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NCIL



Supporting Learners from Gypsy/Traveller Communities Guidance for Schools



Date	Version	Status	Update
May 2018	1.0	Guidance	Interim guidance
June 2018	2.0	Guidance	Interim guidance: notes added regarding primary – secondary transition
June 2018	3.0	Guidance	Interim guidance: further section added Partnerships with families and Leaving Guidance 2
Aug 2018	4.0	Guidance	Cover amended and page numbering
Nov 2020	5.0	Guidance	Primary to Secondary Transition information was amended and order of guidance was amended
Nov 2024	6.0	Guidance	Additional information in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gypsy/Traveller communities • entitlements • enrolment • partnerships with families • Update of resources section

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Learning about Travelling Communities in Scotland

Good relationships depend on all parties having a good knowledge and respect for the other's vision, values and cultural background. STEP (Scottish Travellers Education Network) recent research highlights the need for educators and mobile families to work together in partnerships to achieve better educational outcomes for young people.

Though sharing many aspects of common heritage, Travelling people are not one homogeneous group. Within Scotland, there are distinctive and separate groupings, each with their own histories, cultural traditions and values.

Gypsy/Travellers are Scotland's oldest ethnic minority community, often mobile in lifestyle. This is the broad term for people in Scotland who might variously refer to themselves as:

- **Travellers**
- **Scottish Travellers**
- **Gypsy/Travellers and Gypsy Traveller people**

As a generic term, it also encompasses English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish Travellers and European Roma.

Gypsy/Travellers regard 'travelling' as a very important aspect of their ethnic/cultural identity, although they might not literally be 'on the road' all of the time.

These guidelines apply to the Gypsy/Traveller groups listed in the above paragraph and not to 'Occupational Travellers' and 'New Travellers'. Gypsy/Travellers as an ethnic group are protected by equalities legislation.

Patterns of Mobility

Before considering how to build partnerships with families it is necessary to understand the different patterns of mobility a family may experience and how each may differently affect the families' capacity to engage with the education system.

These would include:

- Settled
- Semi-sedentary
- Highly mobile
- Out of School

Some families are completely **settled**. Although the children may come from a travelling background the family will have decided through necessity to settle in one area, often in a house for economic reasons or to gain access to services such as health for an older relative. Although settled Traveller children may attend school, families may not ascribe to their cultural or ethnic background for fear of discrimination. Whole school approaches to recognizing and valuing the culture will be necessary.

When families are **semi-sedentary** the children will usually have enrolled in a base school, but families will travel fairly predictably during the travelling season for work. Schools will have opportunities to plan how to keep in touch with young people when they travel and may provide schoolwork packages usually based on the use of digital technology.

Highly mobile families have unpredictable travelling patterns and seek access to a

range of different schools. Children often find it difficult to settle into school life and form relationships. Schools will need to be able to engage families quickly and access previous attainment and achievement records. Flexibility and nurturing strategies will be necessary to reassure children and build confidence.

Some families have no tradition of attending school. The families can be fairly settled, live on sites or houses or be continually mobile. The families may educate their children at home and children will develop skills in line with family work traditions.

Entitlement

All children and young people have a right to education in Scotland. Parents/carers and children from Scotland's Gypsy/Traveller communities have the same rights as any other family in relation to accessing school places, even if they are only staying temporarily within the local authority. Local authorities must provide education that meets a child's learning needs. Families and educators working together help children and young people become 'successful learners', able to take their place at home and in wider society.

Under Section 2 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000, a clear duty is placed on education authorities and schools to have regard for a child's right to a 'school education'.

'It shall be the right of every child of school age to be provided with school education by, or by virtue of arrangements made, or entered into, by, an education authority (2002).'

The arrangements noted above allow for flexibility when tailoring educational provision to meet the needs of Gypsy/Traveller children. Arrangements made could involve contributions from some or all of the following as appropriate:

- Schools
- Community Learning and Development (CLD)
- Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officer
- Other Agencies

It is important to note that parents/carers have a duty to ensure that their child/ren are educated. However, the type of education may be different to that of children and young people from the settled community.

Enrolment

Admin

Schools can help the process by helping with the completion of any paperwork required as parents/carers may on occasions have difficulties with reading and/or writing. It is important to note that Gypsy/Traveller families may not have internet access to complete an online application. The Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer (GTLO) may also assist with the registration process.

Proof of Identity

If the child/ren has not been in education before or arrived from a school out with Scotland, standard admissions procedures should be followed. A birth certificate or passport should be requested as proof of identity. If parents/carers do not have either of these, the GTLO can assist in obtaining a copy. Pupils should be enrolled while the documents are being located. If the child/ren have come from another school in Scotland, contact should be made with the previous school to confirm that they have seen either a birth certificate or passport and the child/ren have previously been registered there.

No Fixed Address

There may be occasions that families do not have a fixed address, and reasonable adjustments may need to be made. Children can be enrolled in a school without proof of address, however, the family's temporary address or stopping place should be within Aberdeenshire and preferably within the catchment of the school. A mobile phone number and/or email address should be used for communication. In certain circumstances it may be appropriate to set up a PO Box, the Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer can assist with this.

Travel for Cultural Reasons

Gypsy/Traveller children and young people have a right to continue their travelling traditions. Historically Gypsy/Traveller families have travelled for work reasons but more recently they are more likely to travel for family or church events and celebrations, all of which form part of their culture. The SEEMiS code for authorised travel is ABS – Other Authorised Absence. However, schools have a duty of care while the family are travelling and should contact them a minimum of fortnightly. School and family should work together to agree a preferred method of communication and regularity of contact. Families should be made aware that if they do not respond to communication, Children Missing in Education procedures may be followed.

SEEMIS

The information recorded on SEEMiS relating to children and young people from Gypsy/Traveller communities and Ethnic Origin category is recorded as "White – Gypsy/ Traveller". However, some families may choose not to identify as Gypsy/Traveller and this must be respected.

It is suggested, by ScotXed, that for pupils up to and including those in stage S2, parents/carers are asked to declare the ethnic background of pupils. Pupils in stage S3 or above may declare their own ethnic background. In cases where an individual does not wish their ethnic background to be recorded, please use 'Not Disclosed'. This category should only be used in cases where **this selection has been made by the appropriate individual on the admission form**. In other cases where no selection has been made by the appropriate individual, please use 'Not Known'. This means that there will be a value from the code list for every pupil. All schools are asked to make reasonable efforts to ensure that ethnic background data are available for all pupils. For further information on ethnic background categories: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-exchange-of-data-school-pupil-census/>

Pupils can be registered on SEEMiS with two schools at the same time. For example, some families arrange for their children to enrol in a 'base school' for part of the year and take authorised 'Extended Leave with Parental Consent' for periods of travel. The children may temporarily enrol in other schools as they travel, and these schools provide attendance and other data to the 'base school'.

Further information on the enrolment process can be found within the flowchart on the next page

Enrolment Process

Is pupil enrolled in another school as a base school?
(Base school explanation: refer to Note 1 below)

No



Yes



Option 1

- Enrol pupil at your school. Ask the family if they wish your school to be known as the base school. If yes, then you become the 'base school' and may be contacted at a later date, by another school, to send a copied record if the family intend travelling.
- Advise MIS Support
missupport@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Option 2

If family does not wish to enrol at your school as base school then:

- Ask if they already have a base school and if not then enrol pupil at your school as per usual enrolment

- Ask family for contact details of base school.
- Advise MIS Support and ask the base school to send a copied record to you.
- Liaise with base school regarding updating attendance on a weekly basis. When the pupil leaves for another establishment end the copied record and advise the base school.
- When the pupil leaves the current school to return to base school or to travel to another area (school) then the current school should notify the base school. The copied record should then be ended.

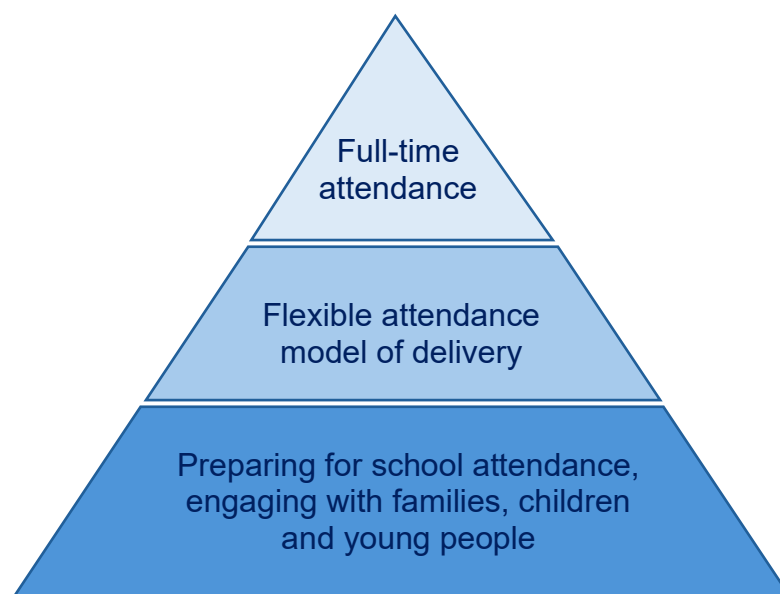
Base School Explanation

Pupils can be registered on SEEMiS with two schools at the same time. For example, some families arrange for their children to enrol in a "base school" for part of the year and take authorised "Extended Leave with Parental Consent" for periods of travel. The children may temporarily enrol in other schools as they travel, and these schools provide attendance and other data to the 'base school'.

[Improving Educational Outcomes for Children and Young People From Travelling Cultures](#) (p27) provides further information in relation to this.

Learning Provision and School Attendance

We recognise that a “one size fits all” model is not appropriate and within Aberdeenshire we have a model of flexible learning. For children and young people from Gypsy/Traveller communities, the following diagram illustrates a flexible approach to learning provision



Flexible Learning Options:

- ✓ Flexible school attendance pattern.
- ✓ Community based learning e.g. CLD, links to further education options e.g. college, work placement opportunities
- ✓ E-learning.
- ✓ Learning packs that can be made up for learners for use when travelling (exemplar packs for BGE available).

Primary – Secondary Transition

The numbers of Gypsy/Traveller young people who transition to secondary school from primary is particularly low. This is due to a number of reasons including the community believing that the secondary curriculum is not relevant to Gypsy/Travellers.

Transition conversations should start between school and Gypsy/Traveller families when the young person is in Primary 6, or earlier where necessary.

Examples of good practice for primary-secondary transition

- Early engagement with parents and young person, at the latest January of P6 year
- Extended transition procedures followed
- Parent and pupil visits with a trusted staff member
- Discussions with parents and young person around flexible learning/flexible attendance

Secondary Education for Gypsy/Traveller Young People

Possible Options:

- Young person enrolls in Secondary School and attends full time
- Young person enrolls in secondary school and attends on a part time basis. Timetable is agreed in discussion between school, parents and young person.
- Young person does not enrol in secondary school and home education options are explored

Partnerships with Families

Good relationships depend on all parties having a good knowledge and respect for the other's vision, values and cultural background. STEP (Scottish Travellers Education Network) recent research highlights the need for educators and mobile families to work together in partnerships to achieve better educational outcomes for young people. Two ALDO courses on Gypsy/Traveller cultural awareness are recommended for all staff (further details at the end of the document).

Steps to Building and Maintaining Relationships

- Build positive relationships as per normal practice; please note that the Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officer (GTLO) can provide further advice.
- Use of Scottish Travellers Education Programme (STEP)



If there is a breakdown in relationship between family and school, then:

- School should continue to maintain contact as per normal practice
- School advises Named Person
- HT or other member of staff with a good relationship with the family, continues to maintain contact with the family.
- School contact works with the family to resolve the issue.



Where the relationship breaks down and communication with the school ceases, the Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officer (GTLO) and Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing Team, Quality Improvement Officer (QIO) should be contacted via ASNInclusionEquityWellbeing@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

They will work with the school to re-establish communication with the family and work to resolve the difficulty. This may involve the GTLO/ QIO directly contacting the family. The GTLO can arrange to visit the family to discuss the issue.

Leaving Guidance 1

Normal procedures for children and young people leaving or transferring school should be followed. The following 5 exemplars should be taken into account as appropriate.

Exemplar 1:

Family leave and the children will transfer to another school.
Usual leaving procedures should be followed.

Exemplar 2:

Family leave, advising that they are intending to travel.
Reason for leaving should be entered as “authorised absence travelling as part of a culture/tradition (education authority consent required)”.
School should contact their school QIO with this information.

Exemplar 3:

Family advise that they are Travelling and wish their children to remain on school roll (Base School).
If children are not registering with another school, then they can remain on the roll of your school but their attendance should be marked with the appropriate code which is EXL.
Pupils can, for part of the year, take authorised “Extended Leave with Parental Consent” for periods of travel (code EXL).

Exemplar 4:

Family is leaving area, and their children will transfer to another school. However, the family wishes your school to remain the Base school.
Pupils can be registered on SEEMiS with two schools at the same time. For example, some families arrange for their children to remain in a “base school” but the children may temporarily enrol in other schools as they travel, and these schools provide attendance and other data to the “base school”. This is, effectively, a “copied record”.
Please advise MIS Support and send a copied record to the school they intend to enrol whilst travelling.
Liaise with the copied-record school regarding updating attendance.

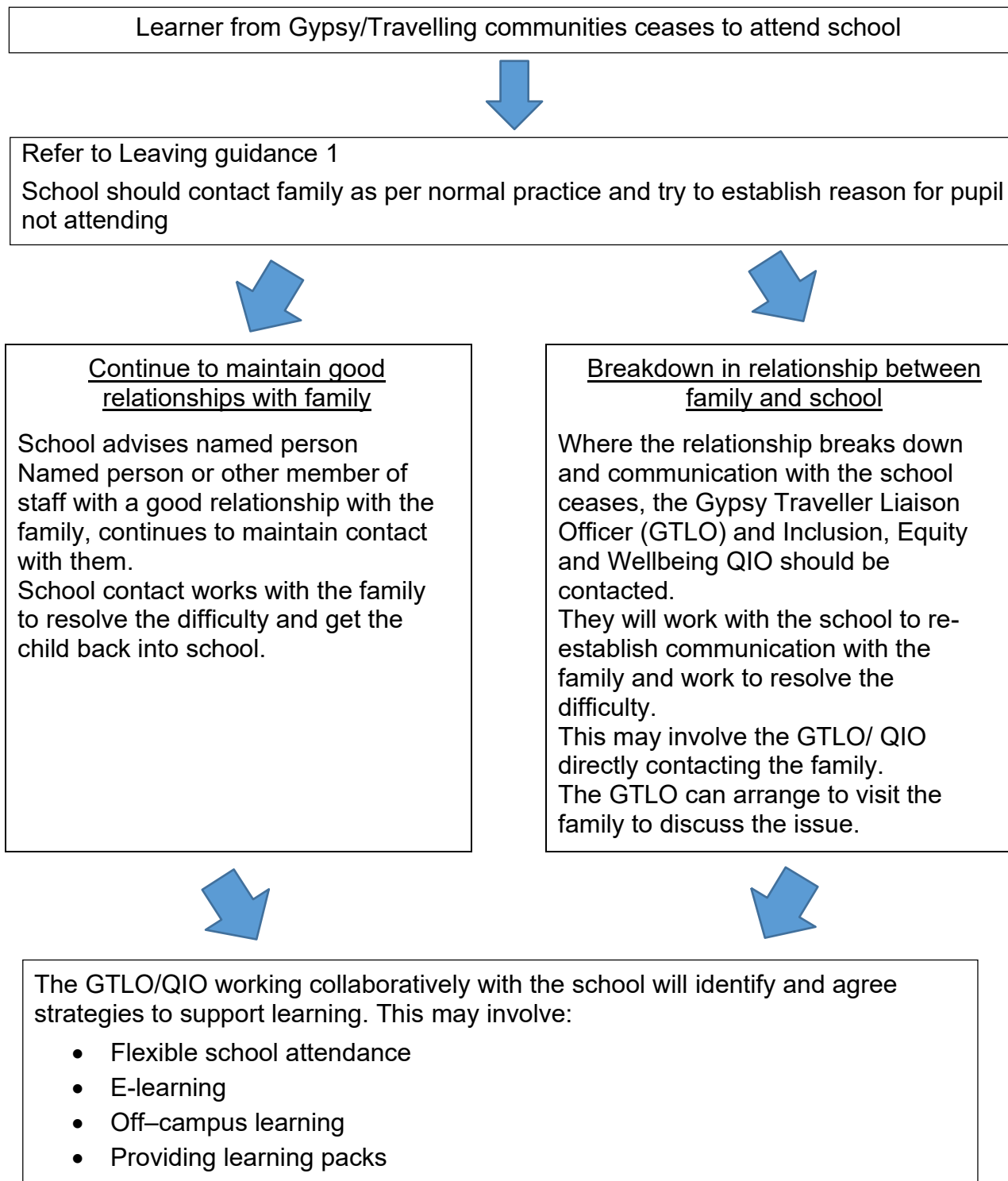
Exemplar 5:

Family leave without advising school

- Follow usual attendance procedures and then, as appropriate, Children Missing in Education (CME) guidance.

Contact Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer (GTLO) via gypsytravellerliaison@aberdeenshire.gov.uk and the Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing QIO via ASNInclusionEquityWellbeing@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Leaving Guidance 2



Further Support Available to Schools

To support Gypsy/Traveller children and young people who attend Aberdeenshire schools, a Teacher of ASL (Gypsy/Traveller) (0.2FTE) is available to support schools in the following ways:

- develop and signpost to relevant resources
- provide advice and guidance
- provide short-term targeted support where appropriate, to build the capacity of staff to support gypsy/traveller children and young people in their school
- provide support and advice during times of transition

Short-Term Targeted Support

Children and young people from the gypsy/traveller community may have experienced multiple school placements and disrupted learning. Most Gypsy/Traveller children and young people will have their needs met through Universal Supports available within school or through targeted support from school or cluster-based staff.

There may on occasion be cases where targeted support, specifically related to Gypsy/Traveller Communities, is required from the Teacher of ASL (Gypsy/Traveller) as part of Staged Intervention.

Where required and appropriate, short-term targeted support is likely to be in person on a weekly basis, for 6-8 weeks. A key aim of this targeted support is to build capacity of staff to support gypsy/traveller children and young people in their school.

To discuss the possible need for targeted support from the Teacher of ASL (Gypsy/Traveller), please contact ailleen.strachan2@aberdeenshire.gov.uk in the first instance.

Resources to Support Gypsy/Traveller Education

Further resources can be found within the [Gypsy/Traveller Tile](#) on the [Inclusion, Equity and Wellbeing website](#) and [VIVA Arcadia](#)

Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer (GTLO)

Email: gypsytravellerliaison@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Tel: 07795 238423

Aldo courses

[Gypsy/Travellers Awareness](#)

[Ensuring the needs of Gypsy/Traveller children and young people are met in educational settings](#)

Aberdeenshire ASN website

[Supporting learners from Gypsy/Traveller communities](#)

Relevant Scottish Government documents

[Improving the lives of Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers](#)

[Educational outcomes for Gypsy/Traveller children](#)



From mountain to sea

Assessment tools

[Digital rapid assessment guide for nomadic learners](#)

Websites

[Scottish Traveller Education Programme \(STEP\)](#)

[The Traveller Times](#)

[Friends, Families and Travellers](#)

[Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and other Travellers \(ACERT\)](#)