

Welcoming a GRT Child Or Young Person Into Your School

<p>Support children and young people to be 'ready' for school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First impressions – a named coat peg, tray, any other equipment will make children feel part of the school and encourage a sense of belonging; consider offering a school jumper, PE bag or book bag to the child on their first visit. • Entry mid-term – bear in mind this could possibly be the child's second or third school this year. Allow time for the child to become familiar with their surroundings, take time to explain expectations, school rules, break-time and assembly procedures, ensuring there is an appropriate induction process in place. • Do not assume families have access to the internet for letters, online school updates and payments of school lunches; ask and offer an alternative if this is an issue. • Be clear about attendance and always let parents / carers know your school policy and the expectations around this. Please be aware of any work commitments the family may have that will apply to the T Code. • Dates Of Birth – parents may not be certain of their child's DOB. As a school you may need to contact local authorities or a previous school, to gain access to this information. Pressing the parents on this issue may not be beneficial. • Previous School Experience – GRT children and young people may have varied opinions towards school, based on their prior experience, or from parental fears, cultural beliefs or being under threat of eviction. Ensure that children feel valued and everyone is happy to welcome them into their new classroom. • Ascription - Take all measures to support GRT parents ascribe to their ethnicity when completing admissions forms and add GRT children and young people's ethnicity to the School Census.
<p>Support individual needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline assessments - Look at current attainment, progress and attendance at the point which children and young people start at your school. Consider whether they are at age-related expectations and if they are not what support is needed. If children and young people have missed significant periods of schooling contact the GRT Service for advice and support. Collect children and young people's voice and family views. Ask them about what they need and how you can support them. • Year groups - parents may ask for siblings be placed in class together. If this is not possible, explain clearly why and reassure parents that their children will still be able to spend time together during certain times of the day, like break and lunch times. • School Trips - Some GRT families may feel concerned about their children going on school trips to environments that they are unsure about. <i>Try to reassure parents when this is raised and inform them that if they do not want their child to attend a school trip their child can still attend school or that they can accompany their child so they can still take part.</i>

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- **PE/ swimming** - changing in front of other children and young people may be an issue and some GRT children and young people and parents may feel more comfortable if their children get changed for PE in an area without the opposite sex. Offer another area to change if children look uncomfortable or refuse to change.
- **Taking things home** – the child or young person may be moving on suddenly or may not have the space to take paintings, models or reading books home. If they look unsure, consider offering them a special place to keep their things safe in school.
- **Sitting on the carpet** – many children or young people living in the confined space of a trailer may not be allowed to sit on the floor as they would be taking up precious space in the living area. Therefore, sitting on the floor at school may not feel right to them. This might mean they are not used to sitting on a hard floor surface; consider offering a cushion for them to sit on until they feel more familiar with the expectations within the classroom.
- **Language** – children or young people may sometimes use inappropriate language; for example, when asking for the toilet. This could be common language used within the family and not considered bad or rude. In this situation a simple and calm explanation, modelling appropriate language, will have the best outcomes.
- **Running water** – some Traveller children or young people, particularly those living roadside, may find a running tap or flushing toilet the height of amusement! Please be patient and consider why they may be fascinated.
- **Homework** – getting help with homework from an adult may be a problem for some children or young people. They may not have access to the resources needed to complete tasks or simply may not have a table to work at. Consider offering an alternative arrangement and make allowances for the possibility of no internet access.
- **Responsibilities** – most children or young people, even the very young ones, are likely to have some sort of responsibility at home, such as collecting water, feeding chickens, horses, and dogs; also helping with jobs like cleaning, washing and taking care of younger siblings. Please be mindful of this when setting homework or expecting children and young people to stay behind after school for clubs or after school activities.
- **Making friends** – most children or young people like making new friends, but this may not be the case if the child or young person thinks they will be moving on sometime soon. GRT children or young people are likely to only want to play with their sibling as this will be the constant friend in their life. For this reason, they may group closely with other Traveller children and young people they are familiar with in the school.
- **Being still** – due to the outdoor lifestyle of Traveller children, many may find it difficult to sit still for long periods of time, and practical lessons may engage them more fully. Additionally, make the most of the children's knowledge of the outdoors, animals, birds, nature and the changing seasons. Encourage them to share their experiences of the great outdoors.
- **Highly mobile families** – having difficulty washing clothes and personal hygiene may not be a choice for some families. Living roadside can be one of the most difficult things during the winter months. If possible, try to overlook if children or young people are not in uniform and consider this may not be a choice, but a necessity, and is not the child's choice to appear differently dressed to others within school. Some school staff have discreetly

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	<p>offered the use of a school washing machine and dryer during the winter months and shower facilities too. By choosing your wording carefully you are less likely to cause offence and have a successful outcome.</p>
<p>Create a welcoming, safe and engaging environment!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome – The first priority should be to make the school a safe place and a meaningful experience for the GRT child or young person, having a selection of culturally reflective resources on display and in the library will help with this, ideas for welcome areas can be found in our GRT culturally reflective resource padlet. • The GRT Service has some culturally reflective resources and books to lend schools and settings. Seeing familiar items in school and positive images within books will inspire the children to share their culture and be proud of their culture and heritage. • Curriculum - Use the GRT Service padlets to embed GRT culture and history across the curriculum enhancing the diversity content of teaching and learning and helping GRT children and young people to have a sense of belonging. Sometimes differentiating the curriculum, by adding more practical activities linked to their skills, interests and strengths, can be beneficial and will provide a more culturally inclusive education.
<p>Develop safe and trusting relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show a genuine interest towards parents who enrol the child into your school – they may not have positive memories of their own school experience and may need additional support. • Parents <u>may</u> need support to access school documents, help may be needed when filling in admission forms and noting down school contact numbers. <i>Think about alternatives to sending letters, such as telephone calls, texts, or face-to-face meetings.</i>
<p>Reflect on transitions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider what went well and what could be improved during the next transition.

Find out more information with helpful signposting in our GRT [One Minute Guide](#).