

REMA - EWS

Children, Schools and Families: Schools & Learning

School attendance advice for children from travelling Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families

Full and regular attendance at school is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. Some parents may need to take their children out of school in order to travel for work purposes. The legislation (*Education Act 1996 Section 444(6)*) regarding school attendance recognises this and provides protection from unreasonable prosecution if children are absent whilst parents are travelling for their trade or business. This applies to children who meet both the following criteria:

<p>Ascribed <u>Gypsies</u> (inc. Romanies, Romanichals, Welsh Gypsies/Kaale, Scottish Gypsies/Travellers) <u>Irish Travellers</u>, Minceir <u>Roma</u> from Eastern and Central Europe <u>Occupational Travellers</u> (Showmen/Fairground) <u>Circus</u> people Boat Travellers/Bargees New Travellers or New Age Travellers</p>	<p>The <u>parent/carer</u> is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature that requires them to travel from place to place.</p> <p>(<i>Education Act 1996 Section 444(6)</i>)</p>
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As the Headteacher decides whether to authorise a child's absence from school consideration should be given to the following for children who meet the above criteria:

- The child attends regularly when not travelling
- The child has been in school for at least 100 days (200 sessions) in the 12 month period prior to their expected return date from travelling (*Education Act 1996 Section 444(6)*)
- Parents have completed a leave of absence request form before the period of travel for work. Being able to **show** they are travelling for work purposes is recommended and will help the Headteacher in making the decision of whether to approve or accept the request.
- Parents have given the school a date when they expect the child will return to school. If this changes they will need to let the school know along with the reasons why
- Do the parents intend to dual register their child whilst away? Could the child's learning be supported through distance learning provision?

Schools should work in partnership with Traveller parents to ensure good attendance for their child, help them to understand the decision making process around authorising absence and apply it consistently and fairly at all times.

It is not acceptable for parents to take their child out of school for extended periods of time without the Headteacher's authorisation for reasons such as: visits to relatives, to attend weddings or funerals or to go on holiday.

If the absence is not authorised and exceeds 20 days or a child does not return on the expected date schools should contact EWS for guidance in following deletion from roll legislation.