



Education Improvement – Equality and Diversity Team

# Effective Practice for Attendance for GRT Pupils

*Good school attendance is essential for children to get the most out of their school experience and Gypsy, Roma Traveller (GRT) pupils need to attend school (every day unless there is a valid reason to be absent). High expectations of attendance and achievement for all pupils, including GRT pupils, is paramount*

In addition to the attendance guidance below we recommend that schools:

- Receive training around the cultural history of GRT communities and discrimination these communities may have experienced and use this knowledge to promote GRT culture in school.
- Have an inclusive culture that welcomes all communities and does not tolerate discrimination or bullying.
- Promote accurate ascription of GRT pupils, and support families identifying with the correct ethnic group.

- Track GRT pupils for any specific barriers they face and take action to address these barriers to advance equality of opportunity.
- If making contact with the family has become problematic seek advice from the Equality and Diversity Team Access Officer for support and guidance
- When travelling for work purposes, it is crucial that schools work with the families to ensure they understand their responsibility to return on the agreed date and it is good practice to encourage and support learning through work packs and advice regarding accessing dual registration in other schools.

These actions will help ensure that the school is compliant with its public sector equality duty under the Equality Act (2010).

School Attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities.

Updated 2020 [School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities. Updated 2020](#) of particular relevance is: Code D: Dual Registered and Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence, see below:

## **The 'T' Code**

The law recognises that GRT families may have to keep their children off school due to a parent(s) or carer(s) who is engaged in trade or business that requires them to travel and means their child cannot attend school. The child must attend



school for at least 200 sessions though in a 12 month period and is expected to attend as regularly as the trade or business permits.

The law does not automatically reduce the number of days that children from GRT families are expected to attend school; schools and local authorities should seek to secure GRT pupils' attendance at 380 sessions each school year.

The law makes no reference to a physical dwelling so a GRT family that lives in a house but travels in the course of their trade or business can have absences authorised through use of the T code.

## **When should the T code be used?**

On days when a pupil from a GRT family is known to be out of the area for work purposes and is not in educational provision, schools can use the T code to record the absence.

Parents should make sure they let the school know in advance when they are going to be travelling and when they expect to return. This enables the child's attendance and absence to be recorded accurately, their safety and well-being to be monitored and appropriate distance learning work to be set by the school.

The term 'travelling' means travelling as part of the parents' trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place. It does not mean travelling as part of a holiday.

The T code can only be used if the child is travelling for work purposes with their parents, not with any other relatives.

The use of the T code to authorise a pupil's absence is at the discretion of the headteacher.

## **The 'D' code**

The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. To help ensure continuity of education for GRT children it is expected that the child(ren) should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling. Where a GRT pupil is travelling and attending another school, the pupil should be dual-registered using D code. The child remains on the D code until the subsidiary school informs the base school they have left and are off roll, or until they return to the school full time.

## **When should the 'D' code be used?**

The D code is used by the main school when the child is attending the subsidiary school. When the child is attending the subsidiary school, they record their attendance as they would any other pupil. The school where the child is expected to attend is responsible for accurately recording the pupil's attendance and chasing up non-attendance.



Pupils who are dually registered at two schools should be registered as such in both schools' information management systems (MIS) under "pupil enrolment status". For example - A student who is on roll at school A but attending school B (which could be the PRU or a special school).

- School A - record M (Main – dual registration)
- School B – record S (Subsidiary – dual registration)

This code can be used for Traveller children when it is known that:

- They are attending another school; and
- They are dually registered at both schools.

It should NOT be used unless these two conditions are met.

The subsidiary school should:

- Contact the Base school to confirm the child is on roll and is understood to be travelling. Check that the base school has not (and will not) take them off roll but will code them D for the time the child is on your roll
- Code the child on your register as you would do for any child; and you hold the responsibility for ensuring the child's attendance and education during that period.

- Maintain contact and share attendance certificates with the base school.

*For safeguarding and educational reasons, one of the schools must follow up on all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner, such as through “First Day Calling” procedures.*

## **Travelling for purposes other than business or trade**

You may receive requests for leave from your GRT families for events and occasions that are of particular significance to them (eg Appleby show / horse fairs). In addition, GRT community members put high value on extended family responsibilities so families may move to care for sick relatives or a bereaved family member and again a request for leave may be submitted for occasions such as these. When GRT families are travelling for purposes other than business or trade, the T code should not be used and requests should be considered in the same way as they would be for all families at your school.

## **What actions should the school take if a GRT child doesn't return after travelling?**

If a child/ young person does not return to their base school after travelling the school should:

- Make regular attempts, beginning on the first day of any unexplained absence to contact the pupil's parents



either by telephone or text messaging. Every effort to locate and contact the family must be taken, including a home visit.

- Contact the GRT access and attendance officers who will make every effort to visit the family and ascertain when the child will be returning to school (contact details below).
- Contact any other school where the pupil or their siblings are known to attend while they were away.
- For pupils known to be at risk or where safeguarding is a concern the school should contact social care.
- If despite these efforts the pupil's absence continues and his/her whereabouts remains unknown where a pupil has not returned to school, school should [contact the Child Missing Education \(CME\) team](#) for advice on next steps.

Additional guidance on good practice with GRT pupils is available here: [Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils: supporting access to education - Case study - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

If you have any further questions, please contact:

**Equality and Diversity Team -**  
**[equalityanddiversity@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:equalityanddiversity@lancashire.gov.uk)**

**For your school's attendance worker, please**  
**use this link: [Schools' Portal \(lancsngfl.ac.uk\)](https://lancsngfl.ac.uk)**

**For children missing education advise, please**  
**email [cme@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:cme@lancashire.gov.uk)**

For further information on improving school attendance please  
refer to: [Working together to improve school attendance](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)  
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