

Traveller Education Support Service (TESS)

Information on Supporting Traveller Pupils Through Transitions

This information leaflet aims to help schools guide their Traveller pupils and families through the transition process from pre-school to primary and from primary to post primary education

Positive engagement between parents, pupils and schools is fundamental in determining the success of any transition process. Traveller pupils may experience a higher number of transitions throughout their school life partly due to the nomadic lifestyles of many Traveller families.

These transitions could be at any point in the academic year or in any year group - primary or post primary. It is worth considering that some Traveller parents may have had limited or poor experiences of schooling, particularly at post primary level and may need extra support and reassurance throughout the transition process.

Transition to Preschool & Primary School

This information may be relevant to transitions from Preschool to Primary School

- Begin the transition process to pre-school or primary as early as possible to give the maximum preparation time.
- Ensure families know what their options are and discuss with them using the DE and EA guidance documents including showing parents where and how to access applications.
- Support families, if needs be, with the completion of pre-school or primary school applications. TESS can help with this process.
- Make parents aware of the importance of closure dates and signing completed enrolment applications.
- Ensure parents are aware of important dates such as open days and information sessions in pre-school or primary schools.
- Encourage families to visit all possible schools or pre-school providers. Ask TESS or your Education Welfare Officer to assist.
- Distribute school uniform, free meals or transport application forms in good time. Offer support and guidance if possible and signpost to other sources of support including TESS.
- Appoint a designated staff member to undertake your home-school liaison work. Ask TESS for sample job descriptions.
- Ensure all relevant pre-school information is passed on to the primary school, and from the Primary to the Post Primary School.

Traveller Pupils in Post Primary Schools

This information may be useful to Post Primary schools in the early days

For Pupils

- Provide information for pupils as regards pastoral care issues, particularly bullying, and direct young people to external and internal education online resources including:
<http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/pupils-emotional-health-and-wellbeing/imatter-english-language-leaflets.htm>.
- Provide advice on reading timetables and ‘navigating’ through the school. Colour coded plans and personalised timetables e.g. with clock faces to denote times. Consider the use of ICT and apps to facilitate the above e.g. *[www.4kidCal](http://www.4kidcal.com)*.
- Ensure spare copies of the timetables are kept in school
- Plan how long it will take to get ready at night and again in the morning. Break it down into minutes - 5 to brush your teeth, 10 to put on your full uniform, 10 to walk to the bus stop. This will ensure children will arrive in school on time and with the correct equipment for each lesson.
- Discuss what common or frequent post primary school phrases mean e.g. form class, year head.
- Provide information for pupils and parents e.g. how to read sample timetables, how to use a map of the school, where to find photographs and contact details for the key staff including pastoral care, secretary, anti-bullying or learning support coordinator.

For Schools

- Collect all relevant information from the primary school(s). Remember the Traveller pupils' schooling may have been interrupted and more than one school may have necessary information regarding services accessed and involvement to date).
- Provide parents with relevant information regarding key members of staff and procedures.
- Meet with parents to ascertain any particular needs or concerns to be addressed.
- Discuss with parents and TESS any curriculum issues that may be problematic such as changing for PE, boys wearing aprons for home economics, health and personal social care issues.
- Facilitate any additional links needed between your Traveller family and the secondary school eg. home visits or community appointments.

**Please contact TESS for any assistance
or further guidance on transitions**

**Jim Maye AAO - 07796 277 306
Genevieve McSorley AAO - 07795 687 156**

Traveller Education Support Service (TESS)

Tullygally Regional Centre,
21 Meadowbrook Road,
Craigavon,
Co Armagh
BT65 5EP

www.eani.org.uk/tess



Údarás Oideachais
Lear Owerance

***Useful guidance on transitions is also available from the
Department of Education through DE Circular 2015/11
(Pre-school and Primary 1) and DE Circular 2015/25
(Primary to Post-Primary Education)***