



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

GUIDANCE, DOCUMENT

Celebrate and participate: Education guidance to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people

How schools and settings can improve support for learners from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

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Introduction and context

Our vision

The Welsh Government's ambitions for education in Wales are set out in '**Our national mission: high standards and aspirations for all**'. They include a commitment to equity of outcome in education for every child and young person in Wales. This ensures the success, high standards and wellbeing of all learners.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) we all have a responsibility to ensure the rights of all children. For the purposes of this guidance, particular attention has been given to the following articles:

- Right to non-discrimination (article 2)
- Commitment to the best interests of the child (article 3)
- Right to education (article 28)
- Commitment to the quality and content of education (article 29)

Purpose of this guidance

The purpose of this guidance is to help teachers, education practitioners and senior leaders to support learners from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to:

- access education
- fully develop their talents and skills
- achieve their full potential

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Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are diverse, and attitudes to school and learning vary greatly. The difference in attitudes to education can be seen:

- between each community
- within families
- between individuals

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities each have their own distinct histories, cultures, and lifestyles. These include nomadic traditions though there are an increasing number of settled communities. Fewer families travel frequently and an increased number live in bricks and mortar homes.

Individuals within all communities have the right:

- to their own identity
- for their identity to be recognised and respected by the society in which they live

It is important to recognise and celebrate all the achievements of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners in education.

Despite some progress, the **Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC) data for September 2021 to August 2022** on attainment in examinations shows more needs to be done to ensure equitable outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners

This guidance aims to increase cultural awareness among education practitioners and provides examples of effective practice in supporting children and young people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

Anti-racist Wales Action Plan

The Welsh Government's **Anti-racist Wales Action Plan** (2022) includes a

commitment to ‘publish Gypsies, Roma and Travellers’ guidance to support educational outcomes, ensuring that championing anti-racist practice is at the centre’.

Our vision is to champion inclusive practice so that every child and young person is included, their identities celebrated, and their educational outcomes improved.

We are developing a holistic education system that meets the needs of all children and young people and reduces the attainment gap. This will, in turn, become a source of national pride as Wales leads the way in demonstrating anti-racism in practice.

Delivering our anti-racism objectives

Delivering the objectives of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan relies on the training and development of education practitioners in promoting awareness and anti-racist cultures in schools. The under-representation of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller teachers is part of the wider lack of diversity in the education and schools’ workforce. It is also a contributing factor to the barriers, discrimination and racism which Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners may experience.

This guidance is an integral part of the actions being driven forward by the Welsh Government and statutory bodies, as well as schools, to create and embed an anti-racist education system, and a truly anti-racist Wales by 2030.

Reasons for change

In the most recent [School Health Research Network Survey report](#) of learners aged 11 to 16 for 2021 to 2022, Gypsy and Traveller learners were the ethnic group least likely to ‘feel their teachers accept them’, and also the least

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likely to 'agree that their teachers care about them as a person'.

In the Office for National Statistics' research, '**Gypsies' and Travellers' lived experiences, education and employment, England and Wales (2022)**' Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities reported:

- experiences of discrimination, racism, bullying and harassment
- the inflexibility of the education system and aspects of the curriculum that are seen as contradictory to their values as reasons for withdrawing their children from mainstream education, and choosing to educate some at home instead

These experiences and views show the importance of embedding anti-racism within educational settings. Schools should consider the training and development of the workforce needed to do this.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller identities

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are made up of several ethnic and cultural groups such as:

- Romani Gypsies
- Irish Travellers
- migrant Roma
- cultural groups such as New Travellers and Occupational Travellers

The term 'Gypsy Traveller' includes:

- Irish Travellers
- Welsh, English and Scottish Gypsies and Travellers
- Romani Gypsies

The term 'Occupational Traveller' includes:

- people who belong to the traditional show, fairground and circus communities
- Bargees and other waterway family businesses and homes

'New Travellers' are described as a UK group which emerged in the 1960s. Previously known as 'New Age Travellers', many have dropped the use of 'Age' whilst others prefer to be known simply as Travellers. The term 'Traveller' can sometimes be used to refer to different groups.

The Welsh Government recognises the different cultures and lifestyles of various groups. Therefore, we use the term 'migrant Roma' to refer to Romani groups who had previously been settled for a period in central and eastern Europe and have now migrated to Wales (largely since the expansion of the European Union in 2004). This may include:

- Roma
- Sinti
- Ashkali
- other 'sub-groups'

The term 'Roma' is used to minimise confusion as it aligns with the term used by the European Union and reflects the most populous Romani group in Europe.

The Welsh Government uses the phrase 'indigenous Gypsies and Travellers' to refer to:

- Romani Gypsies
- Irish Travellers
- other groups with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in caravans, who are native to Wales

We have used the umbrella term 'Gypsy, Roma and Traveller' to include all the different cultural groups set out earlier. This guidance does not go into detail

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about the histories of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. However, it is good practice for educational practitioners to learn about the cultures and identities of the children and young people they teach.

The Office of National Statistics published '**Gypsies' and Travellers' lived experiences, overview, England and Wales: 2022'**. This qualitative research offers valuable insights on areas including 'culture and identities' and 'education and employment'.

Using this guidance: effective practice examples

Effective practice examples within this guidance are drawn from current service provision in Wales. In some of the examples the setting has used the term 'Gypsy', 'Traveller' or 'G/T'. We have used direct quotes to reflect the language used by the setting. Some of the guidance will be focused on 1 or 2 of the communities and some will apply to all Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners come from a diversity of rich culture and heritage. Including and celebrating their heritage and cultures offers important opportunities for education professionals to champion the cultural diversity of Wales.

Settings which celebrate Gypsy, Roma and Traveller experiences and culture will be more inclusive for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners. This will also help support all staff and the wider school or education setting's community to expand its cultural understanding and prevent discrimination.

Status of this guidance

This guidance replaces the guidance 'Moving Forward - Gypsy Traveller Education' (2008), Guidance Circular 003/2008.

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This is non-statutory guidance based on the challenges identified by stakeholders, children and young people. It raises awareness of those challenges and shares effective practice. There is no one-size-fits all answer. What works in different settings and circumstances across Wales will differ.

This guidance takes into account:

- the UNCRC
- the Rights of Children and Young Persons Measure (Wales) 2011
- the Children Act 2004
- the Equality Act 2010

Local authorities are obliged by statute to:

- ensure that all children of compulsory school age receive education that is appropriate to their age, abilities and any additional learning needs
- promote high standards in the provision of education
- promote the welfare of children

These obligations apply to all children, whether or not they are permanent residents in an area. This guidance complies with the legislation.

Acknowledgements

We, the Welsh Government, would like to acknowledge and thank the Gypsy Traveller Stakeholder Group for their engagement in the development of this guidance. We also thank members of the Minority Ethnic, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Local Authority Group for their invaluable advice and support. Most importantly we thank the children and young people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities who engaged with us in the development of this guidance, for sharing their lived experiences and views.

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The views of children and young people

Consultation process

We have a strong commitment to children's rights and listening to the voices of children and young people.

We used a child-centred consultation approach to get the views of children and young people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities on their experiences and challenges in education.

Using a set of open questions, we consulted with around 40 children and young people of different ages across 7 local authority areas, geographically spread across Wales. Working with their teachers or trusted local authority practitioners, we asked about the things most important to them. Almost every child and young person included their family and culture as 2 of the most important things for them. The children and young people told us:

“ “My family. Being a Gypsy. Being born into the same culture.”

“ “My family, friends, football and my career, my culture and my health.”

“ “It's important that I get an education and I'm glad that I can read and write. ”

Attitudes to education among children and young people were very varied. Every effort must be made to understand the cultural influences which may affect these attitudes. This will require working with children, young people, and their families, to encourage them to see the value of education.

The children and young people told us:

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“ I like to be in school, I like to learn, it is good. I have a break from the family.”

“ I am going to leave when I am 13 years old.”

“ I am not going to study anymore because I don't need it. I am going into business with my family. ”

Some experiences of children and young people highlighted that there can be a clash between cultural or family expectations and education.

“ I'm in school full-time and jobs I have to do at home, I do after school.”

“ I help keep the house clean and look after my siblings.”

“ I'm in school every day because my Mum wants me in school. ”

We asked children and young people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities how the Welsh Government and local services could best support them. One of the most common responses was to give more time for the learner to understand, and a request to be listened to. Children and young people also said:

Primary age children

“ I like working in small groups.”

“ I like hands-on learning.”

“ I like time to think about it and be able to ask questions. ”

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Secondary age young people

“Talk to me in a way I understand. Give me time to understand what you want me to do. If I don't understand, then think of another way that will help me.”

“Listen to me and what I have to say, give me time to be patient.”

“I learn best when people show me, and then I have a go.”

“I went to school full-time. Sometimes I was poorly. School always checked if I needed help. I had extra help. ”

We also asked the children and young people about their own aspirations, and responses were varied. They told us:

“My dream is to have a good husband, having a family of my own.”

“I am studying GCSEs in school which will help me go to college. I would have liked to have done cookery but it's not the manly thing to do. I'm the eldest of three and I would like my brother and sister to finish school.”

“I will be applying for college to do either construction or music.”

“I love music and would like to learn how to produce my own - I would like to see this taught in school. In 5 years I see myself 'rapping' on the stage at Glastonbury. Also, to have my own business.”

“I want to finish my A levels and go to university. ”

General strategies for supporting learners from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities

Most local authorities in Wales have a Traveller Education Service (TES). This service:

- provides a link between school and communities
- offers support and advice in understanding the culture of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities

The TES will also often work with an Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) which provides advice and support on language acquisition for children and young people from Roma communities.

Services can:

- provide help and advice to schools in recognising and supporting children's and young people's needs
- provide training to teachers and teaching assistants on effective practice
- suggest strategies for and offer guidance on engagement with communities
- act as a link and provide outreach with communities

To find out what helps children, young people, and their families, to overcome any challenges to accessing education we asked:

- education practitioners
- local authority Traveller Education Services and Ethnic Minority Achievement Services
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people themselves

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Responses included

- A whole school approach, having strong leadership and an ethos of being welcoming for all.
- Family engagement, the importance of building relationships and trust with families and communities.
- Effective approaches and support through transition from primary to secondary education because transition can be the biggest challenge to school attendance, for example, concerns about the curriculum at secondary school, or concerns about bullying.
- Recognising and celebrating culture, building understanding within education settings about different cultures improves inclusion and reduces incidents of bullying.
- Having a trusted adult learners can turn to in their education setting who understands their culture and experiences can be beneficial. Schools may consider having a designated member of staff in their setting for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners.

The role of Community Focused Schools in supporting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners

The [Programme for Government 2021 to 2026](#) commits us to ‘Invest in the learning environment of community schools, co-locating key services and securing stronger engagement with parents and carers outside traditional hours.’

Community Focused Schools aim to take a broad approach to addressing children’s needs through working in partnership with families and the wider community. They will also help to join up services available from other providers, such as healthcare and the third sector. Further information on these roles and the ways that schools can develop family engagement can be found in the [‘Family engagement guidance’](#).

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The 2020 Estyn report '[Community Schools: families and communities at the heart of school life](#)' describes a community school as:

'...one that has the best interests of learners, families, and the community at its heart. These schools reach out to engage families and work with the wider community, knowing the difference this can make to the success of all pupils in the school, particularly those who are disadvantaged by poverty. These schools work in highly effective strategic partnerships with a range of organisations, where possible co-locating services to enable families and the community to access them easily.'

Community schools utilise their facilities and resources effectively to benefit the communities they serve. This includes ensuring that they have the staffing and expertise to address the needs of families and the community.'

Information on Community Focused Schools is available in the '[Community Focused Schools guidance](#)'.

Challenges: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners

This section identifies some of the concerns that have been identified by:

- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people
- members of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities
- practitioners and professionals working with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners

It also illustrates possible challenges these children and young people experience about:

- accessing education
- fully developing their talents and skills

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- achieving their full potential

Overarching concerns and specific challenges

In 2019 Estyn published a thematic review '[Provision for secondary school-aged Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils](#)' that:

- evaluated the provision for learners and set out some of the challenges
- provided some effective practice examples

It also made recommendations for local authorities, schools, and the Welsh Government. Recommendation 7 stated the Welsh Government should update the 2008 guidance 'Moving Forward – Gypsy Traveller Education'.

In developing this guidance we wanted to find out what challenges, real and perceived, exist for children and young people and prevent them from getting the most out of their education. We consulted with:

- stakeholder organisations who represent communities
- local authority support services
- third sector organisations that support learners

The following areas were identified as challenges:

- Additional learning needs (ALN)
- Admission to school
- Attendance at school
- Bullying on the grounds of race
- Communication between schools, families and communities
- Cultural awareness and celebrating culture
- Curriculum for Wales, including Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)
- Dedicated person or trusted adult at school

- Digital inclusion
- Elective home education
- Exclusions from school
- Financial support and school uniform
- Transition from primary to secondary school
- Vocational courses: apprenticeships, further education and higher education

Welsh Government actions and examples of good practice to overcome challenges

In this section we:

- explore the individual challenges identified
- outline the Welsh Government actions
- share examples, where available, of effective practice used to mitigate or overcome these challenges

Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

Challenge

It is essential to provide the right support to learners, particularly where they have English or Welsh as an additional language. Having Welsh or English as an additional language may make it more difficult to identify an additional learning need (ALN).

Parents have told us that it is not always easy to know if the challenges experienced by their child within education are due to an additional learning need. This may lead to issues in getting support for their child. This is not a unique issue for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families but can be more

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challenging where there is a lack of good communication and/or trust between the family and school.

Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government has changed the way in which children and young people with ALN are supported in school and college. The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (ALNET) and accompanying **The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales** (ALN Code) came into force in September 2021. This is being implemented across Wales over a four-year period.

ALNET and the ALN Code create a unified legislative framework to support learners from 0 to 25 years who have ALN. The Act focuses on ensuring all children and young people who require additional support to meet their needs have that support properly planned for and protected.

The Act replaces the special educational needs (SEN) statementing system and creates a single statutory plan, called the individual development plan (IDP). The IDP replaces the existing range of statutory and non-statutory plans for learners, ensuring equity of rights regardless of the learner's level of need or the education setting they attend. The Act puts the learner at the heart of the process and encourages better collaboration between agencies, so that needs are identified early, and the right support is put in place.

If a school, college, or local authority is aware of the possibility that a learner might have ALN then, unless certain exceptions apply, it must decide whether that learner has ALN or not. If it decides that a learner does have ALN then, unless certain exceptions apply, they must prepare an IDP. Information on this and other responsibilities can be found in the '**ALN Code**'.

Chapter 2 of the ALN Code explains that identifying ALN for those whose first

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language is not Welsh or English requires particular care. It explains that the school, college, or local authority should look carefully at all aspects of a child or young person's performance across the curriculum. This is to establish whether any difficulties the child or young person has are due to limitations in their command of the language that is used, or if it arises from ALN.

It is important to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners and their families through the ALN assessment processes so that they understand the child or young person's ALN support needs. This is particularly important for Roma learners and their parents or carers, who may have the additional barrier of English or Welsh as an additional language.

Admissions to school

Challenge

Our consultation indicated that, generally, families from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities prefer their children to attend a school where there are also other children from their own Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller community attending.

A particular challenge can occur where parents or carers have low literacy levels and may need support in completing applications for school places. Families may not have access to digital devices or may experience poor connectivity if they live on-site or are travelling. Roma families may have the additional challenge of having little or no English or Welsh language.

Children and young people told us:

“ “Our families like schools where they understand us, or there are other

Traveller families”

“ “My parents can read and write with a little bit of help.”

“ “My mum cannot read or write. ”

Welsh Government action

The purpose of the Welsh Government’s **‘School admissions code’** is to ensure that all school places for maintained schools are allocated and offered in a fair way.

The Code imposes requirements and offers guidance to local authorities, the governing bodies of maintained schools, school admissions forums and school admission appeals panels on the discharge of their school admission functions. These bodies must act in accordance with the Code.

The Code recognises that the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are very strongly family-orientated. It also recognises that parents and carers will normally want all of the children in their family to attend the same school. Parents and carers have a right to apply for a place in any school that they would like their child to attend and, where there are places available, they must usually be offered a place. Where a school has more applications than places available the admissions authority must use its published oversubscription criteria.

Arrangements must be in place for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children to be registered quickly at a school, whether they reside permanently or temporarily in the area.

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Effective practice: help with the school admissions process

One Traveller Education Service (TES) supports learners and their families to be able to access education from nursery age to post-16. Over the years the team has fostered and developed good relationships with the communities to ensure that Gypsy and Traveller learners may return to school or college, even when some have been out of education for many years.

An increase in online services because of the COVID-19 pandemic, means the Traveller Education Service has the ability to directly contact:

- the parents and carers of as many 'rising 5s' as possible
- parents and carers of all Year 6 learners applying for a secondary place
- all known post-16 young people both in school and being electively home educated

The service can now ensure primary and secondary applications are submitted by the local authority deadline, so children and young people are given a school offer in the first round. The team complete and submit applications with the parent or carer, and then follow up education place offers by contacting parents or carers to gain permission to accept a school place on their behalf.

The service works closely with Careers Wales to support young people to access further education post-16. Meetings are arranged for learners educated within a school, as well as for those who are educated at home. A home visit is carried out to find out what the young person would like to do or study. Careers Wales then follow all Gypsy, Roma and Traveller

young people through this process into further education.

Effective practice: Traveller families engaged through adult education

A school in west Wales is taking a whole-family approach to its education provision. It has provided opportunities for Gypsy and Traveller parents and carers to boost their learning. Successes include:

- parents and carers successfully completing vocational training courses, such as the Construction Skills Certification Scheme, via their children's schools securing employment
- parents and carers enrolling on degree courses taught on the school premises
- a one-to-one literacy programme that is teaching Gypsy and Traveller men literacy skills and boosting their employability

Attendance at school

Challenge

National data shows that attendance among Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners is generally lower than their peers. A statistical '[summary of absenteeism at school before and during the coronavirus \(Covid-19\) pandemic](#)' identified that absence was highest among Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners.

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Reasons for this include:

- families' attitudes to school and the importance they place on education vary enormously
- some Gypsy, Roma and Traveller parents and carers did not have a positive experience of school and did not complete their own education
- Roma people who have migrated from parts of Europe may not have had access to education previously

Factors such as these can lead to low literacy levels and a distrust of schools and the education system.

For many Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families there is a cultural expectation that a young person will take on the responsibilities of caring for family or engaging in the family business.

Further concerns that can impact on attendance include:

- the subjects that are taught at secondary school and their alignment with their culture and values
- the influence of children and young people from outside of their communities
- racist bullying
- children and young people facing racial harassment and abuse

Children and young people told us:

“Mum stayed in school until she was 11 and my dad stayed until he was 13 or 14 although he tells me he 'mitched' most of the time.” (Mitched is a term for truancy.)

“I have missed a bit of school, so I want help explaining things in school. I am shy when I first meet people, so I don't speak. I don't really have many

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friends because of this, and it helps when I have a louder friend or cousin to be with because they can figure things out for me like ordering dinners in school. I don't like to come to school if I am going to be on my own because of this.”

“ I go part time. I would like more stuff like sewing, cooking, also doing hair and beauty.”

“ I attend school full time. I do my chores when I go home. If my mum or grandparents are ill, I might have to stay at home to help. ”

Welsh Government action

A number of key resources have been produced to help education professionals, schools and others:

- The **All Wales (school) Attendance Framework** is a practical resource toolkit for use by the Education Welfare Service and provides standards and guidance for practitioners to ensure greater consistency of practice throughout Wales.
- The '**Belonging, engaging and participating – Guidance on improving learner engagement and attendance**', outlines suggested good practice in terms of improving learner engagement and attendance, signposting to further guidance and resources.

Further information can be found in '**Guidance on school attendance codes**'.

Legal considerations

The unique position of Traveller families in relation to school attendance is

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recognised by Section 444(6) of the Education Act 1996. It provides a defence to conviction if a parent can demonstrate that:

- they are engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as requires them to travel from place to place
- the child has attended at a school as a registered learner as regularly as the nature of the trade or business permits
- where the child has attained the age of six years, has made at least 200 attendances (i.e. sessions or half days) during the preceding twelve months

The purpose of this section is not to protect Traveller parents from legal action, nor does it relieve parents of their duties under section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states:

“ To cause their child to receive a full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and any additional learning needs they may have. ”

It is to ensure that children are receiving suitable education through regular attendance at school or otherwise.

The aim should always be to ensure that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people, in common with all other children and young people, attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible. Attendance is at least 380 sessions, which equates to 190 days during any school year. The 200 attendances stated above should not be regarded as the norm.

In cases where school attendance is an issue a balance should be found between:

- the need for legal action taken against individual cases
- the interests of the child or young person
- adopting a sensitive and sympathetic approach that recognises the lifestyle and cultural traditions of the family

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Schools may authorise absence of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners where they are satisfied that a family migrates but gives reasonable indications that it has every intention of returning. Consultation with the local TES may be helpful at this point. This includes Gypsies and Travellers, including circus and fairground families, leaving sites and winter quarters with every expectation that they will return.

Some schools in these circumstances may be able to maintain contact with the children and young people via outreach work or the provision of distance learning packs. However, such activities should not be viewed as a preferable alternative to attendance at school. Some reasonable latitude on absence might also be offered to families while the family finds another site. However, in the latter circumstances all efforts should be made to encourage and maintain attendance at school.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 introduced the power for schools to dually register a Traveller child when they are known to be attending another school. In such situations their attendance can now be recorded as attending an 'approved educational activity'.

The school of main attendance should take responsibility for setting up the appropriate communication systems with the other educational provider to ensure the child or young person is in attendance when they are supposed to be. For safeguarding and educational reasons, the responsibility for following up on unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner falls to each school, during the time in which the learner is present.

Where Traveller children are specifically registered learners at a school and are known to be present either at a site, official or otherwise, or in a house and are not attending school, the absence should be investigated in the same way as for any child or young person.

Effective practice: improving attendance levels

This example sets out the action one local authority took to improve the attendance levels of Gypsy and Traveller learners. These included:

- identifying a Gypsy Traveller Officer at the school
- training staff about Gypsy Traveller culture
- establishing monthly Education Welfare Officer meetings to look at data
- holding termly meetings to monitor data with the identified officer at the school
- providing regular home visits to build up the relationships with the school and TES
- educating parents and carers on the importance of school and completing (at least) the required 200 sessions before travelling
- encouraging and arranging dual registration at other schools
- working with the Education Welfare Officer to build up relationships within the Gypsy Traveller community through the TES
- supporting families through the identified Gypsy Traveller Officer at the school who maintained regular contact with families and the TES
- engaging with Families First
- providing education travelling packs to families

These actions resulted in:

- all Gypsy and Traveller pupils completing their 200 sessions before travelling
- more dual-registration at schools
- increased attendance by the child or young person
- traveller packs being completed

The local authority identified that the actions which had the greatest

impact were identifying a Gypsy Traveller Officer within the education setting and holding regular meetings and visits with parents.

Bullying on the grounds of race

Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are protected under the Equality Act 2010 because they are minority ethnic groups. They are therefore protected against race discrimination.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people can experience direct discrimination or other forms of discrimination on the grounds of their race and/or ethnicity. Their family background and culture may lead to them being discriminated against, and the lived experiences of children and young people illustrate that this often happens within education settings. This discrimination can include:

- bullying
- harassment
- abuse
- violence
- hate crime

It can also take the form of:

- overt racist language
- perpetuating harmful stereotypes
- microaggressions

While any type of bullying or harassment is unacceptable, racial bullying and harassment can have a hugely detrimental impact on a child or young person's:

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- overall wellbeing
- attendance at school
- longer-term educational attainment

The Welsh Government condemns bullying and harassment in any form. We expect all allegations of bullying and racism to be fully investigated by education settings. We also expect appropriate action to be taken to address the matter and prevent further instances from happening.

Despite work by schools and other services, as well as local, Welsh and UK government initiatives, bullying in offline and online environments remains a worrying problem. It impacts on children, young people, their families and communities.

The United Kingdom has been found to be one of the worst countries for children and young people's life satisfaction. The Children's Society's **The Good Childhood Report**' shows that bullying behaviour can signal that there are other disadvantages in a child or young person's life, reflecting low overall life satisfaction.

Children and young people who engage in bullying can have a range of motivations, including holding prejudices against certain groups in wider society. According to the Welsh Government's anti-bullying guidance '**Rights, respect, equality: Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools**' these prejudicial opinions may be informed and influenced by a wide range of factors. These include:

- the media
- community and/or family values
- previous personal experience

Some Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners told us that they had not experienced bullying because of their ethnicity and culture.

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However, many others told us that they had experienced it, particularly name-calling.

“ “I have been called names in school such as 'Gypo' and 'Pikey', which I hate.”

“ “Not that I can remember. To tackle bullying school should follow their policies for every incident reported.”

“ “People sometimes bully us with words like ‘Czechy’ and stuff like that. It is often about our culture and our country. I don’t care about the bullying as I am proud of where I’m from and when I show I don’t care, it stops. It is mainly pupils in my year group.”

“ “No bullying. I wouldn’t stand for anyone bullying me. Also, people don’t bully us. They are scared of Irish Travellers.”

“ “I have never been bullied. I think schools should do more and give stricter punishments for bullying and being racist. ”

The impact of bullying and harassment can lead to retaliation in the form of physical fights which can lead to exclusions from school.

Welsh Government action

Eradicating racism and promoting race equality have always been priorities for the Welsh Government. The Covid-19 pandemic brought into focus the stark reality of the disproportionate adverse impact of the pandemic on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups.

In March 2020 the First Minister requested urgent work be taken forward. This led to the development of the [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan](#), published in June

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2022. Built on the values of anti-racism, it calls for a truly anti-racist Wales by 2030.

Co-constructed with ethnic minority communities including Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, the Anti-racist Wales Action contains goals, actions, timelines, and tangible outcomes that will help us to move from the rhetoric on racial equality and ensure we deliver meaningful action.

The definition of racism and racist incidents used in Wales and across the UK are those that were proposed in the report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry in 1999.

- Definition of racism: “Conduct or words or practices which disadvantage or advantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin.”
- Definition of a racist incident: “Any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.”

The Macpherson inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence contained recommendations for public services, including schools, on how racism should be addressed. The full report, with recommendations in Chapter 47, can be found on the [UK Government's website](#). Further details are on the UK Parliament website within '[The Macpherson report twenty two years on](#)' review.

We have a responsibility to support and help communities who have been the victims of racism and other forms of discrimination. For that reason, the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan sets out the steps the Welsh Government is taking to ensure all children and young people have access to the support they need.

It is also important for schools to recognise the wider inequalities facing Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities around:

- health

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- accommodation
- socio-economic status

The health needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people are part of these inequalities. The '[Framework on embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being](#)' reflects the need for all schools to consider relevant data to inform practice. Relevant data includes the School Health Research Network reports. Schools should include the specific needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people when developing action plans to combat discrimination and provide support for these learners.

Recording racist incidents within education settings

As set out in our '[Rights, respect, equality: Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools](#)' guidance, education settings are expected to record and monitor all instances of bullying within their setting. The Welsh Government expects data and information collected by schools to be used to identify improvements and assess their progress as part of self-evaluation.

It is for individual schools to determine what data and information they collect in the context of the specific issues within their school and in compliance with data protection law. It may also be useful for local authorities to consider how data might be used on a local level to identify improvements and opportunities for collaborative approaches across their area.

The most effective recording of this data includes detail regarding the nature or type of the bullying and/or harassment. The Welsh Government expects schools to consider, when recording incidents of racist bullying, that there should be distinct and separate categories for noting the basis of the racist bullying, for example on the basis of religious heritage, ethnicity such as Gypsy, Roma or Traveller, or on the basis of refugee status.

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Prejudice-related bullying is very often motivated by hostility based on a person's actual or perceived race, religion, or culture. At the root of such bullying is a view that some people are different or 'other'. By 'othering' them through remarks and insults it becomes easier to see any group as set apart and to dehumanise them.

The Welsh Government is currently strengthening its statutory '**Rights, respect, equality**' anti-bullying guidance for schools. The updated guidance will provide specific guidance to education settings on prejudice-related bullying and provide advice for practitioners on how to engage effectively with parents and carers around this.

The role of schools in helping every learner feel they belong is of immense value in building a cohesive society. This is reflected in 'human rights' and 'diversity' being **cross-cutting themes** within the Curriculum for Wales. Very young children do not see difference until they learn or adopt attitudes and prejudices which may be present around them.

The Welsh Government expects schools to work with learners, families and communities to ensure the right support, at the right time, is provided to learners. This will ensure the best outcomes for the child or young person. Under the **Public Sector Equality Duty** schools are under an obligation to ensure appropriate and effective action is taken to remove or minimise disadvantages encountered by learners who have protected characteristics.

Communication with families and communities

Challenge

There are several challenges that can affect communication between schools and families and communities. These are not exclusive to Gypsy, Roma and

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Traveller communities but can seriously affect how easy it is to communicate with them.

Key to good communication is building a strong relationship between school and community, and building an understanding of the challenges and barriers a community may face. These may include institutional and/or systematic challenges or obstacles. By developing this understanding, education practitioners can paint a full picture of the support a child or young person may need to ensure equity in education.

There is a huge amount of expertise and effective practice around Wales, but it is worthwhile outlining some of the challenges.

For Gypsy and Traveller families living on a site, whether local authority or private, there may be challenges ensuring internet connectivity which can make contact via e-mail difficult. When communicating with families, low levels of literacy may need to be considered.

For children from EU Roma communities there can be the added challenge of language acquisition. Children may be new to the English or Welsh languages and may not have had access to formal education in their country of origin. They will therefore need support to acquire English or Welsh to enable them to access the curriculum. Currently, local authority Ethnic Minority Achievement Services (EMAS) provide help and support to individual learners and schools, to support language acquisition.

Children and young people told us:

“ Information comes through e-mails but my parents prefer a call.”

“ My parents prefer a phone call. They understand it better than a text because it can be explained.”

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“ “School sends a text (unable to read it) or I have to tell my family. ”

Effective practice: parent and carer involvement

To encourage the engagement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families with the education process and the wider community, schools, local authority TES and EMAS in Wales have identified a range of successful approaches. These help build strong relationships while recognising their specific cultural needs.

Successful practices that have encouraged parents' and carers' involvement in the education process

- Speedy enrolment for children and young people from Traveller families.
- Dual school registration for children and young people of relatives visiting local Traveller families, to maximise attendance.
- Translation support for EU Roma families, when needed, to ensure they are kept fully informed of school developments and their children's progress and can fill out forms needed to access additional support such as admissions, uniforms, and school dinners.
- Informal parent coffee mornings held at school which provide opportunities to notify parents of upcoming events.
- Twice-yearly meetings between TES teams, educational welfare officers, link workers and parents or carers to discuss learners' progress and reiterate the attendance requirements and importance of national tests.
- Offering parents educational packs for children and young people to use while they are travelling during the summer.

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- Home visits that help build positive relationships and trust with families.
- Introducing families to wider support services including TES language and play support for pre-school children.
- Ensuring TES staff are available to support learner or parent and carer meetings in school; advocate and help to resolve any issues; and support positive ways forward.
- Organising TES open days at their offices where interested stakeholders can:
 - learn more about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultures and lifestyles
 - network
 - share effective practice

Initiatives that have encouraged the involvement of children and young people in the wider community

- Enabling learners to have a say on issues that are important to them and develop their aspirations by encouraging them to participate in youth forums, nationally, locally and at school.
- Arranging skills-based courses including hair and beauty and boxing, which boost learners' self-esteem and can inspire further education choices.
- Tailoring lessons and discussions related to personal relationships and sexual health to ensure they are culturally sensitive for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners and supported by their families.
- Encouraging learners' participation in young enterprise projects and fundraising events.
- Linking with sport-focused programmes run by local authorities or charitable organisations such as boxing clubs, to create safer, healthier and more inclusive communities.

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- Organising broader learning experiences outside of the school timetable, sometimes referred to as ‘home clubs’, which can be in partnership with TES, and involve organisations in the local community.

Effective practice: home clubs encourage community engagement

For learners in one area of south Wales, the school day doesn't end when the final bell rings. To encourage Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners' engagement, with education and the local community, the local TES organises extra skills-based activities. These can be with a range of community organisations and public sector services, for example the local Fire and Rescue Service or the Romani Cultural and Arts Company.

These sessions:

- encourage the children and young people to widen their community involvement
- provide an opportunity to engage with TES staff outside of a school setting, fostering valuable relationships in the process

Cultural awareness and celebrating culture

Challenge

Children and young people's attitudes to recognising and celebrating the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultures may vary, but mainly favour celebrating their

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cultures. Children and young people told us:

“ I would like to see more lessons on all the cultures and the way people live.”

“ To help celebrate their culture, you have to be careful in school that Gypsy children aren't singled out. Celebrate our history or life in a positive way.”

“ Teachers within the school should have a better understanding of my culture – the rights and wrongs and do's and don'ts.”

“ I feel the school does not celebrate my culture. Schools could make it easier for those who travel and have G/T history within lessons.”

“ My school does recognise my culture and staff are interested. I feel school could do more to understand us. ”

Welsh Government action

The Curriculum for Wales is being taught in all schools from September 2023. One of the curriculum's four purposes is that children and young people develop as ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world. Building understanding within schools about different cultures is a key part of this. Improving all learners' awareness of cultures will increase their acceptance and inclusion of others. In turn, this can reduce incidents of bullying, which can be a barrier to learning.

Wales has led the way by becoming the first part of the UK to make it mandatory to teach Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic histories and experiences in the curriculum. This teaching is intended to ensure our children and young people:

- develop an understanding of their own and others' identities.

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- make connections with people, places, and histories in their communities as well as elsewhere in Wales, the UK and across the world

It reinforces the importance of teaching about the experiences and contributions of ethnic minority peoples, as part of the story of Wales across the curriculum.

Effective practice: celebrating different cultures

Examples of the ways schools and TES in Wales are improving awareness of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller lifestyles and cultures include:

- participating in the annual Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month every June, which includes displaying cultural information and materials created by learners in primary and secondary schools
- raising awareness of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultures and dispelling myths during classes
- ensuring history lessons include the persecution of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers during the Second World War. Some schools have organised Holocaust memorial projects, linked to local churches. These projects remember the hundreds of thousands of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers killed because of Nazi ideology and racial policies which led to persecution and genocide.
- exploring Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultures and relevant artists as part of learning in the Expressive Arts Area of Learning and Experience, for example, art and music classes
- discussing the different kinds of homes people can live in during primary school lessons, using TES resources to help
- inviting grandparents and community elders to discuss their heritage and culture with the class as part of a wider ancestry project
- enabling parents and carers from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to share their culture through cooking sessions with

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learners

Effective practice: art exhibition used to express culture

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners at one secondary school produced artwork celebrating their culture and heritage as part of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Month.

Staff from the school organised an exhibition and invited the local community to view the work and discuss the children and young people's culture with them during a special coffee morning.

The event encouraged better understanding of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultures and also enabled the learners to raise money for a local homeless shelter.

Effective practice: sharing heritage through ancestry

Year 7 learners at one secondary school researched their heritage as part of an ancestry project. As part of this work, their grandparents and elders from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities were invited into the school to share their experiences and celebrate their culture.

They spoke to the class about their history and heritage. This helped to break down social barriers and increase levels of understanding among children and young people who were not from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller backgrounds.

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Effective practice: Roma recipes used to promote cultural exchange

One primary school in south Wales has taken a whole-school approach to engaging with the local Roma community, by using food as a means of recognising and celebrating Roma culture.

The school established an after-school homework and nurture group. It was staffed by an emotional literacy support assistant and 2 bilingual teaching assistants who speak Czech and Roma.

Staff provided learners with additional literacy and numeracy support while parents and relatives were encouraged to prepare healthy meals in the school kitchen using traditional Roma recipes. This promoted a cultural exchange and reinforced the school's healthy eating messages.

The club enabled parents and carers to communicate and develop relationships with teaching staff and observe how they can help their children with homework. At the end of each session families received a stationery gift (sponsored by an office retailer) that forms part of a study skills pack that the learners can use at home.

Towards the end of the project the school organised a day-long, whole-school event that saw learners of all backgrounds participate in a range of Czech-inspired activities. This included basic Czech language lessons, listening to traditional Czech tales, and cooking traditional dishes.

A praise and celebration assembly was held in the school to mark the end of the project. The families who took part cooked traditional snacks and served them to the rest of the school. This boosted families' confidence in approaching and communicating with learners, parents, carers, and

school staff.

Effective practice: curriculum provision

One south Wales primary school has the motto statement 'Living and Learning in Harmony' and the core value of 'Peace, central to the work in the school'. Children from a wide range of different countries are part of the school, with over 40 different home languages. Twenty-one percent of the school community is of Roma heritage.

The primary school is an accredited Peace Mala school and its ethos is based on the golden rule 'Treat others as you would wish them to treat you'. Learning is based around a Peace Plan and a calendar of events, festivals, celebrations, and fundraising days are co-created with learners, parents, carers, and community partners. The aims are to:

- foster a sense of belonging, identity and culture
- celebrate diversity
- value the rich cultural influences that families bring to the school community

Roma families are invited into school using a digital school communication tool. Young Interpreters create videos in a variety of languages including Slovak Romanes, Romanian Romanes and Romanian. A teaching assistant speaks Slovak Romanes and shares messages in the mornings to parents and carers as they bring their children to school.

Parents and carers are invited into a coffee morning and identify dates

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that they think are important to add to the Peace Plan. They include:

- International Romani Day's Nikolas Day
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month
- Romanian Easter
- Martisor, International Children's Day
- Holocaust Memorial Day

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller celebrations in June culminate in a whole-school festival which is planned and led by Roma parents, carers, and learners. Parents and carers teach traditional dances, cook traditional food, sing and play traditional music. Traditional costumes are made by Roma families using inspiration from Roma artists. Roma learners teach their classmates language patterns and help to lead dancing and singing.

Classrooms represent the diversity of the learners through the use of:

- flags
- books
- pictures
- a variety of languages

Stories have been selected that are written or illustrated by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller authors or illustrators. Many of the stories have oral recordings in Romanes and Romanian, and recently the school have acquired a story book written in Romanes and Romanian.

Artwork is inspired by Roma artists such as Damian La Bas, Robert Czibi and Gabi Jimenez. Once the skills are taught, pupils apply these techniques to other topics. Recently they created artwork to show solidarity for Ukrainian refugees and used the style of Robert Czibi to

support the Ukrainian Roma refugees.

Using role models to raise aspirations is also an important part of the curriculum. This helps children and young people become ambitious, capable learners. The school have engaged with Toby G, Dr Rosa Maria Sisneros, Isaac Blake, and Petr Torak who are all inspirational in their own fields and represent different communities.

Curriculum for Wales

The **Curriculum for Wales** is a clear statement of what is important in a broad and balanced education for every child and young person, aged 3 to 16 years. The perceived inflexibility of the previous national curriculum often proved to be a barrier to accessing education for some Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. The Curriculum for Wales provides more flexibility for schools and education settings to respond to the local community.

Under the Curriculum for Wales a school or setting's curriculum is everything a learner experiences in pursuit of the four purposes. Ultimately, it should support all children and young people to become:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives.
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work.
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world.
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

This focuses teachers, children and young people on what a child or young person's skills should be across the different areas of learning. This includes fulfilling a range of different career and employment opportunities in the future,

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supported by mandatory Careers and Work-Related Experiences. Children and young people should be supported to progress along their individual learning pathway to achieve their own aspirations and ambitions.

The Curriculum for Wales national framework has been developed to be **inclusive of all learners**. It is also intended to support schools to design inclusive school curricula. A school's curriculum should raise the aspirations for all learners. It should consider how all learners will be supported to realise the four purposes and to progress.

This is essential for children and young people to:

- play an active part in their community and wider society
- thrive in an increasingly complex world

Schools and education settings should be aware of the needs and circumstances of all their learners when designing their own curriculum. They should consider equity of opportunity when putting into place support and interventions or making reasonable adjustments.

The **Curriculum for Wales Enabling learning guidance** supports schools to plan, design and implement a curriculum appropriate for all children and young people.

Curriculum: valuing diversity

We recognise it is vitally important that our education system equips young people to understand and respect their own and each other's histories, cultures and traditions. That is why the Curriculum for Wales has been designed to reflect the true diversity of our population and to support children and young people to understand how this diversity has shaped modern Wales.

Diversity is a **cross-cutting theme** within the Curriculum for Wales and

guidance includes information for developing a curriculum which promotes the understanding and valuing of diversity.

Curriculum: enabling learning

All children and young people in Wales have a right to be valued and well supported to make progress throughout their learning journey through experiences that are important and meaningful to them.

The Welsh Government's Curriculum for Wales framework is clear that practitioners should take a learner-centred approach. This involves working with families and other partners involved in the learner's progress, which can support holistic development. They should also make strong connections between the learner's home and wider community. This strengthens the learner's sense of belonging through embracing past and present experiences.

The curriculum should value and respect inclusivity and learners' identity within their community and the wider, multi-cultural Wales. This will promote the unique identity of the Welsh language, culture and heritage of Wales.

Further information can be found in the '[Enabling learning](#)' guidance.

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

Challenge

Some aspects of the curriculum have been considered contradictory to the values of some communities and cultures, although this is very varied due to the diverse nature of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. These challenges have been stated as reasons for withdrawing children and young people from mainstream education.

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A TES support provider explained that conversations relating to sex, sexuality or relationships needed to be carefully approached:

“ “Discussing sex is not a culturally appropriate conversation to have as a female with boys of the Traveller community. This would cause upset to the parents of the children I was supporting. ”

Parents also expressed concerns to us:

“ “We teach our own girls their sexual relationship curriculum, I asked school not to teach her. ”

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people told us:

“ “I am worried about being in RSE lessons. My family do not want me to be part of these lessons and I have to leave these lessons. It makes me feel uncomfortable when talking about these things especially to teachers who don't know me. I don't think it should be taught in school. I just need to know these things before I get married. The information will come from my mum and my aunties.”

“ “I'm not allowed to attend these lessons. I think RSE lessons are disgusting. At home these subjects are not mentioned.”

“ “We will talk about it but with family members and not in front of a whole class or boys, as that isn't appropriate.”

“ “I don't think G/T should talk about these things at such a young age. What worries me, it can impact your life. I think you need to be 18-years-old before you are told. I think it's disgusting. The information should come from parents when young people are told, boys with their dad and girls

with their mum.”

“ I think I will be allowed, but I’m not sure. I want to learn about relationships because I will have one day and need to know what to do.”

“ I think I am allowed to learn some things, but only in a class with just other girls. I would not be allowed to listen if there were any boys there. My mam and sisters talk to me about changes at home. ”

Positive responses to RSE were also shared:

“ I actually like going to RSE as most of my friends are in the lesson and I feel that it is more chilled and not a formal lesson. No one talks to me about that topic outside of school.”

“ We should talk about it in school so that people know how to be safe and to stop people sexually assaulting others. ”

Welsh Government action

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a **mandatory cross-cutting theme** within the Curriculum for Wales. It is designed to safeguard all children and young people, supporting them to develop knowledge, skills and behaviours that will assist in protecting them throughout their lives.

This is critical to building a society that treats others with understanding and empathy, whatever their ethnicity, social economic background, disability, sex, gender, or sexuality.

Young people should have the right to access information that keeps them safe from harm. This includes learning about:

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- healthy relationships
- keeping safe online and offline
- being confident to raise issues with responsible adults

The RSE section of the Curriculum for Wales framework contains:

- RSE Code: what will be taught and at what phase
- statutory guidance: this supports schools in developing their RSE curriculum

Developmentally-appropriate Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

There are legal requirements for RSE to be developmentally appropriate, including the resources schools and education settings use in implementing RSE. This requirement is outlined within [RSE statutory guidance](#).

RSE is also legally required to be objective, critical, and pluralistic. This means that schools and settings must provide factual information and on questions of values, a range of views on a given subject, commonly held within society.

Involving parents and carers: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)

The statutory RSE guidance is clear that we expect schools and settings to work closely with parents and carers to make sure they understand what their children are learning. Schools and settings should:

- have clear lines of communication in relation to RSE
- engage with learners, parents, carers and the wider community about learning and teaching in RSE, with opportunity for questions and clarification

The [RSE Code](#) has been published to give parents and carers clarity and

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transparency about what their children will learn and when.

This is an area where early and continuing communication, particularly with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller parents and carers, is essential to make sure families' concerns can be addressed wherever possible.

The Welsh Government will work with schools, local authorities and stakeholders to ensure that schools are supported to implement this sensitive area of the curriculum.

A resource to support schools with the implementation of RSE will be developed in 2024. It will provide practical support which schools and settings can draw upon when designing an inclusive RSE curriculum for children and young people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds.

Dedicated person or trusted adult in school

Challenge

Alongside good communication between schools and communities, many learners told us how important it is for them to have someone in the school that understands their culture. They want someone they can turn to if they have a problem.

Where there are TES or a dedicated person in school to support children and young people, strong links have been made with the communities. Here are some of the learners' views about who they trust and talk with in their school or setting if they need support:

“ I don't really know anyone, so if TES isn't in I don't know how to order

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dinner or I get lost. I wouldn't have anyone to talk to all day."

" "My family can talk to the TES team if they are worried about anything."

" "I settled into Year 7 OK. Having a TES at school made it easier because there was someone I could go to and for my Mam to ring. "

Effective practice: Point of contact boosts families' confidence

At one north Wales school, a dedicated point of contact has meant that Gypsy and Traveller families feel more confident that their children's needs are fully understood. The school is sensitive to their culture following the appointment of a senior staff member as their main point of contact.

The staff member has spent time developing positive relationships with the families, keeping communication open. They also regularly liaise with the local TES. This ensures all approaches are joined up and in line with effective practices.

Effective practice: primary school focused on learners' futures

One primary school in south-east Wales has a staff member designated as a point of contact for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners and parents or carers.

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This staff member regularly attends conferences with local TES staff to ensure they are up-to-date with developments and policies relating to the communities.

Key school staff also meet each term to discuss learners' progress, both socially and academically. The aim is to establish the best pathways to learners' future success.

Digital inclusion

Challenge

During the COVID-19 pandemic many children and young people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities did not have access to suitable digital devices or connectivity at home to support learning. In addition, many did not have a dedicated space in which to work.

This highlighted the importance of schools and settings providing, where possible, a space for children to work at lunchtime, break time or during an after-school club.

Some children and young people may have issues with internet connectivity or cannot afford the data, even if they have a device. Many Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people prefer not to work on laptops. When asked about technology, children and young people said:

“I have a laptop at home, the laptop is the school laptop I was given during lockdown.”

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“ I need help with technology, I don't have internet at home or a laptop.”

“ I don't like using technology. It takes me too long.”

“ I prefer using technology when learning, even though our school doesn't always give us the time to use the ICT facilities. I like to do my work on a computer as it makes tasks easier and more fun than using papers.”

“ I prefer handwriting rather than using the laptop. ”

Welsh Government action

To ensure all maintained schools across Wales have equitable access to online tools and resources to deliver the Curriculum for Wales, the Welsh Government has provided a range of centrally funded bilingual digital learning services and resources via **Hwb**. Hwb is the strategic digital channel that supports the delivery of the curriculum in Wales and is a key component of the Welsh Government's wider Hwb EdTech programme.

All practitioners and learners in Wales have access to a number of services, including:

- Google Workspace for Education
- Microsoft Office 365
- Just2easy
- Adobe Spark

These services provide education settings and learners with access to a range of powerful, effective, simple-to-use tools. These tools provide a safe and secure environment for schools and settings. Practitioners and learners can use these tools to confidently share ideas and take a collaborative approach to learning

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and teaching. Hwb can also be accessed anywhere, anytime from an internet-connected device.

The Welsh Government recognises the critical importance of keeping children and young people safe online. Through Hwb's '**Keeping safe online**' area we improve the digital resilience of children and young people, families, education practitioners, professionals and governors. We are providing the latest resources, information, training and guidance to enhance their digital resilience.

The Welsh Government continues to work closely with local authorities to:

- further support schools in adopting and embedding digital learning in the classroom
- continue to streamline and standardise the way digital services and ICT are delivered in a school context, including support for remote learning

The Welsh Government recognises that use of digital devices is an important part of our daily lives. This was key to including digital competence as a cross-curricular skill at the heart of Curriculum for Wales.

Effective practice

In a north Wales local authority, the TES team is located within one of the feeder high schools which the majority of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners attend. There is an offer of one-to-one and small group support with online homework, and they have requested paper-based work packs for children and young people who do not feel comfortable accessing schoolwork online. However, where possible, they try to work with their local Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners to support them to become IT literate. Most Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families in the local area have

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Wi-Fi in their trailers and homes. Children needing IT equipment have been provided with items such as laptops.

The team is supporting parents and carers to navigate the support platforms that their children access. This issue was identified during the pandemic when the children, young people, parents and carers struggled to understand and/or access online learning platforms. A future aim is to support parents and carers to become digitally aware so they can continue to support their children's learning.

A Level 4 teaching assistant trained to deliver a specialist literacy and numeracy platform has been appointed to support the learning and progress of learners. It is planned that learners will be able to work with the teaching assistant in small group sessions for short interventions. Learners will also be able to access the platform independently at home with their own log in. This will facilitate tracking where extra support and guidance is needed. The children will be familiar with the programme from initial guided support.

Elective home education

Challenge

Gypsy and Traveller families are more likely to choose to educate their children and young people at home for a variety of reasons. These reasons include the challenges identified in this guidance.

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Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government published statutory [Elective home education guidance](#) in May 2023.

The Welsh Government published a [handbook for home educators](#) in June 2023.

Effective practice

When a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller family is considering home educating their child it is advisable for schools to liaise with the family, a local authority's TES, EMAS, or Elective Home Education officer. This will help to:

- address any challenges to the child or young person remaining in school
- clarify relevant roles and responsibilities should the family wish to home educate

Exclusions from school

Challenge

Research undertaken in developing the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan identified that, for the year September 2019 to August 2020, learners with a Traveller ethnic background had the highest rate of fixed-term exclusions (of 5 days or less). Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners all had higher rates of fixed-term

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exclusions of 5 or fewer days in the 2019 to 2020 academic year than other ethnic groups. However, please note that we do not have data for the ethnic background of all learners. Some learners prefer not to provide the information, and for some the information was not obtained (Welsh Government, 2021b).

Welsh Government action

In response to this data and the subsequent year's data covering 2020 to 2021, the Welsh Government has committed to strengthening guidance on Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units in relation to learners who are disproportionately subject to permanent or temporary exclusions.

Data will continue to be taken from the Welsh Government's published official statistics on permanent and fixed-term exclusions from schools. These statistics include data on exclusions by ethnic background.

Further information and guidance can be found in '[Permanent and fixed-term exclusions from schools](#)'.

Financial support and school uniform

Challenge

It can be a challenge for many parents and carers, not just those from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, to meet the cost of sending their child to school. However, families from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities may not know how to access the support that is available to them, particularly if systems differ across local authorities.

Community stakeholders told us that they believe there is a need for schools

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and settings to raise awareness of grants available, for example to help with the cost of school uniform, and to communicate this information with parents and carers. Stakeholders also told us that schools need to offer more flexibility and leniency around school uniforms.

For Gypsy and Traveller families, there can be challenges in having to buy a uniform where a child has transferred from another school or has been travelling and outgrown their uniform. Families may not be able or want to purchase a new uniform if the child is not going to be in a particular school for long.

Many schools that support families well have said that they raise awareness of the help and support available to families and provide support with completing forms. Consideration should be given to assisting with any application processes.

The following information will help identify the grants available to help with the cost of school uniform, PE kit and other costs associated with sending a child to school.

Welsh Government action: School Essentials Grant (formerly PDG Access Grant)

Families may be eligible for support to purchase school uniform, PE kit, school bags, stationery materials and other equipment, enabling children to attend school and take part in activities at the same level as their peers.

Children whose families are on lower incomes and **qualify for certain benefits** (linked to existing eligibility criteria for free school meals) and those with no recourse to public funds (including asylum seekers) can apply for the **School Essentials Grant**.

Eligible families can submit a claim if they have a child in:

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- primary school from reception to Year 6
- secondary school from Year 7 to Year 11

All looked after children qualify for the grant, whether they receive free school meals or not. Learners who receive free school meals due to transitional protection arrangements do not qualify for this funding. Families are only entitled to claim once per child, per school year.

Families may need help and support to access this grant. Therefore, consideration should be given to assisting them with the application process.

Welsh Government action: cost of the school day

The Welsh Government's **Programme for Government** includes the cost of the school day as a key priority. It is an important issue for many families across Wales. The Welsh Government commissioned the third sector organisation Children in Wales to produce a set of **Price of Pupil Poverty guides** for schools. They cover key aspects of the cost of the school day, including practical methods to raise awareness of poverty and how this affects learners while attending school. We encourage schools and settings to use them.

Alongside its direct work with schools, Children in Wales has developed short fact sheets, outlining simple, practical ways schools can help their learners by alleviating the stigma that surrounds poverty. Children in Wales has also published 'The Price of Pupil Poverty: A Guide for Governors'. This guide helps all school governors to support their schools in reducing poverty stigma. These **guides** are available on Hwb.

As part of the process and best practice, the Welsh Government also advises that schools consider the voices of their learners and encourage them to use the **Children's Commissioner's Charter for Change resources**. These were developed to help education settings to reduce costs for families. These

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resources include the “Check with Ceri resource”, which enables children, young people, and adults to participate in reducing costs for families in their school community.

Welsh Government action: school uniforms

The Welsh Government published statutory [school uniform guidance](#) in May 2023, to better support governing bodies in making decisions on school uniform policies. It covers:

- access
- affordability
- flexibility
- the current position in Wales regarding financial assistance for parents and carers towards the cost of purchasing school uniforms

The cost and affordability of school uniform is covered in section 3 of the guidance and lists those areas governing bodies should consider for keeping costs down, including stipulating basic items and colours, but not styles. This means items can be bought from multiple retail chains at reasonable prices and not just from one authorised supplier. It also includes considerations around the cost and availability of non-standard sizes and limiting the frequency of uniform changes.

Second-hand school uniforms can benefit all parents and carers, particularly families on low incomes or large families. In addition, by extending the life of garments, schools can encourage sustainability and its wider environmental benefits. The guidance states that schools should have recycling and exchange schemes in place. More information is given on the different types of [school uniform exchange and recycling schemes](#) available.

The uniform guidance also promotes the TES, and other good practice to reduce

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costs. The Children's Commissioner's '[Revolve resources](#)' support children and young people to set up uniform re-use shops.

The statutory uniform guidance references the Equality Act 2010. The provisions of the Act may impact on school uniform and appearance policies. Governing bodies and head teachers must have regard so as not to discriminate unlawfully on the grounds of:

- sex
- gender reassignment
- sexual orientation
- pregnancy
- maternity
- religion or belief
- disability

Effective practice

Many schools already recognise:

- the challenges for families from all backgrounds in providing schools uniforms
- the cost associated with purchasing school-branded items that may be more expensive than generic brands

Many schools now offer uniform exchange facilities and help in accessing grants.

Schools and TES can also work together to provide help and support to families, for example, we were told:

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“To further ensure school admissions/transitions are smooth and successful we will support parents with school data collection, uniform grants, and free school meals. This approach has proven to work, which we will continue to use and improve.”

“We provide practical support to parents, including with form filling (online and paper), such as for uniforms, sports kits, school dinners and admissions. ”

Transition from primary to secondary school

Challenge

Ensuring successful transition from primary to secondary school for learners can be challenging. Many families from Gypsy and Traveller communities want their children and young people to learn the traditional roles of their culture. They may see transitioning to secondary school as a barrier to doing this.

Local authorities, along with published research, identify that families can have concerns about the curriculum and culture of secondary schools. This can lead to some children not being registered to continue their schooling in secondary education. This is evidenced by **Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) data** which shows significantly fewer Gypsy and Traveller learners in Year 7 than Year 6.

Attitudes to school and attending secondary school vary widely. Children and young people told us:

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“ I am not going to high school because my older sister doesn't go and my mum never did.”

“ I am not going to high school. My mum will get me a tutor at home like for my older brother and sister.”

“ I will only go to high school if I cannot read and write well enough by the time I leave primary school.”

“ None of my older brothers have gone to high school or college so I probably won't either. ”

Effective practice

Some methods used by schools and TES in Wales to support and encourage learners to make the transition to secondary school and to stay engaged in education include:

- starting to prepare children for transition early in Year 5 as this may help to reduce any anxiety around what to expect at secondary school
- initiating early dialogue with parents and carers to discuss secondary school transition and the options available
- helping parents and carers with relevant paperwork and application forms, for example forms for transport and free school meals
- reassuring parents and carers about safety and promoting the benefits of secondary school education
- providing additional support where needed, during the early stages of secondary school attendance
- promoting the move into secondary education as a special occasion worthy of celebration

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- developing individualised ‘transition plans’ that take into consideration the needs of each child
- arranging visits to the secondary school with learners and parents or carers, and a Q&A session with the staff member who is likely to be their main point of contact
- providing opportunities for learners and parents or carers to meet and/or speak with secondary school staff and other learners (for example through community engagement activities such as family learning sessions, celebration events, open evenings, or coffee mornings)
- providing a starter pack with information children will need
- organising transition days for groups of learners to get a feel of their new school and experience taking part in lessons
- if appropriate, considering a reduced timetable during the first week of secondary school to minimise the intensity of the experience
- establishing ways for secondary settings to contact parents and carers with positive news
- inviting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller role models (existing or former learners) to talk about their academic successes and/or offer advice on how to cope with situations learners are likely to face in school
- sharing videos and leaflets on the transition with parents, carers, and learners. These often feature Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners and have been created by schools
- providing learners with bags containing the equipment they will need for secondary school
- organising after-school transition clubs to encourage learners to engage with secondary education – these are sometimes held at secondary schools
- inviting current Year 7 and Year 8 learners from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to talk to Year 6 learners about secondary school
- facilitating collaborative projects between Year 6 learners and Year 7

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and 8 secondary school learners, at the secondary school, in the 2 terms preceding transition

- establishing a mentor or 'buddy' system for primary school learners with appropriate secondary school learners, ensuring they have a friendly face to turn to when they start
- ensuring schools maintain links with the local TES during the transitional period, when support with referrals and attendance may be needed
- maintaining close links with the local authority's school admissions team
- keeping lines of communication open between the TES, school and families, particularly during the initial transition period, to ensure effective communication and that everyone feels fully informed

Effective practice: preparation is key to a positive transition

The transition from primary school to secondary school can be daunting, particularly for learners from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. To ensure children feel well prepared for the move, one secondary school in south-east Wales organises at least 2 terms of activities aimed at helping the children settle in.

During the spring term, to help them prepare, Year 6 learners work with Year 7 and Year 8 learners on projects, for example go-kart building. Weekly 'explore' classes at the secondary school, run during summer term, allow Year 6 learners to collect stationery, compete in a quiz, meet their teacher, and become familiar with their timetables and weekly planners. Uniforms and sports kits are also provided if needed.

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Effective practice: After-school transition clubs put learners at ease

With the support of the local TES, one south Wales primary school established an after-school transition club to encourage its Year 5 and Year 6 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners to engage with secondary education. The club was held at the high school.

Among the activities organised were:

- an opportunity to interview the headteacher about the secondary school
- a chance to meet other school staff
- a tour of the buildings and facilities by existing Year 8 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners

Vocational courses, apprenticeships, further education and higher education

Challenge

Studying in further and higher education can strengthen individuals' life chances by:

- widening their experiences
- providing them with vital skills and knowledge that can support their future career development

However, the experiences and inequality in outcomes for learners from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities can have an impact on their aspirations to

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continue in education after the end of compulsory schooling.

Experiences within education should be positive for all learners and staff. However, we know that as well as barriers and challenges experienced by children and young people, teachers, lecturers and other educators from ethnic minority communities can experience inequity and racism. This has an impact, not just on those in post, but also those aspiring to join the profession.

Many Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people value education and the opportunities to access and progress into further and higher education. When asked, children and young people expressed particular interest in hair and beauty, music and construction skills. However, many Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people also told us that they feel school and the education system do not offer them the life skills they feel are necessary to succeed post-16.

When asked about their future aspirations, young people told us:

“ I am studying GCSEs in school which will help me go to college. I would have liked to have done cookery but it’s not the manly thing to do. I’m the eldest of three and I would like my brother and sister to finish school.”

“ I will be applying for college to do either construction or music.”

“ I love music and would like to learn how to produce my own. I would like to see this taught in school.”

“ I want to finish my A level and go to university. I am thinking I want to do criminology.”

“ I would like more skills to be able to go into the workplace. I have signed up for college. My ambition is to be in full-time employment.”

“ “My brothers went to 6th form college. I think I will stay until Year 12 because I can get a good job and education. I would like to be a pianist or mechanic and have a family and buy a house.” ”

Welsh Government action

Post 16 education: apprenticeships and junior apprenticeships, further education and higher education

All young people should be given comprehensive information, advice and guidance to help them choose the most appropriate post-16 options. These options could include:

- A levels
- vocational programmes
- apprenticeships
- employability programmes
- self-employment

Working Wales has comprehensive information on the range of options available to young people.

For Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people it is particularly important to ensure that advice and guidance:

- encourages every individual to achieve their aspirations, rather than making culturally-biased assumptions about educational or career goals
- offers a range of options which challenge traditional gender assumptions
- emphasises flexibility and the possibility of returning to learning at a later stage, studying on a part-time basis, and exploring different options (for

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example through 'taster' courses and employability programmes)

- raises awareness of opportunities for exam resits and additional learning support for learners who may not have achieved what they want to at school
- promotes Gypsy, Roma and Traveller role models who have succeeded in their careers, in entrepreneurship, or in educational pathways

It is often possible to study on a part-time, flexible, or remote basis which may be more suitable for some learners. All further education colleges have student services teams. These teams should be the first point of contact for information on flexible opportunities, as well as any additional learning support or financial support that learners may be eligible to access.

Learners may be reluctant to self-identify as Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller when they enter post-16 learning. This is because of concerns that this information may be misused to discriminate against them. This can make it difficult to measure participation and outcomes for this group of learners and means that it is particularly important for learning providers to build trust and confidence. Further information on concerns amongst Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities regarding the misuse of data can be found on the [UK Parliament website](#).

Colleges and other post-16 providers will not always know that a learner is from a Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller background. Therefore, they should make information on support, guidance and options easily accessible, so learners can find it without having to disclose information they are uncomfortable with sharing. This could include information on:

- flexible learning options
- financial support
- parental engagement
- a “zero tolerance” response to discrimination and bullying

In April 2019 Estyn published a thematic report '[Provision for secondary](#)

school-aged Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils'. This report states that around half of local authorities and schools work in partnership with a local college or work-based learning provider to enhance learning opportunities for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners at Key Stage 4, years 10 to 11 (ages 14 to 16). In some areas there are junior apprenticeship programmes, primarily funded by the local authority in collaboration with further education colleges.

Junior apprenticeships offer Year 10 and Year 11 learners the opportunity to study full-time for a future career in a college setting from the age of 14. The programme offers a two-year programme of work-related education with work experience built-in, alongside a Level 2 course. This leads to a qualification that is equivalent to 4 or 5 GCSEs, in a range of different vocational pathways. Each apprentice also studies GCSEs in Maths and English alongside their chosen area. There are a number of different junior apprenticeship pathways.

Each junior apprentice should have access to:

- support with learning and teaching
- behaviour management
- a designated Welfare Officer to support day-to-day issues, and provide pastoral care

The aim of the junior apprenticeship is to make the learner ready for employment, or ready to progress onto a higher-level vocational course or apprenticeship at the age of 16.

Effective practice: transition into post 16 education

Education settings and the local TES can put in place support for young people to help them to transition successfully into:

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- post-16 education
- further education (FE)
- Higher education (HE)
- training
- work-based learning
- employment

Methods include:

- facilitating transition visits to colleges, sixth forms in schools, or training providers for Year 11 learners
- working with organisations such as **Careers Wales** to support young people into pre-employment and training courses – this can increase their employment and entrepreneurial opportunities once they leave school
- supporting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners who are registered as home-educated and aged 14 to 16 years into vocational and basic skills training, or to reintegrate into mainstream education

For example, one north Wales local authority has secured benefits for learners by:

- introducing the option of different studies and courses during the 14 to 19 learning pathway to generate interest among the children and young people about applying to an FE college, or as something to aim for
- supporting careers appointments as early as possible, recognising the importance of understanding the needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners. This helps the learner understand what is required for FE or HE studies, vocational learning, apprenticeships, or other forms of post-16 learning

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- creating a pathway which is achievable and realistic for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners. Clearly explaining how this could work, alongside respecting cultural norms, can help persuade families to agree this next step
- establishing effective links with the local college diversity officer who could contact course leaders prior to applications by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners
- supporting the learner through the process of applying for college, HE, or an apprenticeship, ensuring the learner, and their families are fully aware of the processes, commitment and expectations
- using summer trial sessions, including help with transport to the new location
- supporting a tour of the provision with the learner and family so they are familiar with the study location and facilities, offering a trial run-through of the first day
- linking with the college and the learner before the learner starts at their new provision, highlighting any possible barriers and supporting the learner (if needed) to attend the first day
- keeping in contact with the college link officer and supporting any reviews or issues being experienced by the learner – for some learners support is not a short-term measure but something that needs to continue while they are in college

Annex A: relevant legislation

This information relates to: Celebrate and Participate - education guidance to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people.

This annex clarifies the key legislation and rights as they apply to children and

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individuals with protected characteristics.

Legal framework

A child's right to a quality education and a child's right to equal opportunities are fundamental rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

In Wales, these fundamental rights have been incorporated into domestic law through the Rights of Children and Young Persons Measure (Wales) 2011. This Measure places a duty on the Welsh Ministers to have 'due regard' to the UNCRC when carrying out their functions.

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 (the 2010 Act) is an important piece of legislation in the context of this guidance.

The 2010 Act states it is unlawful to discriminate against a pupil, or a prospective pupil, by treating them less favourably because of their protected characteristic(s): sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity and gender reassignment. It is unlawful to discriminate against a pupil because of a protected characteristic a person they are associated with has; or because of a protected characteristic you perceive them to have, even when you are mistaken.

How Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are protected

Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are protected under the 'Race' protected characteristic as defined in the 2010 Act. This includes the following aspects of a

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person's identity:

- colour
- nationality (including citizenship)
- ethnic origin
- national origins

Romani Gypsies have been recognised in law as a racial group since 1988. Irish Travellers have had similar legal recognition as an ethnic group since 2000. Both groups are covered by the Equality Act 2010 on the basis that 'race' (which can also include ethnic groups) is a protected characteristic in accordance with section 9 of the 2010 Act.

Roma people are an 'ethnic group' in terms of the law, and therefore protected by equality legislation. Many Roma people may face racism or discrimination because they are, or are perceived to be, from another country and are therefore protected under the Act because of their nationality or national origins.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The 2010 Act introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in 2011. This duty applies to a wide range of public bodies including local authorities and schools. It means that public bodies must consider all individuals:

- when carrying out their day-to-day work in shaping policy
- in delivering services
- in relation to their own employees

It requires that public bodies, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act

- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) ensures compliance and delivery of actions which support the PSED.

More information on the PSED can be found in EHRC's guidance document '**Public Sector Equality Duty: Guidance for schools in Wales**'. This guidance gives information on:

- the PSED
- what schools need to do with regard to the duty

Annex B: Codes to use for the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) as they relate to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children

PLASC is an electronic collection of pupil and school level data provided by all maintained sector primary, middle, secondary, nursery and special schools in January each year.

As part of PLASC schools are required to submit ethnic background and first language information for all pupils.

It is difficult to be precise about the numbers of children and young people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds in Wales. This is because they may be reluctant to state their ethnicity because of fear of:

- prejudice

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- bias
- lack of privacy and someone sharing their personal information with others

Families should be encouraged to feel comfortable in stating their ethnicity.

To improve data collection and ascription among these groups, since 2018 PLASC Ethnicity Codes have been extended to offer more ethnicity choices for families. The changes include:

- separating out Gypsies and Roma
- an additional code under Traveller for Showperson

The codes are as follows:

Main code

WIRT Traveller

Extended codes

WITH Traveller of Irish Heritage

WNAG 'New' Traveller

WOCC Occupational Traveller

WOTT Other Traveller

WSHP Showperson

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Main code

WRGG Gypsy

Extended codes

WOBG British Gypsy

WOOG Gypsy from Other Countries

WOTG Other Gypsy

Main code

WRRR Roma

Extended codes

WOER EU Roma

WOOR Roma from Other Countries

WOTR Other Roma

Annex C: additional effective practice examples

In addition to the effective practice provided for the specific challenges raised in this guidance there are also some useful examples of successful practices in

other areas.

Supporting Traveller learners to improve literacy levels

A primary school has a very high percentage of Traveller learners – 13%. Many were not progressing as well as their peers in literacy. This affected their ability to access aspects of the curriculum. The school also thought this may have contributed to:

- disengagement
- a lack of confidence
- a reluctance to attend school

Disrupted attendance due to traveling, and low levels of literacy among parents, added to these challenges.

A Traveller Education Service (TES) education officer was appointed by the local authority to oversee literacy and carry out a baseline assessment of learners' spelling and reading. This has enabled the school to identify which pupils would benefit from support.

One-to-one sessions and small group sessions are carried out on a weekly basis. Training has been provided to TES staff to enable them to deliver sessions. Parents and carers have also been invited into school to be given support and resources to help their children.

Termly updates from the TES are given to parents, and meetings held at school with the staff and the identified school link worker to keep them informed of progress and provide advice where needed.

The school has been provided with a bank of resources to be used in school. A log has also been set up to allow children to take these resources home. The

resources include:

- books
- activity booklets
- games
- electronic pens

The TES officer meets with the link worker on a weekly basis to feedback on progress. They also work closely with teaching staff to ensure literacy targets are included on the learners' development plans. More formal meetings are held with the head teacher on a termly basis to:

- share data
- discuss progress
- discuss areas for concern

The initiative has now been in place for 5 years and data shows that, in nearly all cases:

- learners are making progress
- the initiative is having a positive impact on achievement in the classroom

All learners that transferred to a secondary school are now within the expected range for their age. In addition, parents and carers are supporting their children's literacy in the home environment

Supporting Roma learners in secondary school

One south Wales secondary school carries out the following activities to support Roma families within their school community:

- mentoring learners
- liaising with outside agencies

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- running a **C-Card scheme** to support learners' sexual health
- helping parents, carers and learners to access funds
- providing donations, including food, clothes and furniture
- celebrations of heritage and culture
- delivering training for staff
- volunteering in the community to support learners
- providing school uniform
- ensuring excellent communication between school and parents and carers
- supporting parents and carers with form filling
- offering parents and carers advice
- working with other agencies and artists on a range of projects
- offering an alternative pathway suitable for learners, including qualifications offered by SWEET Education in aspects such as Personal Well-being; employability and work skills and entry-level qualifications allowing learners to follow courses that are accessible and give them options when they leave school or college.

For transition points the local authority team runs a project which includes 'New to English' and Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller learners. This is a 3 to 4 week project that enables learners from feeder primaries to work together and collaborate. The secondary school liaises with the lead primary to develop plans and then other primary schools are invited to take part.

Bilingual teaching assistants from the secondary school visit the primary school to liaise with Roma parents. Language teachers have also visited feeder primaries to meet the new cohort.

Supporting pride in culture and ethnicity

In one secondary school there have been learners who were reluctant to disclose their heritage when joining the school. The school shared an example of a learner who did not wish to share information about their Roma heritage

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with the school. Despite exhibiting many transferable skills and being extremely able and progressing well, this learner started to disengage in school lessons, experienced exclusions, and their attendance was significantly below the school's expected target.

While discussing these issues during one-to-one conversations, it became clear that the young person had several support needs. The learner needed help and support with their own identity, in the context of the new school environment.

As a response the school established sessions where Roma heritage was celebrated and Roma history was explained. The school also:

- arranged meetings with a careers advisor to raise aspirations
- involved the young person with appropriate outside agencies
- supported their parents to have conversations about Roma traditions and share Roma stories

The school also encouraged and celebrated the use of Romanes language.

The young person then gained knowledge about Roma history and started to acknowledge the importance of celebrating their background and ethnicity. The young person became increasingly involved with other Roma learners:

- helping to support events
- volunteering to support younger learners with Roma heritage
- helping with transition projects
- giving advice to practitioners about how to celebrate Roma culture

The learner has since progressed to higher education and continues to actively raise awareness of Roma heritage.

Improving attendance

One south Wales secondary school has a strategy to improve attendance for Roma learners. It has a dedicated team to support learners and families both academically and pastorally. Having a team member from their community whom learners and families trust and respect, has been important to ensure effective communication. The team leads the following actions:

- contacting families via a letter in their home language
- invitations for meetings in school
- phone communication with a teacher from the local authority who builds relationships with the community and supports its members
- inviting a Roma language speaking teacher with close links to the communities and families to attend all meetings and where necessary, Gwent Ethnic Minority Service (GEMS) staff are also involved

As a school there has been a focus on demonstrating to parents and carers that teachers have high expectations of their children and want them to succeed. Improving relationships with families has had a positive impact on attendance.

As well as action by the school, at parents' evenings the local authority team and GEMS staff also support teachers, learners and parents.

Building community relationships to support Roma learners

In one south Wales primary school, Roma learners in Year 6 are part of a mentoring programme run by a Roma-led charity. This programme to raise aspirations continues into Year 7.

The school has developed relationships with its Roma community over the past

10 years. This relationship is built on mutual respect, understanding and care. Staff from the school have been invited to and have attended Roma Church events, community events and weddings.

Attendance and engagement within school and community events have improved significantly.

The school noted that when parents and carers first completed registration forms, some were not confident to share their heritage and would often say they are Slovakian, Czech, or Romanian. Now a majority of families identify proudly as Roma.

Thanks to the support of the school's staff, families also engage with outside agencies, including:

- the police
- social services
- the youth justice system

A sense of well-being is high among Roma learners at the school because they are proud of who they are, showing other learners their culture and Roma identity. They know that:

- they belong
- they matter
- their teachers care about them

Roma learners have high aspirations with many wanting to become doctors, MPs, police officers and business owners. They have passion and ambition to influence change for the community.

Leadership and taking a ‘whole-school’ approach

A variety of ‘whole-school’ approaches are being used across Wales to ensure children and young people:

- can achieve their potential
- feel welcome at school
- fully engage with their education

These approaches include:

- designating a senior staff member as the main point of contact for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners, their families, and the local TES
- improving punctuality and attendance in primary and secondary schools by ensuring ongoing liaison between the school, parents, carers, TES staff and education welfare officers
- appointing a teaching assistant, a bilingual practitioner from among the communities, to support Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller learners in the classroom – in some parts of Wales, TES staff are fulfilling this role, and are also supporting learners with literacy, numeracy and GCSE coursework
- designating a TES staff member to the school’s senior leadership team
- raising awareness of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller lifestyle and culture among teaching staff through training offered by the TES and by attending conferences
- equipping teachers and teaching assistants with tools and technology that assist learners with reading difficulties, such as multi-sensory reading manual and a small portable device that reads text aloud
- improve lesson engagement, attendance and results by organising homework clubs, TES-supported drop-in mentoring sessions, and additional learning support at break and lunch times
- recording racist incidents and taking appropriate action swiftly, giving families confidence that their children’s well-being is a school priority, as

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learners from these groups can be subjected to bullying

- developing an inclusive, flexible curriculum that is available in its entirety to all, in line with the Curriculum for Wales guidance, meaning Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners can access the same opportunities as their peers
- incorporating appropriate and relevant learning experiences into the school curriculum, in line with the breadth of learning given in the Curriculum for Wales guidance
- introducing learners to programmes and qualifications by ASDAN, a UK-based education charity and awarding organisation, whose curriculum programmes and qualifications help young people develop knowledge and skills for learning work and life
- encouraging learners of all backgrounds to participate in a range of learning and experiences that reinforce inclusivity, including school projects
- assigning designated roles and responsibilities within the school to learners from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, alongside non-Traveller learners (see Break-time responsibilities encourage teamwork and involvement)
- establishing TES offices at secondary schools, helping to reinforce relationships between the TES and school; boost relationships with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families who reportedly feel more comfortable engaging with the school; and improve learners' attendance

Promoting inclusion: Duke of Edinburgh Award expedition

In a first for their school, 4 Year 10 learners from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community in west Wales completed their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh award with a final expedition. The young people involved described the programme as transformational, with one young person explaining that he was planning to leave formal education before getting involved in the programme. Their achievement made national news in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards magazine

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and was celebrated with a special presentation event at school. All 4 learners remained in mainstream education, going on to study at a local college.

Break-time responsibilities encourage teamwork and involvement

One school in south-east Wales promotes integration and engagement by assigning learners from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities designated roles and responsibilities within the school, alongside non-Traveller learners. The roles include:

- playground monitors who are responsible for organising and looking after play equipment at break times
- animal monitors who look after and care for the school rabbit
- presenting for the school radio station which is run by the learners at break and lunchtimes

Taking up these roles enables Traveller learners:

- to get more involved in the school community
- work alongside their peers to achieve shared goals

Hair and beauty project inspires self-confidence and careers

A hair and beauty course organised by a south Wales school, in partnership with a social enterprise organisation and a local salon, has:

- boosted the self-esteem and confidence of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners
- inspired some Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners to enrol on related

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vocational college courses

- improved the attendance and engagement with school of learners involved in the project

Annex D: Credit and qualifications framework for Wales (CQFW)

The **CQFW** is an inclusive meta-framework which illustrates the qualifications system in Wales. It aims to provide a 'common currency' for learning achievement and supports the recognition of credit, qualifications and learning across all sectors and levels.

The CQFW offers flexibility to learners, especially those disengaged from learning. It aims to:

- raise skills levels
- allow them to learn in their own time, at their own pace and place

It offers parity of esteem for qualifications and helps learners to see progression routes particularly where they are following non-traditional pathways.

The CQFW is underpinned by a set of high-level principles on which all learning must be based to be recognised. These include the requirement for learning to be based on recognised standards, UK-wide National Occupational Standards (NOS), where they exist.

The NOS provide a robust description of how a job should be performed, and are recognised across the UK, because they provide a common foundation to qualifications, learning and training. NOS are used as the basis for adult vocational qualifications and apprenticeship frameworks in Wales. They facilitate the transferability and portability of skills across sectors and borders.

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