

# Protocol for the Admission of Children from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities

for admissions from September 2011

This applies to:

All Devon County Council maintained schools at primary and secondary phase except for Special Schools.

All parents and carers seeking admission to school for a child in their care.

Policy updated:	September 2011
Review date:	November 2010 for 2012-13 and then annually unless a need to review earlier is identified

## Description of Policy

This policy describes how parents of children from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities can seek admission to schools, recognising they may arrive in an area at short notice and after Year Groups have been established.

## Linked Policies

The In-Year Co-ordinated Scheme, The Secondary Co-ordinated Scheme, The Primary Co-ordinated Scheme.

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<b>Appendix 1</b> – Equality Impact Needs Assessment is located at <a href="http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/learningschools/schools/admissions/admissionarrangements/admissions-determined2011.htm">http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/learningschools/schools/admissions/admissionarrangements/admissions-determined2011.htm</a>		

## General Information and Contacts

Date	September 2011
Review date	Annual
Approval	by Cabinet Members of Devon County Council
Key partners	Learning and Development Partnership Devon Association of Secondary Headteachers Devon Association of Primary Headteachers Devon Association of Governors Church of England Diocese of Exeter Roman Catholic Diocese of Plymouth School Admissions Team
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Useful links	<a href="#">Department for Education</a> <a href="#">Office of the Schools Adjudicator</a> <a href="#">School Admissions Code</a>

# POLICY

## 1 Equality Statement

- 1.1 Devon County Council will only commit to policies and practices which will eradicate discrimination and promote equality for all, regardless of age, gender, disability, religion and belief, race and ethnicity and sexual orientation.
- 1.2 This policy will be subject to an Equality Impact and Needs Assessment. This assessment will be integral to all future policy and guidance reviews.

## 2 Safeguarding Statement

- 2.1 Devon County Council and its partners recognise that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. Whether their interest is in all young people 'staying safe' in all aspects of our services, or whether they are working in specific areas of vulnerability, all staff will have appropriate training and induction so that they understand their roles and responsibilities and are confident in carrying them out. Settings, schools, children, young people and their parents or carers, or any member of the community should feel secure that they could raise any issues or concerns about the safety or welfare of children and know that they will be listened to and taken seriously. This will be achieved by maintaining an ethos of commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. This is supported by a clear child protection policy, appropriate induction and training, briefings on and discussion of relevant factors and refreshed learning in line with current legislation and guidelines.
- 2.2 Devon County Council acts as a Corporate Parent for Children in Care. This means that the local authority has a legal and moral duty to provide the kind of support that any good parents would provide their own children. This policy has been written to comply with this principle.

## 3 Introduction

- 3.1 Families from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are subject to frequent movement at short notice. This can mean that children of such families are disadvantaged educationally and have additional challenges when accessing education.
- 3.2 Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities have a higher risk of underachievement or exclusion from school.
- 3.3 The School Admissions Code of Practice does not require a higher priority to be given to children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities when admissions authorities set over-subscription criteria.

- 3.4 Some Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families live in houses or on permanent sites for at least part of the year. The nature of the parents' work may mean that they travel at other times of the year.

## **4 Purpose**

- 4.1 The purpose of this protocol is to ensure that a place is allocated to a child as quickly as possible once it has been recognised that a place is required.
- 4.2 The target within Devon is to secure a place for a child from a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller family within 3 working days of a request.
- 4.3 The best interests and needs of the child should be the focus of any discussions surrounding his or her admission to school.
- 4.4 Parents from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families have the same right as any other family in relation to access to school places. The Local Authority (LA) will ensure that there is no unfairness or discrimination when an application for a school place is received.
- 4.5 Early identification will enable all appropriate agencies to take a full part in decision-making and providing support to the child.
- 4.6 The receiving school can receive the child's school file and records from education establishments out of the United Kingdom at an earlier point.

## PROCEDURE

### 5 Criteria

- 5.1 The term Gypsy, Roma and Traveller means both:
- a)
    - i) Gypsies, including Romanies, Romanichals, Welsh Gypsies/Kaale, Scottish Gypsies/Travellers;
    - ii) Irish Travellers, Minceir;
    - iii) Roma from Eastern and Central Europe;
    - iv) Showmen (Fairground people);
    - v) Circus people;
    - vi) Boat Travellers / Bargees;
    - vii) New Travellers or New Age Travellers; and
  - b)

the parent is engaged in a trade or business of such nature that requires them to travel from place to place.
- 5.2 The term 'travelling' means travelling as part of the parents' trade or business. It does not mean travelling as part of a holiday or extended holiday (DCSF advice on Attendance reference 00891-2008FLY-EN).
- 5.3 Where there is doubt whether the criteria at 3.1 above are met, advice of the Travellers' Education Service (TES) will be sought. Confirmation will be sought that the family are recognised by the Service or by others in the community and that the family itself considers themselves as such. TES will email or write to the Admissions Team to confirm:
- "This child is/is not known to TES to be a member of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community."
- 5.4 That a family is not known to TES will not, of itself, preclude the family from being considered as being a part of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community. In such cases, TES will make enquiries to seek further information.

### 6 Procedure

- 6.1 The contact requesting assistance with education by a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller family may be with a school, the LA Admissions Team or a member of the TES.
- 6.2 Where the first contact is with a member of TES, he or she may make preliminary contact with a school to query the number of children on roll in the relevant Year Group(s).  
Whether or not there is a vacancy at the school, a request for admission must be made by the completion by or on behalf of the family of an In-Year

Common Application Form (D-CAF) as detailed in the In-Year Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme.

- 6.3 Where the first contact is with a member of the Admissions Team, TES will be notified and advice sought regarding any additional needs for the family. A place will be offered at the school which has been preferred by the parent or at an alternative school according to the In-Year Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme.
- 6.4 Liaison with TES will identify if additional support is appropriate. This may include resources, training or pupil support for the most vulnerable children.
- 6.5 Where there are literacy difficulties within a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller family, it may be necessary for a member of TES to complete any relevant application form. A parent will be invited to sign the form.
- 6.6 As with all children, not all requests and enquiries from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families will result in a school admission, for instance where a move to another area does not take place.
- 6.7 The responsibility for ensuring that a place is offered will remain with the LA.
- 6.8 Wherever possible, contact between TES, Admissions Team, the school and, where appropriate, the School Transport Team, will be by telephone, confirmed by email or letter.
- 6.9 The Admissions Team will record and monitor all requests for places and the time taken to allocate a place and for the child to be taken on roll.

## **7 Base Schools**

- 7.1 All children, including those from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families can be on the register at more than one school. This is known as dual registration.
- 7.2 A base school is the school a child from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller family most recently attended during the preceding 18 months, when the family was not travelling. This is the school of ordinary attendance. A child may not be removed from the roll of a base school within that period without authority to do so from the parent or in the absence of advice from TES or the Education Welfare Service.
- 7.3 A child from a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller family will not be removed from the roll of a base school just because he or she has registered at another school.
- 7.4 A child from a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller family may be removed from the roll of a school other than the base school if he or she is no longer attending. If a school requires specific advice regarding removing a child

from its register, it should consult TES or the Education Welfare Service of the LA.

- 7.5 If the parent finds that their child has been removed from the roll of a base school in their absence, he or she should contact the Admissions Team. This may be via TES.

## **8 Further Support**

- 8.1 TES will assist children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families to get the most from their education. TES will support schools in developing distance learning. Schools should consider how to utilise Information and Communication technology to better enable children to continue their education while travelling.
- 8.2 Non-base schools will consider how they can support children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families in enrolling, with particular reference to issues such as school uniform in order that their actions and requirements are not discriminatory.
- 8.3 Parents will be encouraged to provide details of the base school so that the schools can work together to provide as much continuity as possible and to ensure that absence and attendance are recorded as accurately as possible.
- 8.4 Parents will be asked to give as much notice as possible of dates when they will be travelling away in order to better plan on-going education and accurately record absence and attendance data.
- 8.5 While the aim is to admit a child from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community as quickly as possible, this may impact on transport arrangements. The Education transport Team will assist in this process as far as possible. Decisions regarding transport entitlement will be made without undue delay. However, the LA retains a responsibility to ensure that transport provision is managed efficiently. This may lead to a delay in provision during the transport provider tendering process. All parents are advised that transport will normally be provided within 5 working days.

## EMPLOYEE GUIDANCE

### **9 Guidance for Employees**

- 9.1 The Policy is operated by officers of the Schools Admissions Team in co-operation with management and staff in schools. The governing bodies and staff in all schools are requested to support the efficient operation of the Policy by enabling parents from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to request school places. Schools may assist by referring families to the School Admissions Team Service where support may be beneficial.
- 9.2 No advice should be given by school staff or management which a parent may interpret as an indication that a place will or will not be made available at a school.
- 9.3 Any queries regarding the operation of the Scheme should be referred to the School Admissions Team for advice and support.

## Policy History

Date	Summary of change	Contact	Implementation date	Review date
11/2008	Policy formulated taking into account the requirements of the School Admissions Code of Practice.	Policy Unit	9/2010	12/2009
6/2009	Policy reviewed and formatted into a Directorate Policy shell	Policy Unit	9/2010	12/2009
12/2009	Policy reviewed for 2011/12	Policy Unit	9/2011	12/2010
3/2010	Policy amended by the insertion or amendment of section 2.2 (corporate parenting), sections 8 (employee guidance) and Appendix 1 (EINA)	Policy Unit		
4/2010	Policy determined by Cabinet Members for 2011/12	Policy Unit	9/2011	11/2010
10/2010	Policy amended: to reflect change of title for the Department for Education At 9.1 the following was deleted from the final sentence: <i>or to the Devon Choice Advice Service</i>	Policy Unit	9/2011	11/2010
9/2011	Policy amended with name of the Strategic Director EINA relocated onto Admission Arrangements website	Strategic Support and Policy officer	9/2011	2012 policy already in place