

Traveller ethnicity and ascription

Gypsies, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities collectively represent a significant ethnic minority group in Surrey. Surrey County Council's Brighter Futures GRT Strategy 2014-2017 highlights the need to address and improve life chances and outcomes for GRT children and young people. ***'Our aim is that life opportunities for Surrey's GRT children and young people should be no different to the life opportunities of the majority of Surrey's 0-19 population'***.

To achieve this, GRT cohorts need to be identified and monitored. Data collection systems should include categories for GRT ethnicity and self-ascription should be encouraged by schools.

Ethnicity is a personal awareness of a common cultural identity and relates to how a person feels and not how they are perceived by others. It is not the same as nationality. It is a subjective decision as to which ethnic category a person places themselves in and does not infer any other characteristics such as religion, country of origin etc. Gypsy and Roma people have been recognised as an ethnic group since 1989 and Travellers of Irish Heritage since 2000. Some GRT families have a reluctance to ascribe their children's ethnicity, due to fear of hostility and discrimination and may need to be approached with sensitivity, reassurance and encouragement by schools.

Accurate ascription is important and enables:

- Schools and Local Authorities to comply with their duties under the Equality Act (2010)
- Ethnically disaggregated data to be used as part of school self-evaluation requirements and preparation for the priorities and orientation of Ofsted inspections
- Schools to foster a close relationship with parents through knowing the social, cultural and racial dimensions of the whole school community
- Schools to support GRT children to experience happy and successful learning through confidence in their personal and family identity
- Schools to develop a personalised and inclusive curriculum through knowing the diversity of pupil backgrounds
- Schools to access additional support through Race Equality and Minority Achievement (REMA)

Annual school census

Ethnicity is provided for all pupils aged 5 and over as at the previous 31 August. Since 2003 the two minority ethnic groups of Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish Heritage have been included as ethnic categories. Please note: from September 2015, pupils of Gypsy/Roma heritage may also be recorded as 'Gypsy', 'Roma' and 'Other Gypsy/Roma' as a sub-set of Gypsy/Roma, where desired. Other groups traditionally included within the generic terminology of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller are Fairground families (Show people) and Circus families. These groups **do not** have minority ethnic status and are not specifically listed as categories within the Annual School Census.

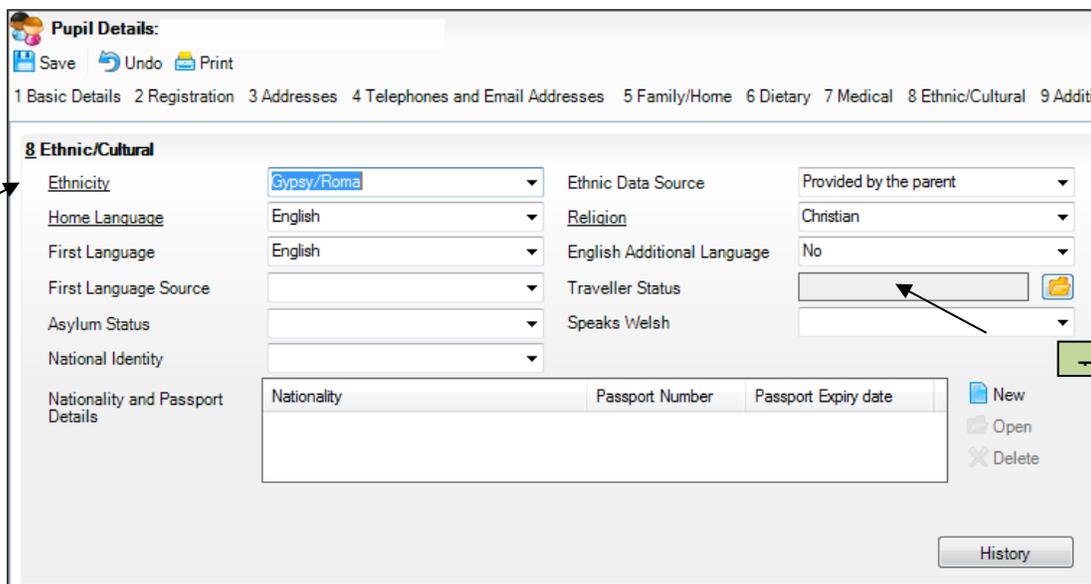
Where the ethnicity has not yet been collected this is recorded as 'NOBT' (information not yet obtained). If a pupil or parent has refused to provide ethnicity, 'REFU' (refused) is recorded and returned.

Good practice guide for recording Traveller data in schools

As part of Surrey County Council's Brighter Futures GRT Strategy 2014-1017 schools are encouraged to maintain accurate ascription data to record ethnicity. All parents are entitled to select the ethnic category they wish to be recorded for their child. A child over the age of 12 can choose their own ethnic category. It is important that ethnic categories are not assumed and are only completed with full parent/child knowledge and consent.

This guide is based on SIMS as the most widely used school management system in Surrey but the principles can be applied to other school management systems.

- Most parents with Traveller heritage will choose to ascribe their child with ethnicity to reflect this (ie. Gypsy/Roma, Traveller of Irish Heritage). If a pupil, thought to be a Traveller, is not ascribed to one of the Traveller ethnic categories they/their parents should be encouraged to do so, to enable them and the school to access additional support if needed
- If a pupil (or their parent) has ascribed to one of the Traveller ethnic groups Gypsy/Roma or Traveller of Irish Heritage the Traveller Status field should be completed to reflect this



Pupil Details:

Save Undo Print

1 Basic Details 2 Registration 3 Addresses 4 Telephones and Email Addresses 5 Family/Home 6 Dietary 7 Medical 8 Ethnic/Cultural 9 Additi

8 Ethnic/Cultural

Ethnicity Gypsy/Roma Ethnic Data Source Provided by the parent

Home Language English Religion Christian

First Language English English Additional Language No

First Language Source Traveller Status

Asylum Status Speaks Welsh

National Identity

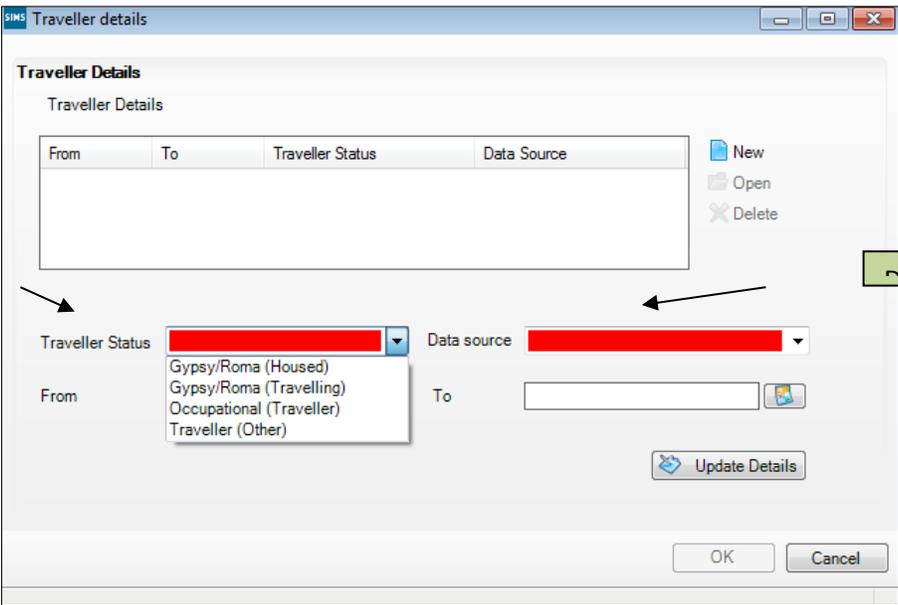
Nationality and Passport Details

Nationality	Passport Number	Passport Expiry date

New Open Delete

History

- Travellers with a Fairground/Showman/Circus heritage (who travel for purposes of their occupation) may not be Gypsy/Roma or Traveller of Irish Heritage and will ascribe as White British. If a pupil is thought to be from an Occupational Traveller family schools should gain the **pupil/parents' permission** to recognise this on their system and then complete the Traveller Status field by selecting Occupational Traveller. **Do not complete if this criteria is unmet.**



The screenshot shows the 'Traveller details' window in SIMS. It features a table with columns 'From', 'To', 'Traveller Status', and 'Data Source'. Below the table, there are input fields for 'Traveller Status' and 'Data source', both with dropdown menus. The 'Traveller Status' dropdown is open, showing options: 'Gypsy/Roma (Housed)', 'Gypsy/Roma (Travelling)', 'Occupational (Traveller)', and 'Traveller (Other)'. There is also a 'To' field with a date picker. Buttons for 'New', 'Open', 'Delete', 'Update Details', 'OK', and 'Cancel' are visible. Two green boxes labeled 'Traveller' and 'Data' have arrows pointing to the respective dropdown menus.

- The Traveller Status data source field should be completed for all pupils recorded with an Occupational (Traveller) status. Source should be either pupil (if over 12) or parent. If the Traveller Status data source field shows that the status has been sourced from a pupil's previous school this should be checked with the parent or pupil (aged over 12) to ensure accuracy
- Schools should regularly review their records to ensure the data held is current and up to date, particularly for mobile or new pupils. Schools are advised to send parents the completed data collection sheet from SIMS on an annual basis so that entries can be checked

Contact REMA team for further advice 01483 517831