition and they can encounter challenges in engaging with and accessing education due to the practical barriers associated with being mobile as well as the cultural differences which may exist between them and settled populations. A partnership approach between families, authorities and agencies is needed to overcome these barriers in order that Traveller children's rights, entitlements and potential can be realised.

In some local authorities and schools in Scotland, proactive efforts have been made to engage and support these children and young people and their families. There is evidence of emerging and established good practice, some of which is included in this guidance. However, overall progress is slow and in some areas activity to support Travellers is limited. Without appropriate engagement and support, educational outcomes for Traveller children are likely to continue to be poor. This guidance is intended as a tool to support that improvement.

### Right to education

Like all children and young people in Scotland, Travellers have rights to education under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC). These rights have been incorporated in Scots Law under section 1 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 which sets out the right of every child of school age to be provided with school education by, or through arrangements made by, an education authority. In carrying out their duty to provide education, education authorities must under section 2(1) of that same Act secure that the education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential. Local authority schools are fundamental to the discharge of these duties.

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4 Amnesty International (2012) Caught in the Headlines. Scottish media coverage of Scottish Gypsy Travellers.  
5 Article 12 in Scotland - Young Gypsy Travellers' Lives: On-Line Media Audit 2011 – 2014, Consolidated Report, January 2016



It should be noted that separately an education authority has a duty under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to secure adequate and efficient provision of education in their area, regardless of whether the children are nationals of the UK or some other state.<sup>6</sup> The parents of such children are under an obligation to ensure their children are educated (whether at school or otherwise).<sup>7</sup>

## **Entitlements**

Within Scotland's inclusive education framework, Traveller children and young people have entitlements under:

- Curriculum for Excellence which provides the flexible framework to meet the needs of all learners,
- A legislative framework of additional support for learning to help overcome barriers to learning<sup>8</sup>,
- 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC), the national approach based on children's and young people's rights which through partnership working supports the wellbeing of children and young people.

## **Teacher responsibilities**

All teachers in local authority schools in Scotland must be registered with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS). The Professional Standards for Teachers<sup>9</sup> place Professional Values and Personal Commitment at their core. The first of these is Social Justice, which is particularly relevant as it involves

- committing to the principles of democracy and social justice through fair, transparent, inclusive and sustainable policy and practices in relation to all protected characteristics, including race, and ethnicity, and;
- valuing as well as respecting social, cultural and ecological diversity and promoting the principles of local and global citizenship for all learners

## **Parental responsibilities**

Parents and carers have a legal duty to provide to their child an "efficient education" which is "suitable to the age, ability and aptitude" of the child<sup>10</sup>. Parents have a right to choose whether to send their child to school (whether a public or independent school) or to home educate. They should have regard to the child's views, as well as any additional support needs they may have, when making this decision. Parents will usually require consent to withdraw a child from school in order to home educate if the child has begun attendance there.

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6 Section 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980

7 Section 30 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980

8 The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004

9 <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-standards/professional-standards.aspx>

10 Section 30 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980

## A partnership approach to education

Within this inclusive educational context it is essential that a partnership approach is taken in pursuit of a goal which is shared by children and young people, parents, schools, local authorities and the Scottish Government. We should all have high expectations that young people enter the senior phase of the curriculum, achieve the [four capacities](#), and go on to realise positive, sustained destinations.

## SCOTLAND'S WHITE GYPSY/TRAVELLERS

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**50% OF GYPSY/TRAVELLERS AGED 16 AND OVER HAVE NO QUALIFICATIONS COMPARED TO 27% OF THE POPULATION AS A WHOLE**

**28.1% OF GYPSY/TRAVELLER** 

**LEAVERS LEFT SCHOOL WITH NO QUALIFICATIONS AT SCQF LEVEL 3 OR HIGHER, COMPARED TO 1.9% FOR ALL SECONDARY SCHOOL LEAVERS**

**69.8% GYPSY/TRAVELLER SCHOOL LEAVERS WERE IN A POSITIVE FOLLOW-UP DESTINATION, COMPARED TO 91.9% FOR ALL SECONDARY SCHOOL LEAVERS**



**GYPSY/TRAVELLER PUPILS HAVE THE LOWEST ATTENDANCE OF ANY ETHNIC GROUP – 79.5% COMPARED TO THE 93.7% SCOTLAND AVERAGE** 

**THE GYPSY/TRAVELLER EXCLUSION RATE IS 75 PER 1,000 PUPILS COMPARED TO 27 PER 1,000 FOR ALL PUPILS**



**48.1% OF GYPSY/TRAVELLER PUPILS RECEIVE ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING** 

## The Traveller educational experience – the evidence

This sub-section presents evidence which demonstrates that Gypsy/Travellers have poor outcomes and experiences in Scottish education. Although in some cases the evidence is limited to data about Gypsy/Travellers specifically, we know from anecdotal evidence and wider research that other Traveller groups may be similarly disadvantaged.

### A note about statistical evidence

The Scottish Government captures statistics for the ethnic group 'White Gypsy/Traveller'. In the analysis below, these statistics have been used to give an **indicative** picture of numbers of Gypsy/Traveller children in schools, their educational outcomes and other related factors. However, it is important to note that:

- There are many Travellers who attend school who, while fitting the description for the White Gypsy/Traveller ethnic group, would choose not to disclose themselves as such, to a greater degree than is common with other groupings.
- There will be many travellers attending school who belong to a distinct Traveller group which cannot be identified through these statistics. For example it is impossible to identify Roma children and young people as a separate group through these statistics.
- Fluctuations in population and small numbers mean that year on year comparisons for the White Gypsy/Traveller ethnic group may not be fully reliable. Changes in population numbers may also impact on number of children attending schools.
- Anecdotally, we know that some Traveller children and young people never attend school, but we have no statistics to measure the extent of this non-attendance.

### Achievement and attainment

“There are no inherent reasons why a child from Traveller community should not achieve as well as any other child”<sup>11</sup>

As a group, Gypsy/Travellers' outcomes in terms of attainment and positive destinations are among the worst in Scottish education. The following data is taken from two year averages. Percentages in brackets are for 2012/13 and 2013/14.

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<sup>11</sup> Moving Forward together: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller achievement, Department for Children, Schools and Families, UK, 2009

- 2013/14 and 2014/15 leavers data<sup>12</sup>, shows that 69.8% (59.6%) of leavers recorded as 'White – Gypsy/Traveller' were in a positive follow-up destination, compared to 91.9% (91.0%) for all publicly funded secondary school leavers
- 2013/14 and 2014/15 leavers data, shows that:
  - 28.1% (20.8%) of leavers recorded as 'White - Gypsy/Traveller' left school with no qualifications at SCQF level 3 or higher, compared to 1.9% (1.6%) for all publicly funded secondary school leavers;
  - 42.2% (41.5%) of leavers recorded as 'White - Gypsy/Traveller' left school with 1 or more qualifications at SCQF level 5, compared to 84.7% (83.5%) for all secondary school leavers.

An analysis of 2011 Census data<sup>13</sup> presents some important education variables for Gypsy/Travellers age 16 plus compared to the general population:

- 50% of Gypsy/Travellers aged 16 and over had no qualifications<sup>14</sup> compared to 27% of the population as a whole
- Only 16% of Gypsy/Travellers held Level 4 or above (degree) qualifications compared to 26% of the population as a whole
- 38% of Gypsy/Travellers age 16-24 were full-time students compared to 46% of the general population in this age group.

### Transitions and retention

Although it is not possible to obtain from published statistics the actual number of Travellers attending school (see '[a note about statistics](#)' above), the numbers of children and young people who are ascribed to the ethnic group '[White Gypsy/Traveller](#)' enrolled in schools is increasing year on year<sup>15</sup>. In 2011, 737 Gypsy/Traveller children and young people were enrolled in schools (558 in Primary Schools and 171 in Secondary schools), compared to 1,060 Gypsy/Traveller children and young people enrolled (812 in Primary and 228 in Secondary) in 2015. It is not known whether the increase is due to a growth in the Traveller population in Scotland, or because of an increased engagement with school education, or both.

Anecdotal evidence, and calculations comparing numbers of Traveller children in P7 to numbers in S1 the following year, show that many Traveller children in school do not complete the broad general education (BGE) or progress to senior stage but are withdrawn from formal education at the end of primary school.

Anecdotal evidence also indicates that there are many Traveller children who do not attend school, either because they have been withdrawn to be home educated or because they have always been home educated. However, data which would allow us to assess the extent of home schooling for Travellers is not collected nationally.

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<sup>12</sup> Because of small numbers, two year average is used. See here for source data available <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/Datasets>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/12/5103/8>

<sup>14</sup> See <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/12/5103/8> for definitions

<sup>15</sup> Fluctuations in population and small numbers mean that year on year comparisons may not be fully reliable. Changes in population numbers may also impact on number of children attending schools, but are not known for 2014.

## Attendance

There is a correlation between attendance and attainment. Pupils with the lowest rates of attendance demonstrate the highest rates of underachievement.<sup>16</sup>

In Scotland, overall, school attendance rates have increased in the last few years. However, White Gypsy/Traveller pupils enrolled in school continue to have the lowest attendance rates of any ethnic group at 79.5% in 2014/15 compared to the 93.7% Scotland average. It follows that Gypsy/Traveller children and young people, and other mobile children whose attendance is irregular, are missing out on time in education compared to other children.

## Bullying, Relationships and Behaviour

Children who hold some protected characteristics, including those from a minority ethnic group such as Gypsy/Travellers, may be more susceptible to bullying. Although the extent of this risk is not known, we know that bullying can impact negatively on attendance; parents have particularly strong concerns about allowing their children to attend secondary schools.<sup>17</sup>

It is worth noting that the 2015 research [Mental health and wellbeing among adolescents in Scotland: profile and trends](#) found that the number and nature of friendships, as well as views on school and school-work, are the key drivers of mental health and wellbeing among girls and boys.

## Exclusions

Although in Scotland the rate of exclusions continues to fall for all local authority pupils – from 33 per 1,000 in 2012/13 to 27 per 1,000 in 2014/15 - exclusions for Gypsy/Travellers have increased over the same period from 58 to 75 per 1,000 pupils<sup>18</sup>. Research in England reported that “Gypsy/Roma boys and girls of Irish Traveller heritage were the ethnic groups most likely to experience exclusion from school, and boys in these groups were twice as likely as girls to be excluded.”<sup>19</sup>

## Additional Support for Learning

2015 data shows a relatively high percentage of Gypsy/Travellers recorded as receiving additional support for learning at 48.1% of pupils compared to 22.5% for all other ethnicities combined. This compares to 42.1% and 20.7% respectively in 2014.

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<sup>16</sup> Welsh Government, (2014a) ‘Academic achievement by pupil characteristics, 2013,’ SB 29/2014, *Statistical Bulletin*, 27 March, Cardiff: National Statistics.

<sup>17</sup> Gwynedd Lloyd & Gilleen McCluskey (2008) Education and Gypsies/Travellers: ‘contradictions and significant silences’ , *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 12:4, 331-345

<sup>18</sup> Fluctuations in population and small numbers mean that year on year comparisons may not be fully reliable. For example, one or two pupils being excluded numerous times could account for the difference.

<sup>19</sup> Reducing inequalities in school exclusion: learning from Good Practice (University of Sussex, 2013)

## Section 2. Leadership and Management

### How good is our leadership and approach to improvement for the education of Traveller children and young people?

This section aligns with existing policy and guidance to illustrate where leaders and managers can improve outcomes for Travellers. Where appropriate, reference is made to the Leadership and Management Quality Indicators (QIs), [How Good is Our School 4](#) (HGIOS4). This section is organised around the following headings and sub-headings:

- Local authority strategic leadership and management
- Leadership and management in schools
- Leading improvements in schools
- Self-evaluation for self-improvement – using intelligence and data to measure impact on learners
- Leadership of learning and staff development
- Management of resources to promote equity

### Local authority strategic leadership and management

By adopting an ethos, culture and values which demonstrate a strong commitment to inclusion and diversity, a local authority will provide a good grounding for supporting Travellers in schools. In line with their public sector equality duty (PSED), local authorities should assess and review, and if necessary revise, all policies and practices which will impact, directly or indirectly, on the education of Traveller children and young people.

Local authority policies, guidance and systems for which Traveller needs should be considered include:

- Attendance
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), including Named Person arrangements where these have been put in place
- Parental engagement
- Curriculum
- Inclusion
- Additional Support for learning
- Relationships and positive behaviour, including anti-bullying, attendance and exclusions
- School admissions/ enrolment/ placements
- Home education
- Children Missing from Education (CME)
- Childcare and nursery provision
- Translator arrangements
- Digital Learning
- SEEMiS (School management information system)
- Forthcoming planning and reporting on the duty to reduce pupil's inequalities of educational outcomes under the Education (Scotland) Act 2016

It may be necessary to involve a range of partners in developing education policies that will support Travellers, particularly where families have no history of engaging with schools. In this case health, social services, housing and Traveller Education Network (TENET) partners ought to be involved. These partners can bring the voice of Traveller children and their parents to bear when developing policies and procedures.

Also, education authorities are encouraged to work together at a strategic level, in line with emerging practice, to address topics of regional significance relating to Traveller education. For example, under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, local authorities can reserve places in schools which might reasonably be required for pupils likely to move into the catchment area of the school during the school year, and intelligence from other local authorities on Traveller mobility patterns might help local authorities plan in this regard.

As part of the cycle of planning and review, SEEMiS (School management information system) data can be used by local authorities to drive improvements. For example, where data indicates that few Travellers who attend primary school transition to secondary school, local authorities are encouraged to work with the local secondary schools to explore patterns of transition and plan for improvements. It is important that each local authority has, and shares with schools, appropriate procedures for using SEEMiS to record data for Traveller pupils, despite the challenges for the system that mobility can pose.

The use of an evidence base to drive improvements is particularly relevant in light of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016 imposing a duty on education authorities to have due regard to the need to reduce pupils' inequalities of educational outcomes together with a duty to report progress. The associated [National Improvement Framework](#) will support this work.

Finally, but very importantly, local authorities need to consider, strategically, how they manage resources to support the improvement of educational outcomes for Travellers. Decisions around allocation of resources to support projects or schools to improve equity should to be evidence based, systematically monitored and regularly reviewed by the local authority to ensure that Travellers are not disadvantaged.

It is recognised that those working most closely with families have the greatest opportunity to build and sustain relationships; therefore much of this guidance is directed to schools.

## Leadership and management in schools

A school's leadership team, and particularly the headteacher, has a fundamental role in raising and improving the achievement and attainment of children and young people from Traveller communities as well as raising the expectations of parents and families from these communities. They should consider the particular circumstances that Traveller children might face more often than other children, and then take action to mitigate the effects of these circumstances on their learning. A key aspect in engaging travelling communities in education is recognising the value of diversity and ensuring that equality and social justice are addressed in all aspects of the school's work. To effectively lead improvements in Traveller education, school leaders need to create the conditions in their school for change, ensure that their aspirations are well understood by all involved, and lead the school to continually improve. School senior management teams should recognise and support leadership at all levels within their school community.

Schools should not assume that they have no Traveller children or young people on their roll or in their catchment area, but should check with other colleagues or partners. For example, local authority education colleagues who are part of the Traveller Education Network (TENET), as well as housing colleagues, are likely to be aware if there are Travellers in the local community. Subject to information sharing protocols, Health partners may also be able to advise.

From time to time, school leaders may require to access advice, information and support from colleagues in relation to specific matters. Annex B provides a summary of resources available.

## Leading improvements in schools

The media frequently represents Traveller lifestyles negatively and, as a result, some travelling families can feel that they are wrongly branded with media-generated stereotypical behaviours such as crime, low hygiene and care standards, and even child neglect. Traveller communities can view any direct involvement by services, including education, as an unwelcome intrusion into their private lives. To mitigate families' concerns about officialdom and intrusion into their lives, school leaders may need to work to build trusting relationships with travelling communities. The following section sets out how this can be achieved.



## An inclusive school ethos

'We are committed to ensuring that we achieve the highest possible standards and success for all learners.....Our vision evolves through ongoing reflection and debate across the school and community.....These are shaped by our clear understanding of the social, economic and cultural context in which children, young people and their families live alongside our awareness of current policy and practice. Through effective leadership at all levels, our community works together to turn the shared vision into a sustainable reality.'

From Section 1.3, Leadership of change – Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community, How Good is Our School 4 (HGIOS4).<sup>20</sup>

The starting point for learning is a positive ethos and climate of respect and trust based upon shared values across the school community, including parents of children and young people. However, for many Travellers, this is not their experience. Improvement must therefore start with 'developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community'<sup>21</sup>. With strong leadership and vision, schools can create a positive, inclusive culture and ethos which creates a safe and welcoming place for all Traveller children to learn, develop and thrive. Nurturing approaches are likely to be of particular value to Traveller children.

## Policies and policy development

The school's policies and procedures bring the vision, values and aims alive. Policies which recognise and provide for addressing the concerns of Travellers and the particular barriers to inclusion they face will demonstrate that school leaders are serious about the aims they have set. Schools should involve Traveller pupils and their parents in developing such policies and should adapt approaches to parental engagement to meet the particular needs of Traveller families. Policies should address barriers experienced by Travellers and improvement plans should clearly support an inclusive experience for children and young people from Traveller communities. (See the [Learning Provision](#) section for guidance on engaging with Traveller families).

For example, research cites<sup>22</sup> that, for Gypsy Traveller children and young people, concerns about safety and previous experience of discriminatory behaviour, including experiences of parents, are negative factors which may lead to low levels of enrolment and poor attendance and affect transitions into and between schools. Concerns about bullying are particularly acute for secondary schools, which may be seen as risky and unsafe by some families.

Traveller families are likely to therefore benefit from the reassurance of a clearly developed anti-bullying policy. The policy should be clear that the school strongly

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<sup>20</sup> HGIOS is designed to promote effective self-evaluation as the first important stage in a process of achieving self-improvement.

<sup>21</sup> HGIOS 4 Section 1.3 reference

<sup>22</sup> Derrington, C. (2005). Gypsy Traveller students in secondary schools: perceptions of behaviour and patterns of exclusion. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 5 (2), - 55-61

promotes equality, and that all forms of discrimination are challenged. Traveller parents and children should be invited to voice their concerns about bullying, during policy development as well as in response to specific incidents. They should be clear about what actions they can take and who they should approach in the event of bullying incidents. The national anti-bullying service [respectme](#) can provide support to schools to review, formulate, implement and evaluate anti-bullying policies. They can also provide training, information and support with guidelines, procedures and monitoring. The Scottish Government's refreshed National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People [currently being refreshed - include future published date and link to refreshed guidance once known] includes a greater focus on prejudice-based bullying.

"Travellers have a great sense of justice and have high expectations around respect for others."

Primary School Teacher

Given the impact of interrupted learning and extended absence from school due to periods of travel, schools need to be mindful that policies and approaches to enrolment, transition and attendance may impact Traveller children disproportionately. Scottish Government guidance [Included, Engaged and Involved – Part 1: Attendance in Scottish Schools \(2007\)](#) provides specific guidance on managing authorised absence for Traveller children and wider guidance on promoting good attendance. [STEP](#) provides advice about keeping in touch with children and young people and their families during periods of mobility, and around supporting learning during these periods so that they continue to learn and remain engaged. (See also the Learning Provision sub-section on [Transitions](#))

Similarly, given the relatively high proportion of Travellers excluded from schools, policies around positive behaviour and exclusion are also likely to impact Traveller pupils more than others. The national guidance [Better Relationships, Better Learning, Better Behaviour](#) encourages the development and implementation of school policies which promote positive behaviour and relationships through whole school ethos and values; while the revised guidance [Included Engaged and Involved Part 2: a positive approach to managing school exclusions](#) [due to publish 2016 – add link once published] guides schools to consider contributing factors, including protected characteristics, when making decisions related to exclusion. For example, staff should reflect on the triggers which may lead to a Traveller child or young person acting in a challenging way, particularly where there is a risk of exclusion, and put in place a plan which clearly outlines strategies that staff should use to support behaviour.

In all these cases, considering Travellers needs during development and review of policies and approaches provides a significant opportunity to impact *positively* on the education of a Traveller child or young person. Leaders should also routinely measure the impact that their policies have on Traveller children and young people's learning experiences. (See sub-section [Self-evaluation for self-improvement](#) below).

“Our nurture programmes have been age and stage appropriate and really supported our boy Travellers who often feel they can’t discuss their feelings. It has contributed to their positive feelings about school.”

Primary Headteacher

## **GIRFEC**

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) is the national approach in Scotland to improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of children and young people by offering, if needed, the right help at the right time from the right people. GIRFEC requires services to work together and in partnership with children, young people and their parent(s) to support children and young people’s wellbeing.

Under the GIRFEC approach, making available a clear point of contact or ‘named person’ ensures that there is someone who has responsibility for helping children and young people get the support they need, if and when they want it. It is also a clear point of contact for parents should they wish to seek advice or if they wish to discuss a concern about the wellbeing of their child.

Named persons are also a point of contact for other services if they have concerns about a child’s or young person’s wellbeing. This helps to ensure services can provide more effective support for children, young people and their parents by being better coordinated. Generally the responsibility for providing a named person service lies with the NHS board before the child starts primary school and the local authority once the child is of school age.

It is recognised that Traveller children often have a non-standard use of the universal services of health and education, and in some cases can experience difficulty accessing services. For this reason, local authorities may need to give particular consideration to arrangements to make a named person available to Traveller children while they are living in their area. These arrangements should be responsive to the needs of children and families where ever they are in Scotland, and sensitive to cultural diversity and difference. Specific considerations may apply in respect of Traveller children, depending on the nature of their engagement with services and their pattern of residence and travel.

## **Practice Insight**

A primary school invited two Traveller parents and their children to a meeting to contribute to the development of the school’s anti-bullying policy. A member of the local secondary school staff (a depute headteacher) also attended. As a result, a section of the policy was dedicated to teachers taking positive action against race-related (specifically Gypsy/Traveller) bullying through whole class sessions. The Traveller parents felt that the school understood their concerns, that they were being listened to and that their contribution was valued. It also engendered positive relations with the secondary school, therefore contributing to the possibility of positive transitions.

## Practice Insight

A headteacher's tips for enrolling new Traveller children

- On the first visit provide a tour of the school led by the school's key contact person for day-to-day contact with Traveller pupils and their families. Introduce the child's teacher and the head teacher if available. This will help the parents and child feel included, part of the school, straightaway.
- Let parents know what documents you need to formally enrol the child – birth certificates etc. – and ask them to let the key contact person know of any problems in supplying the documents. Staff should support families through this process, particularly where the enrolment is non-standard.
- Provide support to parents during enrolment, for example by offering to fill in the form for them if they would like to tell you the information. Do this sensitively. For example, to save embarrassing a parent with limited literacy skills say 'If you just want to tell me the information, I'll fill in the form if you would like'.
- Ask if the Traveller already knows someone in the school community – a parent of a child already at school for example – and consider if their acquaintance can help in some way to support the transition into the school.
- Don't be tempted to visit a Traveller site or a Traveller's home without an invitation. Although this would be done with good intentions, this may be considered intrusive and is potentially counter-productive.

"Success for us has been welcoming the travelling family into our community, making contact with them from the beginning."

Primary Headteacher

## Reflection

- How effective are our processes for involving local families from mobile cultures in the ongoing review of our vision, aims and values?
- How effective are the links with other agencies and people (eg social work services, local health board, CLD (Community Learning and Development), Traveller Education Network (TENET)) in engaging and addressing the needs of the Traveller community, including families where children are not at school?
- How effectively are incidents relating to racial discrimination acted upon to ensure lessons are learnt and prevent future occurrences?
- Are staff up to date with processes for travelling communities and are our systems regularly reviewed?

## Further information

- The report '[Improving Outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Pupils](#)' (Wilkin et al, 2014) sets out six constructive conditions which appeared instrumental in impacting positively on education to improve outcomes: safety

and trust; Respect; Access and Inclusion; Flexibility; High Expectations; Partnership.

- Respectme <http://respectme.org.uk/>
- “A National approach to anti-bullying for Scotland’s children and young people”, SG 2010 <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2010/11/12120420/0> [currently being refreshed - include future publication date and link to refreshed guidance once known]
- Included Engaged and Involved Part 2: a positive approach to managing school exclusions [currently being refreshed – include future publication date and link to refreshed guidance once known]

## Self-evaluation for self-improvement – using intelligence and data to measure impact on learners

‘The most important thing is being able to demonstrate impact in relation to improved outcomes for your learners. To achieve this you must continuously track and monitor children and young people’s successes and achievements and use your self-evaluation to identify where your school is performing well and where it could do better. Weaknesses in these outcomes are usually the result of weaknesses within the learning provision or leadership and management, and often both. Where outcomes are either not improving or deteriorating, you need to take swift action.’  
HGIOS4, 2015

[How Good Is Our School 4](#) (HGIOS4) provides guidance on supporting and developing effective self-evaluation. To understand how to impact the educational outcomes for children and young people in their schools, school leaders need to ensure that self-evaluation, supported by robust analysis of a range of intelligence and data, is the norm and that all staff recognise and actively participate in this approach to continuous improvement. Only by drawing on intelligence will schools be able to answer the questions ‘how are we doing’ and ‘how do we know’ which are key to self-improvement and then go on to decide ‘what are we going to do now?’ The introduction of the [National Improvement Framework](#), aimed at achieving excellence and equity in Scottish education, will provide schools with new and better information to help identify where improvement is needed.

The following table sets out some examples of data and intelligence which is likely to be key to improving Traveller outcomes. This data and intelligence will be useful for the senior management team, but it is important that teachers and other staff also draw on it, consider how it can inform improvements that will support their Traveller children and young people, test those improvements and then measure the impact of the changes they make.

Data/ intelligence relating to:	Reflective questions and how the data/ intelligence might be used
Attendance	How does attendance of Traveller children when they are in school compare to non-Travellers?  If children attend other schools whilst travelling, do you have

	arrangements for sharing information with those other schools?
Exclusions and behaviour	<p>What does data/ intelligence tell you about the behaviour of Traveller pupils?</p> <p>Do you understand the reasons behind any negative behaviour and have they been considered in developing plans and strategies to support behaviour?</p>
Record of racist incidents	<p>Do you capture information about race or other relevant characteristics in your incident reporting?</p> <p>Are Travellers more likely to experience a racist incident, and if so, do you understand why?</p> <p>Are your school's ethos and values clear that racism will not be tolerated?</p> <p>Could your anti-bullying policy do more to prevent incidents?</p>
Feedback from pupils and parents (including on engagement, enjoyment, and health and wellbeing)	<p>What does this tell you about how well you are meeting their needs?</p> <p>Do you need to do more to seek and enable good feedback?</p>
Parental engagement	<p>What levels of parental engagement (eg attendance at parent's evenings) do you have with Traveller families compared to others?</p> <p>How effectively are parental engagement approaches adapted to meet the particular needs of Traveller families?</p>
Evidence of considering Traveller children's cultural background	<p>Do you provide relevant and meaningful learning activities which reflect the cultural background of Traveller children?</p> <p>Do you promote personal development and encourage pupils' self-esteem, cultural identity, aspirations and career choice?</p> <p>Are you taking into account culture differences and inter-personal relationships to develop appropriate, and sometimes flexible, learning opportunities to suit individual learning styles?</p>
Transitions data	What does transitions data tell you about the effectiveness of

	<p>transitions arrangements for Traveller children?</p> <p>Do you have effective practices for promptly accessing information about children's prior learning (when they either enrol or return to your school) which is then used to develop an appropriate plan for learning?</p> <p>Do you consider whether a personalised transition plan would be of benefit for Traveller children?</p>
Additional support for learning	<p>Do you fully understand the types of additional support needs your Travellers have, or may have?</p> <p>How well does the school meet their additional support needs?</p> <p>What assessments have been undertaken, and what has been the outcome?</p>
Performance data used to track progress and achievement	<p>What does this tell you about progress of Travellers in your school? What do you recognise as 'achievements' and do these reflect achievements relevant to different Traveller cultures?</p> <p>Are targets set for Travellers who experience interrupted learning or other barriers to learning sufficiently stretching?</p> <p>Do you understand what expectations Traveller children have for themselves, and what expectations Traveller parents have for their children?</p>
Attainment and positive destinations	<p>How does data for Travellers compare to data for peers?</p> <p>Do you understand the reasons behind these differences?</p> <p>Do you set stretching targets for Travellers to drive improvements in learning provision?</p>
Evidence of good practice	<p>Do you look for evidence of good practice, in and out of school, and share it with practitioners?</p> <p>Do staff share their experience and learning with colleagues?</p>
The local Traveller community	<p>Do you know whether Travellers live in your school community?</p> <p>What local information will help you better understand your local Traveller community's education needs?</p>

By way of example, schools can use data analysis to support improved attendance so as to positively impact on Traveller children’s educational outcomes. Given the impact on learning and educational outcomes, if data analysis highlights poor attendance which cannot be explained by family mobility, schools should explore the reasons behind the attendance pattern with the pupil and parent. Once the causes are understood, schools can work with the pupil and family to support improved attendance and address any other issues or concerns. Schools should critically review any of their own procedures which may be impacting negatively on attendance levels. Early intervention to address declining attendance is particularly important for older children and young people who are at greater risk of disengaging from education. Effective tracking, monitoring and analysis procedures which are backed up by school leaders and local authority policies will be required to support such work.

“My attendance isn’t very good but I am getting better at it now because I am in a special dance class. They are in the morning so I miss if I am late.”

P6 Traveller

[Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1](#): Attendance in Scottish Schools provides useful guidance around follow-up on absence. Given that some Traveller parents may not speak English or may have limited literacy, schools should be particularly mindful of the advice about communicating with parents about absence.

### **SEEMiS and record keeping**

To be useful, data needs to be accurate. There is flexibility within SEEMiS (the school management information system) to record periods of travel for Traveller children and young people, and schools need to ensure that administration staff follow local authority procedures to ensure that the data is collected and up-to-date. Schools should note that:

- Pupils can be registered on SEEMiS with two schools at the same time. For example, some families arrange for their children to enrol in a ‘base school’ for part of the year and take authorised ‘Extended Leave with Parental Consent’ for periods of travel. The children may temporarily enrol in others schools as they travel, and these schools provide attendance and other data to the ‘base school’.
- The correct SEEMiS code to use when a pupil is travelling for cultural reasons is code 14, see below.
- If there are child protection/wellbeing concerns for a child or young person who is travelling and their whereabouts are unknown and no communication has been made from the family explaining that they will be travelling for a period, Children Missing from Education (CME) procedures must be followed.

<b>Code</b>	<b>Narrative</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
14	Authorised Absence - Travelling as part of culture/tradition	Pupil has permission to travel as part of their tradition, for family connections or



	(Education authority consent required)	work commitments.
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It is critical too that all school records for Travellers are maintained to high standards so that Travellers can have confidence in the accuracy of the information held by the school at any time and particularly at the point of transition. This becomes increasingly important when families are highly mobile and opportunities for planned transitions limited. Authorities will need to identify clear systems for sharing information with receiving schools and authorities

### Practice Insight

A primary school headteacher identified an emerging pattern of some Traveller children not attending school on a Friday. The key Traveller contact member of staff established that some families thought it unnecessary to send their children to school on a Friday, as it was a half-day. Revising the week's timetable so that Friday mornings included creative activities which the Traveller children were known to enjoy, led to attendance rates improving significantly.

### Reflection

- How effective is our communication with families around expectations?
- What range of data and information do we use to understand the social, economic and cultural context of the mobile cultures within our local community?
- How reliable is our evidence of impact on the learning of the pupils?
- How effective are our planning, recording and information transfer processes for children from mobile communities?

## Leadership of learning and staff development

It is likely that many teaching and other school staff may know little about Traveller culture and may have limited understanding of the barriers they can face in accessing an education. Leaders therefore have a responsibility to support *all* staff to develop their knowledge of Travellers and help them understand their own role in improving Travellers' educational experience. This is particularly important in a school which has Traveller children on the roll and in this case staff who engage with Traveller children and their communities should be encouraged to develop their practice in leading learning in this area. However, this is also important for schools that do not have Traveller children on their roll, in which case it is anticipatory matter. In this way all staff will be better prepared should Travellers enrol in the school (which may happen unexpectedly) or may encourage existing pupils to identify themselves as Travellers.

Training for staff, including core aspect for probationer teachers and induction and on-going training for non-teaching staff, needs to include awareness raising around Traveller culture and to examine the challenges that schools and families face in developing positive working relationships. Some of the best learning will come from engaging with children and their families. For example, raising awareness activities

developed with Traveller children can be an effective way of sharing examples of Traveller culture with other staff and children in a positive and interactive way. To enable them to support Travellers, teaching staff should be helped to develop their knowledge and understanding of relevant learning and teaching, family engagement in the classroom, managing distance and digital learning, and monitoring and assessment procedures (particularly during periods of mobility). For teachers, such Career-Long Professional Learning (CLPL) is consistent with the Social Justice element of the GTCS Professional Standards<sup>23</sup> and the Professional Values and Personal Commitment core to being a teacher.

The need to support non-teaching staff in their understanding of Travellers should not be underestimated. Most Traveller families will get their first impression of a school from the office staff and effective relationships at the front desk can go a long way to building a relationship of trust with parents and the Traveller community. It is therefore essential that, in addition to building their knowledge of Traveller culture, office staff are supported to develop the skills they need to engage positively with Travellers, particularly strong interpersonal skills which enable them to engage sensitively and diplomatically.

The leadership of learning and staff development needs to be a continuous process which is reinforced with positive role models. Head teachers need to: set clear expectations; support staff to develop the knowledge and skills they need; monitor and evaluate the impact of staff development interventions on Traveller pupils' progress and relationships with the Traveller community; and then adapt, repeat or reinforce staff development approaches as necessary. For example, a head teacher spending time in the school playground (Traveller parents are likely to bring their children to school) on a regular basis can both encourage feedback from Traveller parents and demonstrate to staff the value of engaging with the family.

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-standards/professional-standards.aspx>

## Practice Insight

“Strong community engagement with some of the most marginalised areas of the local community, for example through the Engaging with Travellers work. This has included making visits to the sites, engaging with the community and building relationships and using this as a vehicle to identify needs.”

Good practice noted by Education Scotland in a secondary school

## Reflection

- How well do all staff understand their role and responsibility in supporting Travellers’ wellbeing?
- To what extent do we critically engage with research, policy sources and developments in learning and teaching for mobile cultures?

## Management of resources to promote equity

School leaders need to promote equity for Travellers in their schools by ensuring that resources are managed in a way which enables the needs of this group of learners to be better met alongside meeting the needs of their other learners. Resource decisions in schools should be evidence-based, systematically monitored and regularly reviewed to ensure that resources are targeted to work and approaches which lead to improved, more equitable outcomes for Travellers. Before fully committing resources, schools should look for research or other evidence from those who have tested the product or approach in other schools or local authority areas, or pilot the product or approach themselves. The impact of Travellers lifestyles should also be considered, for example, resources which aren’t sufficiently flexible to work around a pattern of interrupted education pattern are unlikely to be effective in supporting some Travellers.

Of course, not everything needs to have a financial cost and school leaders should consider how using their existing resources - including premises and staff - effectively and flexibly, can support Travellers. For example, identifying a staff member to act as a key point of contact with Travellers, can have significant benefits (see also [Leadership of learning and staff development sub-section](#)). Also, school leaders can get involved in, or draw on the expertise of, Scotland’s [Traveller Education Network](#) (TENET), a national professional network where ideas around management and resourcing are shared. Many Scottish education authorities encourage their designated Traveller education support staff to join TENET.

“The most successful area for us as a school has been the Performance Programme. Talents have been uncovered from singing and acting to dancing. Parents have made the effort to come in and see their child perform out with school hours and this has contributed immensely to the child’s self-esteem and parents’ experience of school life.”

Primary Headteacher

Investment in staff development is crucial to supporting Travellers through education, and should ensure that the benefits from other resource investments are maximised. For example, by supporting *all* school staff to develop their knowledge and understanding of Traveller culture, the school will become more inclusive and Travellers will benefit as a result (see [Leadership of learning and staff development](#) sub-section).

Schools will want to acquire learning resources to support Travellers and other children who need additional support, for example resources to support EAL learners, resources known to help children quickly catch up on their literacy ability or digital resources which help children continue learning during periods of mobility. Such investments may be significant, and need to be evaluated carefully before committing resources. It is critical too that schools invest in the associated staff training for learning resources, where appropriate, to ensure that the full benefits of such investment are realised.

Schools should consider how the challenges faced by Traveller children and young people might impact on how they arrange and use the learning environment. For example, schools without existing nurture spaces should consider the benefits of creating a space which can be used as a safe or quiet space for Travellers, and other children, particularly at times when they are struggling to transition into a new school or just feeling unsafe. Such a space can also be used to support a ‘soft start’, helping a child prepare themselves for class if they have arrived for school late and/or in an anxious state.

### Reflection

- How effectively do we use our resources to meet the learning needs of children from mobile cultures and ensure equity?
- How reliable is our evidence of impact on the learning of the pupils?
- Do we need to adjust our learning to meet Traveller’s needs, and if so, how?

### Further information

- The revised National Approach to Anti-bullying [include future published date and link once known].
- The revised Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2 [include future published date and link once known].
- [Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1: Attendance in Scottish Schools](#)
- <http://www.step.education.ed.ac.uk/tenet/>
- <http://www.step.education.ed.ac.uk/training-menu/>

## Section 3. Learning Provision

### How good is the quality of the care and education we offer Traveller children and young people?

This section aligns with existing policy and guidance to illustrate where practitioners can improve outcomes for Travellers. Each subsection draws attention to issues where it is common for Traveller communities to benefit from support or positive interventions. Where appropriate, reference is made to the Learning Provision Quality Indicators (QIs), [How Good is Our School 4](#) (HGIOS4). This section is organised around the following headings:

- Curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment
- Personalised support
- Involving Traveller families in learning
- Transitions

#### Travellers' perceptions of education

Most Traveller families can see the benefits of education to the future employment of their children and most will want to take advantage of the services schools can offer. However, some communities can find it difficult to participate in the school education system due to the differences between schools' and their own cultures. Schools and local authorities may need to put in place additional measures to ensure that Travellers experience easier and equitable access to education services. This may involve working with the communities to gain an understanding of their cultural and employment aspirations.

Consideration should be given to the barriers faced by those Travellers who do not attend school as well as those already in education. By engaging with families, staff will learn how Travellers can be supported to attend and services improved. Schools should have information on the mobile families in their community, regardless of how temporary their stay. There may be a need for interventions or partnership work with other agencies to establish initial relationships. Local TENET<sup>24</sup> members will be able to provide information and broker relationships.

#### Practice Insight

"In one secondary school, the headteacher and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to working with Gypsies/Travellers in the area. They have built strong and trusting relationships based on respecting the culture and beliefs of the Gypsies/Travellers. They have equipped a "portacabin" on the site to provide an alternative classroom for children who find it difficult to attend a large secondary school. Key staff help to deliver a good range of subjects to young people in S1 and S2. The curriculum is agreed with parents and has a strong focus on developing

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.step.education.ed.ac.uk/tenet/>

literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Skills-based work is also a feature and successful links with a local college has resulted in evening classes in hairdressing and cookery being offered. A small committee meets regularly with the headteacher to monitor developments and a pupil council is being established.”

From [Promoting Diversity and Equality](#): Developing Responsible Citizens for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scotland

## Curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment

### Curriculum design

The curriculum is all of the experiences that are planned to ensure that young people develop the attributes, knowledge and skills they will need for learning, life and work. Children and young people from Traveller communities have the same entitlement as all other pupils to a coherent curriculum that reflects their rights and wellbeing needs, as well as their cultural and future employment needs. To achieve this, schools will need to engage with and involve a range of stakeholders and agencies, including Traveller parents and young people.

The guidance document '[Promoting Diversity and Equality – Developing Responsible Citizens for 21st Century Scotland](#)' considers good practice examples across the four contexts of Curriculum for Excellence. It demonstrates how support is essential to remove barriers that might restrict young people's access to the curriculum because of their circumstances and illustrates how to make provision for diverse groups including Travellers.

### Learning pathways

It will benefit Traveller families if they can see the value and relevance of the 3 -18 Scottish curriculum for school education and that they can see the benefits of continuity and progression to children's educational outcomes. Accordingly, the children and young people should understand the value of what they are learning and its relevance to their lives, present and future. Learning pathways support the child or young person's journey through their education and the choices made within the pathway help to develop existing skills and knowledge. Schools should be flexible and support young Travellers to select courses and qualifications that will improve their outcomes and prospects for employment. All Travellers should experience learning that;

- recognises prior experiences, particularly those skills which have been gained from their cultural and family based experiences
- provides access to a range of opportunities which will support their skills development needs.
- supports the development of an appropriately challenging and achievable progressive learning pathway designed to meet their needs
- are appropriately challenging and enjoyable and well matched to their needs and interest
- includes opportunities for appropriate tracking and monitoring

“I have been taking travelling children to outdoor residential settings for a number of years and they have been great examples to the other children in terms of taking on the challenges with confidence; they often become the natural leaders of the group.”

Primary School Teacher

Schools should set clear and high expectations for Traveller pupils, which used in conjunction with teacher judgement should inform learning pathways. There will be a need for shared systems to show where Travellers have missed stages in learning due to interruptions.

Pathways should recognise cultural skills and strengths; many Travellers are known to excel in some curricular areas while experiencing difficulties in others creating what might be called a ‘jagged’ profile of learning and achievement. Schools will need to use the flexibility of the curriculum to support Travellers to achieve to the best of their ability in all curricular areas. This will mean supporting them to progress and reach their full potential, without imposing artificial limitations in curricular areas in which they excel. This is particularly important where Travellers may not make the transition to secondary school or the traditional route to further or higher education. Where gaps in learning are identified, Travellers’ learning is known to accelerate quickly with appropriate short-term support.

Significant to learning pathways is the work of the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW)<sup>25</sup> programme which is seeking to ensure a Senior Phase that offers relevant courses to provide young people with skills for life, learning and work. The potential of offering Senior Phase opportunities for accreditation across different forms of vocational learning matches aspirations of Traveller communities and the young people themselves. Effective partnerships between colleges and schools, employers and other strategic partners are pivotal in helping ensure that such opportunities for learning are available to meet the needs of all young people, including Travellers. Colleges have an important role to play in providing support for learners at risk of disengaging from learning,<sup>26</sup> or those who have already disengaged.

“The first time he came home with something he had made himself was remarkable ... it’s not something that his family would have known how to make.”

Gypsy/Traveller mum of boy attending college course

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00511602.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.collegedevelopmentnetwork.ac.uk/projects/curriculum-teaching-and-assessment/developing-the-young-workforce/>

## Learning and engagement

Children and young people from travelling communities are likely to demonstrate higher levels of engagement when they understand how their educational achievements can help develop knowledge and skills for future employment. As some children may come from families where there is no tradition of schooling, or where parents have had negative experiences, it will be important to emphasise how the curriculum is personalised to meet each learners' individual needs. To sustain motivation, learning activities should be appropriately challenging and enjoyable and matched to the learners' interests.

Where children have periods of interruption it will be important that aspects of school life remain constant. Recognition of familiar elements such as school timetables and personal learning intentions will enable them to gain confidence quickly in returning to class learning.

Careful consideration of the range of learning activities and approaches will ensure that the curriculum builds on, and promotes, Traveller young people's learning strengths and their culture and lifestyle. The following features are identified as being motivational, inspiring and relevant to their learning needs<sup>27</sup>:

- Cultural relevance - Young people and their families needed to understand the connections between their learning and its future value. Activities based around active and outdoor learning such as integrating problem-solving and the construction of natural and synthetic materials provide useful starting points for learning, as do entrepreneurial activities such as setting up small businesses, integrating numeracy, literacy and communication skills.
- Leadership and ownership - Opportunities to make use of planning and leadership skills learned from an early age within the Traveller community, including leading learning and taking an active role in the school community. Young people are also concerned that they have a 'voice' and that their views are listened to and acted on.
- Flexibility - Travelling communities need flexibility in both the content and processes of school education. Unpredictable travelling patterns will need additional levels of flexibility. Schools will need to consider how education can be delivered in terms of time, space, contexts, facilitators and forms of delivery.
- Creativity - Opportunities for creative learning in the arts and also in cross-curricular settings are felt to be motivational, perhaps also as Travellers are known to feel challenged by subject-specific boundaries. Creativity is known to arise when activities are presented in a permissive and game-like way.<sup>28</sup> Research cites<sup>29</sup> four conditions for schools to pursue when planning creative learning activities:

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<sup>27</sup> An investigation of family literacy programmes for Scottish Travelling communities and European families. STEP, 2015 <http://www.step.education.ed.ac.uk/research/>

<sup>28</sup> Runco, M. Creativity, *Annual Review of Psychology* Vol. 55: 657-687 (Volume publication date February 2004)

<sup>29</sup> Lindstrom, L. Creativity: What Is It? Can You Assess It? Can It Be Taught?, *International Journal of Art & Design Education* Volume 25, Issue 1, 21 Feb 2006



- giving pupils assignments that extend over a significant period of time and address central themes in subjects to foster investigative work;
  - teachers emphasising both process and product, and providing ample opportunity for research, experimentation and revision to foster inventiveness;
  - encouraging pupils to integrate production with perception and reflection to foster the ability to use models;
  - giving pupils opportunities to assess their performance and to get feedback on explicit criteria from peers and teachers to foster the capacity for self-assessment.
- Accessible formats – The use of several modes or methods (multimodal) should provide alternative and accessible ways of learning. Information and communication are more effective when they take a range of formats, including audio, visual, textual, material and virtual. Activities should offer choice and be appropriately challenging, matched to a range of higher order skills, needs and interests and not restricted by literacy levels.

“Travellers bring a richness to our school. They are skilled story-tellers and are proud of their heritage.”

Primary School Teacher

## Reflection

- To what extent is our school an inclusive learning environment for children and young people from the Traveller community?
- How well does our curriculum planning meet the needs of the Traveller community?
- Are there further opportunities for flexibility in the way we provide education which will benefit Travellers?

## Digital Learning

If used appropriately, digital technology in education can improve educational outcomes in all curricular areas and provide learners with vital digital skills<sup>30</sup>. In recognition of this The Scottish Government is in the process of developing a Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy for Scotland.<sup>31</sup> This will set out a comprehensive approach to digital learning and teaching to allow all learners to benefit from education supported by the use of digital technology. The strategy will be built upon four themes:

- empowering leaders of change to invest and innovate in digital technology to support learning;
- improving access to digital technology for all learners;

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00489224.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/ICTinLearning/DLTStrategy>

- ensuring curriculum and assessment relevance in a digital context; and
- extending the skills and confidence of teachers in the appropriate and effective use of digital technology.

The positive impacts of digital technology also extend to learners from travelling communities. For example, digital technology can support Traveller learners in the following ways:

- Education can be delivered through digital devices and online platforms. Research shows that most Traveller families have access to digital devices<sup>32</sup> however; these devices tend not to be used for educational purposes. Schools can tap into this existing resource by offering educational content that can be accessed through digital devices<sup>33</sup>. Apps, websites and games can all support mobile learners.
- Where pupils are mobile, families' involvement in supporting digital learning is seen as a key success factor in maintaining pupil engagement. Digital technology can provide a catalyst and a mechanism to work with parents to identify relevant learning plans for their children.
- Digital technology offers a way for learners to stay up to date with the work of their school. Schools can utilise digital platforms such as websites, blogs and forums to keep mobile learners informed and engaged with the work of the school.
- Schools and learners can access a range of up to date digital tools and services through Glow. These tools and services are available free of charge and can be accessed from any internet enabled device. There is therefore significant potential for Glow to support Traveller learners who cannot attend school regularly.

“I looove technology! I would diiiiie without it!”

Traveller young person

Digital technology also offers opportunities to educators in understanding how best to support learners from Traveller communities. For example:

- Local authorities can form clusters and work with TENET colleagues to share materials on digital platforms that are known to be effective in engaging Traveller learners.
- Digital platforms such as forums, online TeachMeets and MOOCS can support a range of career long professional learning opportunities for classroom teachers and school leaders. These opportunities can focus on how best to support the education of learners from Traveller communities.

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<sup>32</sup> <http://www.step.education.ed.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/YPTech-Report-.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> see <http://www.step.education.ed.ac.uk/young-people/>

## Reflection

- Are there further opportunities to use digital delivery of learning and teaching to reach Traveller pupils?
- Can technology support better communication and engagement with families?

## Practice Insight

The Electronic Learning and Mobility Project (ELAMP) was a nationally funded project by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, which ran from 2004 to 2010. ELAMP looked at ways of using ICT to enhance the learning of Traveller pupils, particularly those who were highly mobile. Laptops with internet connectivity were issued to mobile pupils via 32 Local Authorities. Qualitative evidence from ELAMP indicated that having laptops and internet access had the potential to improve learner progress. Success was dependent on both committed schools and families. Equally it was dependent on the underpinning role of local Traveller Education Services (TES) – the equivalent of the Traveller Education Network (TENET) in Scotland.

Parents were prepared by highlighting safeguarding issues and developing the skills they would need to support their children. TES also played a key role in working with schools to develop appropriate approaches, especially where they were supporting distance learning, and then continued to support both learners and schools over time. The project concluded that ICT is not in itself a panacea and it is important to appreciate that the positive results were the result of three-way partnerships between schools, families and TES.

“This student is now about to start a further education course and can’t envisage post-16 learning without having a laptop and internet access.”

FE Tutor

“Having the laptop has involved (the father) in supporting schoolwork for the first time ever!”

Traveller mother

## Effective use of assessment

The National Improvement Framework for Scottish education has been introduced to help all children to achieve their full potential. It highlights the importance of gathering and sharing accurate information and, essential to this, are the new national standard assessments, which aim to support high quality teaching and learning. Evidence from the assessments will be shared openly with parents to enable them to engage more effectively in their child’s learning. The consistency of approach across all local authorities in Scotland should be supportive of mobile pupils.

Assessment is integral to the planning of learning and teaching. Where young people have interrupted learning, it can be challenging for staff to ensure that their learning is assessed regularly. However, teachers and school leaders need to ensure that targets are reviewed when learners return from travel, and that they take quick action where progress slips.

Teachers should ensure that they assess a wide range of sources and celebrate achievements, particularly in skills that are valued by Traveller communities, enabling parents to understand the value of the continued progression of their children's learning. There should be opportunities for dialogue with parents across the school year. Schools can demonstrate the processes used to share learning intentions and chart achievements. Visual methods such as charts and visual timetable will be particularly engaging for some Traveller families.

### Reflection

- Does the school have effective assessment systems in place to identify the needs of the children and young people from the Traveller community?

### Practice Insight

A primary school with a high population of Travellers living in the catchment hosts "House Coffee Mornings" several times a year. Parents, families and friends are invited to meet a section of P1-7s in an informal environment and hear about their attainment and achievement. All achievements are equally valued – from dance performances to citizenship activities. Staff are available to provide additional information. Where families do not attend, staff and other members of the school community will engage with learners to share their successes.

### Further information

- <https://education.gov.scot/what-we-do/Embedding-inclusion,-equity-and-empowerment>
- <https://www.education.gov.scot/Documents/supporting-learners-legislation-policies.pdf>

## Personalised support

The curriculum should respond to the individual needs and support particular aptitudes and talents of all children and young people, including those from the Traveller community. Delivering the entitlement to personalised support will require individualised planning and possibly support to overcome barriers linked to a learning environment that is not easily described as “Traveller friendly” whether the family is mobile or not. Following periods of interruption teachers will need to be continually responsive, often providing one-to-one support and teaching at the point of learning.

Supporting learning underpins the delivery of the curriculum for all children and young people and it is the responsibility of all practitioners and partners to deliver this universal entitlement within their own teaching environments. The level and support required will vary from child to child, but all children and young people should;

- have frequent and regular opportunities to discuss their learning with a key adult who knows them well and can act as a mentor, helping them to set appropriate goals for the next stages in learning.
- be involved as active participants with planning and reflecting on their own learning and development through assessment, evaluation and personal learning planning.
- be able to identify and plan opportunities for their progress and achievement, in and outwith school.
- receive support for barriers to learning they may experience.

To improve educational outcomes, practitioners will need to consider carefully how they deliver these entitlements for Travellers. For example, a Traveller’s key adult will need to understand the cultural background and the challenges this may pose as well as the particular benefits and opportunities it may provide.

### **Additional Support for Learning**

All children and young people need support to help them learn and develop but, where there is a particular barrier to learning, some children will need extra help to benefit fully from school education. For a variety of reasons, Traveller children may require additional support and national statistics show that Gypsy/Traveller children and young people are nearly twice as likely to be recorded as having additional support needs. The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, as amended, provides the legislative framework for providing support. It requires education authorities to identify, provide for and review the additional support needs of their pupils and, in line with the GIRFEC approach requires that support to be individualised, appropriate, proportionate and timely.

Examples of practice are given in the following table:

<b>Individual support entitlements</b>	<b>Examples of expected practice for children and young people from Traveller communities.</b>
Review learning and plan for next steps	<p>To support interrupted learning, schools and class teachers should;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• share tracking and learning information</li> <li>• provide a learning log/profile</li> <li>• provide curriculum work, which can be completed out with school</li> <li>• moderate and assess the curriculum work.</li> </ul>
Gain access to learning activities, which will meet individual needs	<p>Ensure that the curriculum is accessible for the children and young people from the Traveller community. This could take the form of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging with families to enquire about access to digital devices at home.</li> <li>• Maximising the use of digital media through the use of teaching and learning resources that connect home and school.</li> <li>• Maximising the use of freely accessible software – share information with the family e.g. text recognition software, learning apps, GLOW</li> <li>• Identifying most appropriate methods for communication such as sending and receiving course work.</li> </ul>
Plan for opportunities for personal achievement	<p>Recognition of achievements/attainments gained within the travelling culture. e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiences gained within the family business</li> <li>• Sporting activities – martial arts, dancing, boxing</li> <li>• Cultural activities - musical, art, creative writing, storytelling</li> </ul>
Prepare for changes and choices and be supported through changes and choices (including transitions)	<p>Provide timely support for transitions and course choices. Sensitive and well planned support may be required to support the child and family transition from P7 to S1 and beyond school.</p>

Schools working with partners	Flexible and shared educational placements. For example, some Traveller children and young people are being supported with their learning by community learning officers and the catchment school is supporting them with SQA accreditation.
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To enable schools to deliver the additional support for learning that some Traveller children and young people may require, schools should develop flexible, targeted support<sup>34</sup> which could be at any point of their learning journey or, for some, throughout the journey and which takes into account the Traveller culture. 'Targeted' support is usually, but not exclusively, delivered by staff with additional training and expertise. In a primary school the support will be coordinated by the Senior Management Team and in a secondary school, by guidance/pastoral care/pupil support staff. In both settings staff who may be involved could be:

- EAL (English as an additional language) services
- Specialist pupil support teachers (support for learning)
- Community Link Workers

Targeted support for the Traveller community should reflect the support required to ensure opportunities for more choices and more chances to achieve positive, sustained post-school destinations. Targeted support recognises the additional needs which requires highly personalised approaches to be considered and which are appropriate to the culture and life style of the Traveller community.

“I get help with my reading and I am getting really good at it. Before I didn't want to come to school because it was too hard but now it is easier.”

P5 Traveller

### Reflection

- How effective are our approaches for Traveller children and young people to ensure that there is effective curriculum planning and opportunities for their entitlement to support?
- How do we know if support is having the desired impact of improving outcomes for children and young people from the Traveller community?

### Further information

- <http://enquire.org.uk/publications/briefings>
- <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/inc08traveller>

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<sup>34</sup> See 'Meeting additional support needs' diagram under para. 31 of the Supporting Children's Learning Code of Practice (Revised edition) <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2011/04/04090720/6>

## Involving Traveller families in learning

### Travelling families and their children's learning

Traditionally, Traveller parents have viewed the education of children and young people as the responsibility of the extended family. Many parents have no experience of school education and can view schools as 'threatening' formal institutions. Some families believe that they can provide adequate socialisation and education, which also supports their concerns over community cohesion and security.<sup>35</sup> However, it is a misconception that all parents undervalue learning,<sup>36</sup> and there is evidence to suggest that many parents, particularly mothers, increasingly believe there is value in school educating their children.<sup>37</sup>

### What can schools do?

The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 provides a framework to support family engagement and aims to help parents to be:

- involved with their child's education and learning
- welcomed as an active participant in the life of the school, and
- encouraged to express their views on school education

Traditionally, Traveller parents have resisted becoming involved in the life of the school or to express views, as many of the forums, such as parent council meetings, have appeared formal, intimidating and unfamiliar to their culture.

Traveller parents can also find supporting their children's learning challenging due to lack of confidence, subject knowledge, poor literacy or English language skills. Schools should be proactive in supporting family involvement. For example:

- Schools can provide opportunities for Traveller parents to meet teachers on a one-to-one basis to share information about classwork and support them to support their child in home learning – this will also establish relationships and build trust.
- Parents can be invited to contribute to planning the curriculum, for example, by sharing information or artifacts that represent Traveller culture. Parents will feel that their culture is valued and that their child is respected in the class.
- Parents should be reassured that previous knowledge and skills learned within the community will be valued and used as a foundation for the child's future learning.
- Schools should be mindful that school-home communication may be best done through a phone call or a chat at the school gate as parents may be unable to read written communication. For those unable to understand

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<sup>35</sup> Ureche, H. and Franks, M., *This is Who We Are: A study of the views and identities of Roma, Gypsy and Traveller young people in England*, The Children's Society, 2007

<sup>36</sup> Lloyd, G. and McCluskey, G. (2008). 'Education and Gypsies/Travellers: 'contradictions and significant silences'', *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 12, 4, 331-345.

<sup>37</sup> Bhopal, K. (2011) 'This is a school, it's not a site': teachers' attitudes towards Gypsy and Traveller pupils in school in England, UK', *British Educational Research Journal*, 37 (3): 465-483.



English, oral and visual communication approaches can be used as well as well as translated information leaflets.

- Schools should explore creative approaches to learning, which build on the travelling community's strengths and invite parents to become involved.

When good relationships and trust have been established, schools may be in a position to support the parents' own learning and development, which in turn will help them support their child's education. They can offer advice about adult literacy classes, parenting groups, digital learning or English courses for speakers of other languages, and signpost the range of support agencies in the wider community.

### Reflection

- In what ways is the family support we provide encouraging young people to learn?
- How are we ensuring that our provision is responsive to the needs of Traveller families?

### Practice Insight

A Gypsy/Traveller Interrupted Learning Officer worked in partnership with a nursery teacher and Additional Support teacher from a local pre-school centre to run a mums and children's group. While one member of staff worked with the children on 'school readiness' activities, the others worked with mums to develop approaches to supporting their children's learning. Together they worked on developing shared reading, environmental print awareness and everyday literacy. The mums built confidence in supporting their children while also developing relationships with staff and learning about the nursery and school curriculum. A positive outcome was that two of the mums enrolled their children in nursery where there had been reluctance to engage in mainstream provision.

### Practice Insight

An inner city primary school celebrated the problem-solving and construction abilities of young Travellers when creating a set for the annual school performance. Several Traveller children took leadership roles in the design and construction of the set and one of the Traveller parents also offered support, providing a positive link with the community. The parents expressed their pride in their children's achievements and they felt that their contribution was meaningful and valued. The initiative also encouraged a large number of the young people's families to attend the school play performance further supporting community cohesion.

### Practice Insight

Roma parents and children from two primaries and one secondary school in Glasgow were supported to create a video to describe their experiences of beginning school. The parents speak in their native language with subtitles provided in English. Some of the mums offer practical advice such as about enrolment

procedures or the structure of the school day. Others describe the range of ways that the school can support them, including how to access an interpreter to help with a range of things such as accessing health services. Some of the older children describe their experiences of secondary school. The video promotes the benefits of education, particularly through seeing the young people's aspirations for the future.

### Further information

- Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act, 2006  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2006/8/contents>
- Supporting Children's Learning Code of Practice – Particular Chapter 7, Working with Children and Families <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/348208/0116022.pdf>
- Supporting Traveller Family Literacy, STEP, 2015  
<http://www.step.education.ed.ac.uk/family-literacy-tp/>
- National Parenting Strategy <http://www.gov.scot/resource/0040/00403769.pdf>
- <http://enquire.org.uk/information/parents-guide>
- [https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/additional-support/specific-support-needs/family-circumstances/Travelling communities](https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/additional-support/specific-support-needs/family-circumstances/Travelling_communities)

## Transitions

The times of transitions to, between and beyond school are particularly critical to the success of school education for Travellers. Due to the necessity for family involvement, the barriers can be described similarly to those in the preceding sections, such as low parental literacy, low family value placed on schooling, and concerns about bullying and safety.<sup>38</sup>

Transitions can be negatively affected by Travellers' cultural beliefs at various different school stages. For example, some members of the community may view Traveller mothers as failing in their maternal roles if they put their young children into pre-school education. Additionally, the time of transition between primary and secondary school, is usually the time when young Travellers are taught traditional skills within the extended family and school can be seen to be unnecessary. Parents are also concerned about allowing children to start secondary school because once enrolled, they will need consent to withdraw them. This knowledge can create a culture of withdrawal from primary schools around primary 6 or 7.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> For research detail and the literature see 'School transitions and mobile communities', STEP, 2015 <http://www.step.education.ed.ac.uk/school-transitions-and-mobile-communities-what-the-research-says/>

<sup>39</sup> Statutory guidance states that consent is not needed from the local authority to withdraw a child at this stage in their schooling – see section 3.24 in the Scottish Government's Home Education Guidance <http://www.gov.scot/resource/doc/207380/0055026.pdf>

In recent years there has been a trend for young Gypsy/Travellers who have left formal education at the end of P7, to regain access to education and qualifications around 14 – 15 years. Most approaches are to further education (FE) colleges or Community Learning and Development and outreach services. The transition back into education can be particularly challenging for professionals and young people themselves to manage successfully when several years of young people's school learning has been missed.

### **What can schools do?**

Most Traveller families will benefit from the same transition strategies as others but they may need to begin earlier and they may require more family involvement and inter-agency support. Recent research<sup>40</sup> suggests that to make smooth transitions, three levels of readiness are required: school readiness, pupil readiness and family readiness.

- **Pupil readiness** - Gradual familiarisation is the key to achieving school 'readiness' for pupils from mobile cultures. Where most settled pupils will be surrounded by a culture of going to the local school, young people from mobile cultures may be the first in their families to make these transitions and they may have to learn new social practices, behaviours, rules, and learning styles. Approaches should aim to build gradual connections for example by providing opportunities for pupils to meet school staff or other pupils informally, participate in school-type activities, rehearse social practices but show flexibility until the pupil is 'school ready'. Similarly, transitions beyond primary are about building and extending meaningful connections through people and curricular activities.
- **Family readiness** - Parental involvement in transitions is essential. Positive relationships between the school and home will reassure pupils. Parents and carers from mobile communities are likely to have heightened concerns about children's safety, social relationships and whether their children will be treated fairly. Schools can help by: providing opportunities for parents to meet staff, voice their concerns, and address specific issues well in advance of transitions; sharing school inclusion strategies in formats that parents understand, and maintain regular dialogue in the lead up to and beyond transitions; being aware that pupils may be affected by tensions within families with some members viewing school more positively than others.
- **School readiness** - Many strategies can be adopted to improve the 'readiness' of educational settings and prepare staff for engaging highly mobile families. The 'readiness' of an educational setting is achieved by adopting three key approaches:
  - (i) a whole-school approach where schools adopt a clear transition framework, a positive culture, consistent teaching and relevant curriculum;

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<sup>40</sup> STEP, 2015 – see <http://www.step.education.ed.ac.uk/transitions-tp/>

- (ii) outreach to improve and support family access and engagement with education;
- (iii) targeted programmes for early intervention, to foster school 'readiness' and target specific barriers such as family literacy.

Schools will need to ensure that transitions approaches are shared with agencies who have been in contact with the child (such as health services), or previous or receiving schools. Receiving schools will need to reach out, promote a positive ethos and provide teaching and learning that are consistent, relevant and familiar. They will need to work with other schools and agencies to plan a curriculum where children and families can see the benefits of continuity of learning, building on their knowledge to the next stage (see 'Curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment' sub-section). Schools should ensure that they pass on information about family-based learning and achievements so that they are valued and developed in the receiving institution.

"My mum was worried, my granny was worried, my whole family were worried, but I wanted to go."

"I felt that I wasn't going to fit in, but realise now that everyone else felt the same."

"Granny tells my mum to keep me in school now because I am getting a good education."

Gypsy/Traveller girl starting Secondary school

Where schools or families identify that a Traveller child is likely to experience difficulties with the transition process (for example, because of bullying or racial discrimination, or social or emotional issues) the school should assess the extent of the support needs and prepare a plan to help ease the transition. In this situation the family may benefit from an integrated service approach. All partners, including the family, should agree responsibilities in supporting the transition process.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and supporting Regulations<sup>41</sup>, and the GIRFEC approach, are central to effective transition planning and ensuring that Traveller young people can access the support they need. Education Authorities have specific duties under the 2004 Act in relation to transitions. In the Additional Support for Learning Report to Parliament, 2014, Education Scotland identified the [key features](#) of successful transitions. This provides a useful guide for schools working with Traveller children and young people.

## Reflection

- To what extent do our processes for involving children and families and other agencies ensure effective transitions for Traveller learners?
- To what extent does our curriculum provide opportunities for support and induction into the next stage of learning?

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<sup>41</sup> The Additional Support for Learning (Changes in School Education) (Scotland) Regulations 2005

## Practice Insight

A secondary school in Wales created a Transitions Council with representatives from each of the feeder primary schools and Year 5 pupils from the secondary. The staff ensured that there was representation from the travelling communities at each stage. The Council members were responsible for representing the concerns of their peers. They discussed issues such as bullying and isolation and it was the task of the senior pupils to assure the P6 pupils and build good relationships with them.

## Further information

- Transition for young people with additional support needs  
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/04/3050/15>)
- Supporting transitions for mobile families, STEP, 2015  
<http://www.step.education.ed.ac.uk/transitions-tp/>
- A stage by stage approach to transitions, STEP, 2015  
<http://www.step.education.ed.ac.uk/project/transitions-toolkit/>
- The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004,  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2004/4/contents>
- Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/contents/enacted>
- Supporting Children's Learning Code of Practice – Particular Chapter 6 on Transitions <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/348208/0116022.pdf>

## Section 4. Annexes

- Annex A. The policy and legislative context
  - Annex B. Sources of information, advice and support on specific matters related to Travellers
  - Annex C. Reflection
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### Annex A. The policy and legislative context

Many national policies and frameworks contribute to the Scottish Government's vision for inclusion and support. A number of these are summarised here, alongside relevant legislation and the wider equality context.

**The Equality Act 2010** prohibits discrimination and harassment based on 'protected characteristics' such as race in a range of settings, including school education. It further places a public sector equality duty (PSED) on public bodies and certain other bodies which carry out public functions. Local and education authorities and managers of independent and grant aided schools are subject to the PSED, as well as the more specific requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 which are designed to assist those subject to the PSED in meeting their general duty. Those subject to the general equality duty must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Foster good relations between different groups

As part of its work to deliver the PSED, in 2013 the Scottish Government published a set of [equality outcomes](#), covering areas of activity on which it wished to focus over the four years to 2017. These included equality outcomes relating to [Gypsy/Travellers](#) and [Education](#). [The Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2015](#) describes the activities that are underway around these outcomes and the progress that has been made to date. Local and education authorities and managers of independent and grant aided schools are also subject to the Scottish Specific Duties, and may also set relevant equality outcomes.

[The Race Equality Framework for Scotland](#) sets out the Scottish Government's approach over a fifteen year period from 2016 to 2030 to promoting race equality and tackling racism and inequality. It sets out how the barriers that prevent people from minority ethnic communities from realising their potential will be addressed.

**The Scottish Government's Gypsy/Traveller Strategy** – The Scottish Government was working with partners to develop an overarching strategy and action plan for Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland. The work of the Gypsy/Traveller Strategy Development Group progressed during 2014-15. It considered a range of issues affecting Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland including education, health and accommodation. A draft action plan was considered in August 2015. The group raised a number of issues, which were important in terms of the developing action plan and required further consideration. Work on the strategy was therefore paused.

The problems faced by Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland are longstanding, and the Scottish Government recognises that substantial progress is likely to take time. A strategic programme of work setting out progress and future plans will be published in 2017.

**Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)** is transforming all aspects of education in Scotland. It is a flexible and inclusive curriculum with an increased emphasis placed on inter-disciplinary learning, skills development and encouraging personal achievement. CfE aims to foster four capacities in all young people: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. The curriculum comprises a broad general education up to the end of S3 followed by a senior phase of learning from S4 to S6. Of importance for Traveller pupils is that there is now much greater flexibility in how schools design their Senior Phase Curriculum. There is a range of different approaches being adopted across the country, aimed at meeting the particular needs of learners in different areas.

**Parental Involvement** - Curriculum for Excellence emphasises the key role played by parents in supporting their children's learning. The Scottish Government works closely with partner organisations to ensure parents' views are recognised and heard and encourages all schools to strengthen their links with parents. The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 sets out the role of parents in Scottish Education, modernising and strengthening the framework that supports parental involvement in school education. The act identifies three areas of particular importance: Learning at Home; Home/School Partnership; and Parental Representation.

The **Education (Scotland) Act 1980** requires that education authorities must provide adequate and efficient school education within their area.<sup>42</sup> The **Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. (Scotland) Act 2000** places education authorities under a duty to secure that the education provided by them is directed towards the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential.<sup>43</sup> In this way the Act incorporates in Scots law the right to education under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC).

The **Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004** ("the 2004 Act") introduced the broad and inclusive term 'additional support needs' which refers to any child or young person who, for whatever reason, requires additional support for learning.<sup>44</sup> The Act was amended by the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 and will be amended again by the Education (Scotland) Act 2016. This legislation provides the statutory framework for identifying and addressing the additional support needs of children and young people who face a barrier to learning. The 2004 Act places additional support duties on education authorities and requires certain other bodies and organisations to help. Under this legislation, education authorities are required, in providing school education, to

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<sup>42</sup> Section 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980

<sup>43</sup> Section 2 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. (Scotland) Act 2000

<sup>44</sup> Section 1 of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004

identify and then make adequate and efficient provision for the additional support needs of children and young people. The provisions relating to transitions, as set out in the supporting [Code of Practice](#) and the Additional Support for Learning (Changes in School Education (Scotland) Regulations 2005, may be of particular relevance to Traveller children and young people and their parents.

**The Education (Scotland) Act 2016** (the “2016 Act”) includes a mix of measures covering education in Scotland and sends a strong signal, nationally as well as locally, of the value placed on ensuring that all children and young people receive the best education they can and achieve their full potential. The 2016 Act has a clear focus on narrowing the attainment gap and enshrines in legislation the Scottish Attainment Challenge and the National Improvement Framework (see below). It also contains provisions which amend the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 to enable children to use the rights available under the 2004 Act themselves, if they are 12 years of age and have the capacity to do so.

[The Scottish Attainment Challenge](#) is about achieving equity in educational outcomes. Equity can be achieved by ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. This is set within the context of Curriculum for Excellence and targets improvement in the areas of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

[The National Improvement Framework](#) for Scottish Education outlines the Scottish Government’s vision and priorities for children’s progress in learning. The Framework will be key in driving work to continually improve Scottish education and close the attainment gap, delivering both excellence and equity. Over time, the Framework will provide a level of robust, consistent and transparent data, to extend understanding of what works to drive improvements across all parts of the education system.

In [Better Relationships, Better Learning, Better Behaviour](#) the Scottish Government and Scottish Advisory Group on Behaviour in Schools (SAGBIS) identified the next steps and priority actions to support local authorities, establishments, practitioners and partners to further improve relationships and behaviour within their learning communities. The policy guidance draws on evidence which shows that investing time and resources into improving relationships and behaviour in whole school and wider environments leads to positive outcomes around inclusion, engagement and achievement in the short term, and community safety and cohesion in the longer term.

[Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1: Attendance in Scottish Schools](#) sets out national policy around attendance and absence. In addition to the classification of attendance and absence, this guidance seeks to explore and address wider issues around the promotion and management of good attendance and the prevention and reduction of absence. The guidance recognises that school communities are diverse, and that Traveller children may require authorised absence to travel as part of their tradition, family connections or work commitments.

**Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions** [currently being refreshed – include publication date and link to refreshed guidance once known] has a fundamental role to play in helping realise the Scottish Government’s vision for all children and young people by



supporting those who are at risk of becoming disengaged or excluded from education. It recognises that children and young people need to be included, engaged and involved in their education in order to achieve equity and attainment for all.

**The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland’s Children and Young People** [currently being refreshed - include publication date and link to refreshed guidance once known] outlines the Scottish Government approach to all types of bullying – including prejudice-based bullying. The National Approach was refreshed in 2016/17 in recognition of the changing policy and legislative landscape, including the increased emphasis on the responsibility of those working with children and young people to support those with a protected characteristic.

[Getting it Right for Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#) is the national approach to improving outcomes through public services that supports the wellbeing of children and young people and puts their interest at the heart of decision making. GIRFEC takes a holistic approach to the wellbeing of the child or young person and advocates preventative work and early intervention to support them and their families, developing strong universal services with additional services brought in when required. The approach supports children and young people’s rights and involves children and young people in decisions which affect them. It recognises that children and young people will have different experiences in their lives, but that every child and young person has the right to expect appropriate support from adults to allow them to grow and develop to reach their full potential.

**The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014**<sup>45</sup> supports the Scottish Government’s ambition for Scotland to be the best place to grow up. It seeks to improve the way services work together to support children, young people and families and ensure that children’s rights are respected across the public sector. For example, part 1<sup>46</sup> (sections 2 and 3) of the 2014 Act places duties on public authorities, as defined at Schedule 1<sup>47</sup> to the Act, to report every 3 years on the steps they have taken in that period to secure better or further effect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>48</sup>.

Part 3 of the 2014 Act<sup>49</sup> places a duty on each local authority and the relevant NHS board to jointly prepare a children’s services plan for the area of the local authority, covering a 3 year period. These plans should be prepared with involvement of the service providers capable of having a significant effect on the wellbeing of children. Plans should cover services for children generally and for children with specific needs (Traveller children could be considered as children with specific needs) and related services (services that aren’t children’s services but are capable of having a significant effect on the wellbeing of children).

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<sup>45</sup> [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)

<sup>46</sup> [Part 1 of the Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)

<sup>47</sup> [Schedule 1 of the Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)

<sup>48</sup> These duties are expected to come into force in April 2017, with the first reports due in 2020.

<sup>49</sup> [Part 3 of the Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)

**[Developing the Young Workforce \(DYW\): Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy](#)** published in December 2014 sets out the plans to implement the recommendations from the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce to reduce youth unemployment. The [first annual progress report](#) on the implementation of the recommendations, published in December 2015, includes a chapter on Equality and developing the talents of all young people.

**[The Early Years Collaborative \(EYC\)](#)** is the world's first multi-agency, bottom up quality improvement programme to support the transformation of early years. Launched in October 2012, it involves all 32 Community Planning Partnerships and a wide range of third sector partners. Its focus is on strengthening and building on services using quality improvement methodology, enabling local practitioners to test, measure, implement and spread new and different ways of working to improve outcomes for children and families. The work of the EYC is being joined up with the [Raising Attainment for All Programme](#), which was launched in June 2014 to support consistent improvement in attainment and achievement using improvement methodology. Together they become the **Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative**. This will deliver quality improvement throughout a child's journey and reinforce the link between children having positive experiences in the early years and educational attainment. This will also align closely with the [Maternity and Children Quality Improvement Collaborative](#) where the focus is on maternity, neonatal and paediatric healthcare settings.

## Annex B. Sources of information, advice and support on specific matters related to Travellers

Information needed:						
	Information on local traveller community and cultural awareness	Information needed on non-standard enrolment of child/young person into nursery/school	Advice on unauthorised absence	Advice on permission/application for Education at Home	Advice on CME (Children Missing from Education)	Information on SEEMiS Codes
<b>Sources of Guidance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Policy and Strategy</li> <li>This guidance document</li> <li><a href="#">Scottish Traveller Education Programme</a> (STEP)</li> <li>Local demographic data</li> <li>Community Planning Partnership (CPP)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Authority Enrolment Policy</li> <li>Local Authority Gypsy/Traveller Policy</li> <li>This guidance document</li> <li><a href="#">Scottish Traveller Education Programme</a> (STEP)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Authority attendance guidance</li> <li><a href="#">Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1 (attendance).</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Scottish Government Home Education guidance 2007</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scottish Government CME guidance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local MIS guidance</li> <li>Scotexed Guidance</li> <li><a href="#">Included, Engaged and involved Part 1 (attendance)</a></li> <li><a href="#">Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2 (Exclusion)</a></li> </ul>
<b>Sources of advice, information and support in</b>	Local Authority Education Inclusion/ ASN (Additional Support Needs)	Local Authority School Team	Local Education Inclusion/ ASN Officer	Local Home Education Officer/	Local Authority CME Coordinator in consultation with Education	Local MIS SEEMiS

<b>local authority</b>	Officer/ Quality Improvement Officer		/ Quality Improvement Officer	Education Inclusion/ ASN Officer	Inclusion/ASN Officer/Quality Improvement Officer	Team
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## Annex C. Reflection

This Annex lists the reflective questions included in Sections 2 and 3 of this guidance. It may be a useful in helping consider the Traveller perspective against the reflective questions set out in [HGIOS4](#).

### Section 2. Leadership and Management

- How effective are our processes for involving local families from mobile cultures in the ongoing review of our vision, aims and values?
- How effective are the links with other agencies and people (eg social work services, local health board, CLD (Community Learning and Development), Traveller Education Network (TENET)) in engaging and addressing the needs of the Traveller community, including families where children are not at school?
- How effectively are incidents relating to racial discrimination acted upon to ensure lessons are learnt and prevent future occurrences?
- Are staff up to date with processes for travelling communities and are our systems regularly reviewed?
  
- How effective is our communication with families around expectations?
- What range of data and information do we use to understand the social, economic and cultural context of the mobile cultures within our local community?
- How reliable is our evidence of impact on the learning of the pupils?
- How effective are our planning, recording and information transfer processes for children from mobile communities?
  
- How effectively do we use our resources to meet the learning needs of children from mobile cultures and ensure equity?
- How reliable is our evidence of impact on the learning of the pupils?
- Do we need to adjust our learning to meet Traveller's needs, and if so, how?

### Section 3. Learning Provision

- To what extent is our school an inclusive learning environment for children and young people from the Traveller community?
- How well does our curriculum planning meet the needs of the Traveller community?
- Are there further opportunities for flexibility in the way we provide education which will benefit Travellers?
  
- Are there further opportunities to use digital delivery of learning and teaching to reach Traveller pupils?
- Can technology support better communication and engagement with families?
  
- Does the school have effective assessment systems in place to identify the needs of the children and young people from the Traveller community?

- How effective are our approaches for Traveller children and young people to ensure that there is effective curriculum planning and opportunities for their entitlement to support?
- How do we know if support is having the desired impact of improving outcomes for children and young people from the Traveller community?
- In what ways is the family support we provide encouraging young people to learn?
- How are we ensuring that our provision is responsive to the needs of Traveller families?
- To what extent do our processes for involving children and families and other agencies ensure effective transitions for Traveller learners?
- To what extent does our curriculum provide opportunities for support and induction into the next stage of learning?

## Responding to this Consultation

We are inviting responses to this consultation by 28 May 2017

Please respond to this consultation online at <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/support-and-wellbeing/improving-educational-outcomes-for-children> You can save and return to your responses while the consultation is still open. Please ensure that consultation responses are submitted before the close date.

If you are unable to respond online, please complete and return the Respondent Information Form (see “Handling your Response” below) to:

Traveller Education Consultation  
Support and Wellbeing Unit  
Area 2C South  
Scottish Government  
Victoria Quay  
Edinburgh  
EH6 6QQ

or

Email: [TravellerEducation@gov.scot](mailto:TravellerEducation@gov.scot)

## Handling your response

If you respond using Citizen Space, you will be automatically directed to the Respondent Information Form at the start of the questionnaire. This will let us know how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are happy for your response to be made public.

If you are unable to respond via Citizen Space, please complete and return the **Respondent Information Form** attached to the end of this document as this will ensure that we treat your response appropriately. If you ask for your response not to be published, we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

All respondents should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

## Next steps in the process

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public, and after we have checked that they contain no potentially defamatory material, responses will be made available to the public at <http://consult.scotland.gov.uk>. If you use Citizen Space to respond, you will receive a copy of your response via email.

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence to help us.

## **Comments, complaints and queries**

If you have any comments about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, or any queries about the consultation, please send them to:

Traveller Education Consultation  
Support and Wellbeing Unit  
Area 2C South  
Scottish Government  
Victoria Quay  
Edinburgh  
EH6 6QQ

Email: [TravellerEducation@gov.scot](mailto:TravellerEducation@gov.scot)





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