

# Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children in the Welsh School System: Promoting Equality and Tackling Racism



A Toolkit for Teachers  
and Practitioners

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Show Racism the **Red Card**



Ariennir gan  
**Lywodraeth Cymru**  
Funded by  
**Welsh Government**

## Who are we?

SRtRC was established in January 1996 and has become the UK's leading anti-racism educational charity. The organisation utilises the high-profile status of football and football players to help tackle racism in society. The majority of the campaign's output is the provision of education for young people and adults in their schools and workplaces, and at events held in football stadiums, council chambers, universities and community venues. Across Britain, SRtRC delivers training to more than 50,000 individuals per year.

SRtRC have been commissioned by the Welsh Government to produce this toolkit in response to the recognition that amongst separate GRT groups, attendance and achievement is significantly below the national average for a variety of complex reasons.

## Aim & Objectives

**To provide an educational resource that will enable those working with GRT young people to:**

- Recognise and respond appropriately to racism and ultimately reduce incidences in school.
- Embed issues of equality and diversity throughout the school, particularly ensuring a curriculum that is relevant and accessible to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils.
- Provide a relevant, appropriate, enjoyable and inclusive school experience for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils and their parents.
- Begin building stronger links and trusting relationships with parents and the wider Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.
- Encourage Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils and families to engage more fully with school through inclusion strategies and specific interventions focused on meeting the needs of those groups.

### Key:



**Tip:**  
Provides helpful advice



**Caution:**  
Highlights potentially contentious considerations



**Note:**  
Provides the reader with additional information



**Activity:**  
An activity that can be delivered with staff to aid learning



**Reflection:**  
Asks the reader to reflect on current practice and assumptions

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# Foreword

**Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities should, like any other child, feel safe and supported in school. To achieve this, we need to create an inclusive learning environment for all children, within which all cultural backgrounds are valued and respected.**

Embracing diversity means all children and young people will benefit from learning that meets their needs, encouraging them to widen their horizon, extend their aspirations and ambitions and develop within them an independent ability to apply knowledge and skills.

I was delighted to work with Show Racism the Red Card in response to the recognition that amongst Gypsy, Roma and Traveller groups, attendance and achievement is significantly below the national average. Their expertise and understanding of the complex nature of these issues has enabled the development of this educational resource which provides advice, strategies and interventions to support those working with Gypsy, Roma and Travelling Communities.

It will complement Travelling together – Resources to promote the integration of Gypsy and Traveller culture into the national curriculum, published in February 2014, which recognised that an understanding and acceptance of cultural differences is key to effective educational support.

The work that Show Racism the Red Card has done since 1996 has contributed to developing a society that is built on tolerance, respect and equality and underpins the Welsh Government's inclusive approach.

We have a very simple aim – every child and young person, regardless of their background, should benefit from excellent teaching in safe and inclusive learning environment. I hope that the pack provides a valuable resource which will effectively improve the performance and support the inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners in Wales.

*Yours  
Huw Lewis*

**Huw Lewis AM,  
Minister for Education and Skills**



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# Before you begin...

Striving to create a more equal environment for all students can sometimes be met with resentment by staff, pupils and parents. There is sometimes a lack of knowledge about why anti-racism work is needed or knowledge of the structural barriers communities may face outside and inside school. Resentment can sometimes be fostered if pupils or members of staff feel like one community is being prioritised over another. It is therefore really important that as you start your journey to make your school more inclusive or in ongoing work, you recognise the potential for conflict and expect that prejudice and racism may arise. It is extremely important that you dedicate time to creating the right environment to keep all young people and adults physically and emotionally safe as issues arise, or through more structured lessons on equality issues.

**Please see the Appendix 1 for helpful tips on creating a safe space.**

To truly inform your school's path toward being more equal it is essential that you are aware of what members of the school community are thinking and feeling about their environment so that they can inform change. It is good practice to gather the voices of the school community to have an accurate picture of what needs to change, be improved on or retained. Ideas coming from the school community or the 'bottom up' mean that people will feel more invested in strategies and have a sense of ownership.

It is especially important that you gather the voices of minority communities, who are often the most excluded from having their voice heard but who can benefit most from a more equal environment. If you are only asking staff and pupils from majority communities how welcoming they think the school is, for example, their daily lived experiences will be different from those who belong to minority communities. Whilst their voices and ideas are of course valuable they are not able to reflect the views and experiences of minority communities.



We recognise that teachers are under massive pressure and this process may take time. Pupil and staff perceptions however are the key to a successful programme of equality work.

**Please see Appendix 2 for helpful tips on gathering voice.**



# Introduction & exploring the need...



This toolkit has been compiled by Show Racism the Red Card (SRtRC) to offer teachers/practitioners in Wales practical advice and activities to contribute to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children having a better experience whilst at school. Much has been written about the way in which these diverse groups experience and achieve in education in comparison to other pupils. Statistics such as those below are a stark reminder of the difference in attendance and achievement outcomes for these minority groups.

- **60%** of Gypsies and Travellers in England and Wales over the age of 16 reported having no qualifications (Census 2011).
- In 2013 only **12.3%** of Gypsy/Gypsy Roma pupils achieved at the level 2 threshold (this included a GCSE grade A\*-C in English and Maths at the end of key stage 4) compared with **51.5%** of all pupils (Welsh Government 2013).
- In 2011/2012 Gypsy and Traveller pupils had the highest rates of absenteeism in both primary and secondary school (Welsh Government 2013).

Statistics, however can only tell part of the story and can often be flawed, especially when measuring groups who may not feel able to reveal their ethnicity (for example some GRT pupils may have achieved excellent educational standards but have not disclosed their identity or have not taken part in the census). But even with this imperfect picture, it is clear that more can be done by schools and other agencies to improve the educational experiences of these groups.

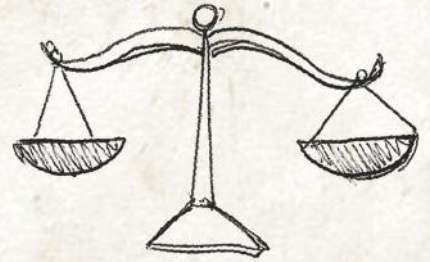
Show Racism the Red Card recognises that there is a complex interplay of social, economic, political and cultural factors which impact upon Gypsy, Roma & Travelling communities. Structural inequality and racism undoubtedly affect the way in which a child is able to learn. So too, will the way in which different communities perceive formal education. Some communities (and it is certainly not exclusive to GRT communities) may place less emphasis on the need for a formalised education and therefore care less about the value placed on league tables, exam results, attendance rates, Estyn judgements and will not measure success by these but will instead favour other priorities and pedagogies for their child's growth.

We recognise that there are nationally driven pressures on schools which mean the freedom to employ radical inclusion strategies to cater for every school member's value set, is not possible. Your work has its limitations and so does this toolkit. Acknowledging the limitations is part of the process of assessing what can be achieved. This toolkit is meant to be a support for those wishing to understand more about some of the issues that affect GRT attendance and achievement (in school) and for those who want to apply simple, practical changes to their practice.

*This toolkit takes into consideration the needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities; however you will notice that sometimes we make specific mention of Roma communities or refer to Gypsies and Travellers only. The needs of Roma migrants have been included because they share distant ancestry with some Gypsy groups and may have had similar experiences or face similar barriers to Gypsies and Travellers, not least patterns of discrimination and societal isolation. However it must be recognised that there are characteristics which may be specific to some Roma communities only.*

# The legislative context

Legislation is not the most exciting of topics for many people and it can seem like something which only needs to be engaged with should something go wrong. Equality legislation however is hard fought for, it provides you with a tool to implore your school to take action (should there be resistance), and it can provide people with access to justice that may not be possible without the legal framework to do so. But how and why is this relevant to your school? This section will outline the Equality Act (2010) and the implications for schools, it will also make reference to how Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people are covered within the Act.



**The Equality Act came into force on 1st October 2010; it harmonised and replaced 116 different equality and anti-discrimination statutes with a single Act.**

The Act requires local authorities and other public bodies, including schools to have due regard for the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

**There are four prohibited behaviours contained within the Act, they are:**

## **Direct Discrimination**

When a person treats one person less favourably than they would another because of a protected characteristic.

## **Indirect Discrimination**

When a provision, criterion or practice is neutral on the face of it, but its impact particularly disadvantages people with a protected characteristic.

## **Harassment**

Unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the complainant, or violating their dignity.

## **Victimisation**

Treating someone unfavourably because they have taken (or might be taking) action under the Equality Act or supporting somebody who is doing so.

There are 9 protected characteristics contained within The Act, they are:



**Note:** The law also protects those who are perceived to have a protected characteristic (for example, it is illegal to discriminate against someone because you think that they may be a Gypsy or a Traveller) and those who are associated with people who have a protected characteristic (for example it is illegal to discriminate against someone because their child has a disability).

## How are Gypsy Roma, and Traveller people protected?

The protected characteristic of 'Race' as defined in The Act includes the following aspects of a person's identity:

- **Skin colour**
- **Nationality (including citizenship)**
- **Ethnic origin**
- **National origins**

Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are protected ethnic groups within The Act. Remember also, prejudice and discrimination can arise because of a perception that somebody belongs to a group that is protected. Many Roma people may face racism or discrimination because they are, or are perceived to be, from another country and would therefore be protected by their nationality or national origins.



## Estyn

- Will require your school to provide details of any anti-bullying policy and will check that it complies with The Equality Act
- Will require evidence of how your school deals with any complaints from pupils or parents arising from such incidents

## Strategic Equality Plans (SEP) and Equality Objectives

Schools are required to develop and publish Equality Objectives and a Strategic Equality Plan with the purpose of the objectives and plans enabling the delivery of measurable equality outcomes which improve the lives of individuals and communities. The SEP must include equality objectives and demonstrate what the school will do to achieve them. A school's SEP is not supposed to be completed by only one member of staff. There may be a lead member of staff; however your school should endeavour to produce your strategy in consultation with staff, parents, young people and members of the community. Whilst this specific document is related to equality, it should link to the general work on improvement and inclusion and to the school's development plan.



**Tip:** Your Local Authority should have a model template SEP which could be used as a guide but would of course need to be tailored to your school, guidance can also be found at the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) website [www.wlga.gov.uk](http://www.wlga.gov.uk)

For more information and guidance on Strategic Equality Plans and the Equality Act visit the Equality and Human Rights Commission at [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com). Please also see the Estyn Report Action on Bullying (2014) at [www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk)

## Reviewing and developing relevant policies

You will need to consider whether the existing policies that guide your school's practices help or hinder the inclusion of GRT pupils, their engagement with formal education and their participation in school life.

We recommend this comes after consultation with governors, parents, pupils & staff, especially those of GRT heritage, as what you learn from this will help you to examine policies from different levels, perspectives and starting positions. You may want to also consult them about their awareness of these policies or their experience of how they are implemented.

A key question to focus your thinking might be:

**Do the policies we have in place adequately provide for meeting the needs of GRT communities as we now know and understand them?**

You may or may not need GRT specific policies. Remember they are likely to have needs in common with other groups of learners such as non GRT ethnic minorities, those with English as an Additional Language (EAL) and special educational needs, temporary/short term pupils and those from low income families.

## In conclusion

Enacting your legislative duties may at times feel like another unreasonable demand on your time, however it is every teacher's moral and legal duty to ensure that every child has their rights upheld. The Equality Act asks public bodies not only to respond to prejudice related incidents should they occur, but also to make every effort to prevent them from happening, whilst at the same time advancing equality of opportunity.

# Terminology & Background

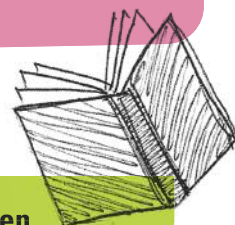
The complex histories, identities and socio-economic positions of different GRT communities make it difficult if not impossible to provide a brief overview. It is also very difficult to 'define' an ethnicity. Reflect, for instance on how easy it would be to define your own. The purpose of this section however is to clarify the meanings behind the terminology commonly used in relation to GRT groups, and to offer a basic description of their contested histories and cultural commonalities.

When we mention GRT communities we are generally referring to several different ethnic groups, each of which has their own cultural identity. GRT groups interact, build relationships and have children with each other, as well as with settled populations, making it difficult to draw clear cut boundaries between each supposed group. In addition, some GRT people choose not to disclose their ethnicity in order to protect themselves from stigma, discrimination and persecution.



**Caution:** Very often we are presented with gross generalisation of GRT groups, facilitated by the mainstream media. In reality, the histories, cultures and national identities of GRT people are very diverse.

**Terminology:** The main GRT communities we are referring to are:



| Gypsy, Roma or Traveller group | Population size    | Number of dialects spoken |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| English Romany Gypsies         | around 100-200,000 | one main dialect group    |
| Scottish Travellers/Gypsies    | 20-40,000          | 3 dialect groups          |
| Welsh Romany Gypsies           | 5-10,000           | 2 dialect groups          |
| Irish Travellers               | 50-100,000         | 2 dialect groups          |

All of the above are the 'old' Traveller populations consolidated in the British Isles during the 16th century in the face of genocidal persecution of 15th century immigrants. Probably a third to a half are nomadic or live in caravans. The rest live in houses.

**New Travellers**

5-10,000

Non applicable

This group emerged in the 1970s. It is made up of those who were able to make a living for themselves as part of the festival circuit and who have since extended their economy to other trades. They are of various ethnicities, including some from English Romany Gypsy and Scottish Traveller housed families.

**Roma**

150-300,000

20-30 dialects in the UK

These are Romani people from Central and Eastern Europe who initially arrived in the UK in the late 19th century, but came in much greater numbers after 1989, as refugees after the collapse of communist regimes, and later as workers after the accession of their home countries to the EU. The majority are not nomadic and therefore it would be inaccurate to define as a Traveller. They include, however, many different groups and nationalities who are as diverse as English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish Travellers.

**Showmen**

20,000

Non applicable

These are members of the Showmens' Guild established at the end of the 19th century, which includes people of many ethnicities, mainly English, but also English Romany Gypsies and Roma. The EU recognises them as a part of separate category called 'Occupational Travellers' which also includes those who work on fairgrounds, circuses and boat people living in barges.



**Tip:** We highly recommend that when working alongside GRT people, you ask them to describe their ethnicity/ethnic heritage in their own words, in order to avoid making unnecessary inaccurate assumptions.

## Historical considerations

GRT groups have been part of British society for over 500 years, with the first authenticated records of a Gypsy presence going back to 1505 in Scotland and 1514 in England. British Gypsies are Roma/Romanies/Romany/Romanichals who have lived in the UK for several centuries. Using linguistic theory and DNA research, their origins have been traced back 1000 years to North West India. It is likely that they left India as part of the movements of people during the first few centuries of the expansion of Islam. They are said to have migrated across Asia and North Africa into Eastern, Central then Western Europe, eventually arriving in the Americas.

During these migrations, various groups were stranded in different countries. Some settled in permanent campsites or housing, whilst others continued migrating to other countries or adopted a travelling life style within those borders. They often inter-married with other Travellers and those from settled communities along the way. Other groups adopted a nomadic way of life, such as the New Travellers who emerged from the UK's free festival movement and those whose occupations as show/fairground/circus people called for mobility. These patterns of migration, integration and settlement, account for the vast diversity amongst GRT groups across Europe and the world.

Many of the current Irish Travellers came over from Ireland in the 1960's following the depression in rural Ireland. Irish Travellers have been travelling abroad for work since the 15th century. There are Irish Romany, Romanies and Romanichal Gypsies; however Irish Travellers have a different ethnic origin and identity from them.

The most recent wave of Roma immigration has come from post-Communist Eastern Europe in the 1990s and after 2004, when some countries joined the European Union.

GRT communities have survived slavery, persecution and genocide. Throughout the centuries, various countries across Europe have introduced laws that called for their imprisonment, enslavement, deportation and even execution, based on their ethnic and cultural identities alone. Anti-gypsy laws go back to the 16th century and remained law for centuries in some places. During the Holocaust the Nazis targeted GRT groups for extermination, murdering between 500,000 - 1.5 million. This is known as 'Porraimos' in Romani/Romanes which means 'The devouring'.

Roma who remained in Eastern and Central Europe were later subjected to 'de-romanisation' measures. This involved breaking up extended family units by housing nuclear families amongst non Roma people during periods of forced settlement. Children were also discouraged from following traditions in speech and dress. In Czechoslovakia, Roma women were coerced into sterilisation during the 1970's, 80's and 90's ending in 2001.

## Further reading

For a more in depth understanding, we would advise you to seek out more detailed information than can be provided here. We would suggest the following books:

***Gypsy Politics and Traveller Identity*** T. A. Acton, Published by University of Hertfordshire Press 1997

***Romanichal Gypsies*** T. A. Acton & D. Gallant, Published by Hodder Wayland 2000

***The Council of Europe and Roma: 40 years of Action*** 2012

***A Minority and the State*** B. Taylor, Published by Manchester University Press 2013



It may also be useful to visit the following websites for historical timelines and more comprehensive historical summaries

[www.romasupportgroup.org.uk](http://www.romasupportgroup.org.uk) (click on **publications**)

[www.romaniarts.co.uk](http://www.romaniarts.co.uk) (click on **resources**)

[www.grtpa.com](http://www.grtpa.com) (click **Home**, then 'Why GRT')



## Cultural Commonalities & Sensitivities

There are some values, beliefs and practices that various GRT groups may have in common, but these are by no means guaranteed or completely distinct from those found amongst non GRT groups. Some of the cultural practices listed below are things that people who self identify as GRT have told us are important to their sense of identity. Beside them, we have posed questions that will help you to think about them in the broader context of everyday human behaviour. There is a very fine line between raising awareness of cultural traditions and sensitivities and being complicit in stereotyping that supposed 'group'. We therefore highly recommend that you get to know your local GRT communities and develop your own understanding of their needs first hand; do not rely upon generalisations about GRT groups as a whole to inform and direct your work. Each community will have their own characteristics and issues that are unique to them.



### Nomadism, whether past or present

**Reflection:** Do all GRT groups travel? In light of discrimination, persecution and changing economic opportunities - has travelling been a choice or a necessity for some groups?

### Greater self-reliance and independence than settled communities' e.g. high self-employment

**Reflection:** Consider the impact of historical persecution, discrimination, the transient nature of travelling and how public services and industries are often organised.

### The importance of children, family and relatives - extended close knit families

**Reflection:** Can you think of any communities that do not place a high value on familial relationships? Within most cultures these are seen as important.

### Strong oral tradition

**Reflection:** Historically, the sharing of information and knowledge by word of mouth has played an important role in the development of most cultures. With this in mind, which populations/communities can be said to not have a strong oral tradition?

### Rituals around birth, death and cleanliness

**Reflection:** What rituals have been developed as a result of the need to keep ourselves healthy? Consider hygiene requirements. What do birth and death represent? How is reverence for human life demonstrated across cultures?

### Annual and seasonal social gatherings, fairs or festivals

**Reflection:** Consider the multiple and varied ways people socialise. Are annual and seasonal gatherings, fairs and festivals unique to GRT communities?

## Further sensitivities for schools

From our consultations, there were some issues raised that need to be considered when adapting your schools provision to become more inclusive, enjoyable and relevant to young people from these backgrounds. It may also avoid potential conflict between the school and parents/carers. Of course these sensitivities are not exclusive to GRT groups.

### Religion

Religion is likely to inform certain attitudes, expectations and behaviour in the same way as it would for any other groups who uphold their spiritual beliefs.

### Traditional gender roles

In line with gender segregated roles of non-GRT communities a similar trend can be found amongst some GRT communities. Caring and cleaning responsibilities for women and girls, and the need for men and boys to contribute to their family's income can compete with schools for GRT young people's time and attention.

### Sex education

Many parents may feel uncomfortable with their child receiving sex education and may have misinformed or pre-conceived ideas about what the content will be, or accurate ideas that are unacceptable to them. The Welsh Government recommends that schools should always work in partnership with parents/carers, informing them regularly about the content of sex education. Schools should pre-warn families as to when sex education will be taught. Parents have the right to request that their child be wholly or partly excused from receiving sex education at school, other than sex education contained within the national curriculum, for example in science. At induction the school should have discussions with parents about potentially sensitive curriculum areas. Some people think that every child has the right to know about their own body, to know how it works and to know they are in control of it. This however, is contested and seen as culturally conditioned. Many parents, including some from GRT communities, believe that a child has to reach an appropriate level of maturity before knowing how the human body (even their own) works and that this is the responsibility of parents, not the school. The need to ensure pupils receive the basic sex education specified within the curriculum has to be finely balanced against the potential risk of them losing their parents' trust and the withdrawal of that child from school completely.

### Informal education

The flexibility and autonomy of a travelling life style will understandably be at odds with a school system that requires involuntary daily attendance at a fixed location. Formal education is highly structured and prescriptive in comparison to learning from experiences and shadowing elders. GT pupils may need time to get used to the scheduled repetition of school life. Please note that generally Roma communities are settled communities and any instability in accommodation or being required to move may be due to other factors such as poverty, insecure employment, rogue landlords, etc.

## Communication

We all have different ways of expressing ourselves and this is in part shaped by our family, our community and power relations. It is very important that teachers understand that if a pupil continuously shouts out or interrupts others, this may not be because that person has little respect for them or wishes to be obtrusive, but that they are working from a different set of cultural values and expectations. It is not suggested that there are different rules for different pupils as this may breed resentment, however teachers should approach the ways in which young people communicate with an understanding of the cultural practices they may follow outside of school. For some young people, interruptions may be completely normal and expected.

## Distrust of authority figures

Where there are antagonistic relationships between the state and any group, mistrust towards the other can arise within both parties.

## Cultural pride

People tend to gain fulfilment from the culture within which they were primarily socialised. When a person's culture or identity is attacked or threatened – they may feel the need to defend that culture. This is not unusual.

## Standing up/fighting back

GRT communities are a highly stigmatised group with a long history of persecution. Their experience of racism has been persistent and pervasive. Some GRT communities have learnt to defend themselves as a coping mechanism and survival strategy.

## Reflection



- To which other pupils or groups do these characteristics apply?
- Are there other pupils or groups who experience difficulties with their peers – what are some of the root causes of this?
- How could you support pupils to learn constructive ways of expressing negative emotions and resolving conflict?
- What are your expectations of behaviour for young people who experience the mental and emotional trauma of prejudice related or identity-based bullying? Are these reasonable and or realistic?



## Note



Self-reflection will help you to understand the needs of GRT children in a broader and less racialised context. For example, some GRT children may have learnt to 'stand up' for themselves, not because of a fixed cultural norm, but in response to threats to their safety and attacks to their sense of identity from peers raised in the dominant culture. Developing emotional resilience, assertiveness and advocacy skills may offer children and young people solutions.

There are prevalent negative stereotypes and popular assumptions about GRT communities. Portrayals of GRT people in the mainstream media can, more often than not be damaging, therefore serve to fuel the prejudice and discrimination directed towards these groups. It is important that work is done to challenge attitudes towards GRT groups that are grounded in preconceived ideas and racism.



**Tip:** Dispelling myths and misinformation about GRT communities may help to raise awareness and promote understanding amongst the settled population. You may also need to alleviate fear or hostility towards GRT groups and the settled population. We would suggest using some of the activities in the SRtRC 'Anti-racism' and 'Out of Site' Educational Packs to help pupils develop critical thinking skills and empathy. You can find downloadable copies here: [www.theredcard.org](http://www.theredcard.org)

Please also see **Myths and Facts-Gypsies and Travellers Flintshire County Council** at [www.flintshire.gov.uk](http://www.flintshire.gov.uk)

## Caution

Be mindful of '**cultural dissonance**'.



This refers to the sense of discomfort or discord that arises from unexpected or unexplained cultural differences that individuals find difficult to navigate or resolve. (Tierney, W. 1993) Cultural psychologists assert that where children in education systems experience cultural dissonance, they are more vulnerable to educational disadvantage. Cultural dissonance therefore can have a profound and negative effect on academic achievement and personal development. It can provoke the tendency either to resort to accentuating cultural values, or to abandon cultural values and adopt those of the school culture, in order to achieve success. Cultural dissonance may also lead to misinterpretations of parent behaviours, creating misunderstandings between home and school. Tierney (1993) suggests using a 'border' pedagogy that helps students negotiate back and forth between cultures, teaching them how to become culturally savvy so that they can succeed in the predominant culture, but at the same time, honour and support their own cultural roots and traditions.

# Arriving and Settling



In this section we will consider how your school can take steps to ensure that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and their parents/carers have a positive experience at the beginning of their relationship with your school. We will then look to understand what could be done longer term to ensure a child is settled, affirmed and included.

Increases in GRT pupils may arise from a range of factors including local demographics, changes to educational provision, parental choice and successful engagement with families. Many of these factors cannot be anticipated and are beyond the immediate control of the school. What is clear, however, is that all schools are responsible for providing an accessible and appropriate learning environment for all pupils. Many of the suggestions below do not only apply to GRT communities.


Let us first think about some of the apprehensions and barriers that parents/carers and pupils may have upon entry to your school.

## **Previous experiences of racism and discrimination:**

Pupils and parents/carers may have experienced hostility and even overt racism at their previous school. There may have been an unwillingness or even flat out refusal to admit a pupil because of their ethnicity. Roma pupils may have experienced segregated schooling in their country of origin or may have been excluded from education entirely. Roadside travellers who are regularly forced to move on by the police and local authorities may have grown to distrust authority figures.

## **Perception of education:**

Many Gypsy and Traveller children are educated by their elders in their communities and therefore some parents/carers may have different ideas from your school about what 'formal' education will provide for their child.



**Reflection:** Has the value and worth of education been communicated explicitly to parents/carers? What will the parents/carers get out of the experience? What will the children gain by attending school?

## **Teasing from peer group:**

Some Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children may experience teasing by their peer group for expressing an enthusiasm for, and attending, school.

## **Cultural dilution:**

There may be a perception from some GRT parents/carers and young people that attending school with non-GRT young people and adults could dilute their own culture. They may also think that the school may try to change the culture of the young person, or that their culture will be looked down upon in comparison to the perceived cultures in school.

Let us now look at what practical measures schools could take to welcome and settle GRT pupils and their parents/carers. It is of course not possible to implement all of these suggestions at once, some of the longer term suggestions will take more time.

# Short Term

- ✓ Establish a relationship with your Traveller Education Service (TES, if available in your area), it will be an invaluable link between the school and your GRT pupils/parents/carers
- ✓ Welcome parents/carers into the school, make sure that the first interactions are warm, positive and welcoming
- ✓ Provide support for parents/carers in filling out admission forms or offer to fill it out on their behalf
- ✓ Reassure parents/carers that your school takes racism and bullying very seriously and that their child is able to speak to any member of staff should they receive any treatment they do not like
- ✓ Appoint a member of staff who will be the lead contact for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children. The school structure and hierarchy can often be confusing, a lead member of staff as a link will make it clear who parents can approach
- ✓ Make sure that any information about the school (induction material/brochure) is explained to the parent/carer rather than just being handed over
- ✓ Establish the best way of getting in touch with the parent/carer. As with non-GRT parents there may be some who are not literate and therefore a phone call rather than written communication is advisable. It is recommended that any written communication sent is followed by a phone call
- ✓ Class buddies could be identified to show the newly arrived child around the school, answer any questions they may have and be there to listen to any anxieties ('buddy' training may need to be offered to the 'buddy')
- ✓ It may be useful for your school to keep a box of fresh uniforms so that a newly arrived child can feel like a member of the community straight away, young people who travel to different schools may constantly feel peripheral to the school community. This small gesture on behalf of the school could make a huge difference. Many schools will have a spare jumper box; however GRT children should not necessarily be given used or worn clothes but should look new if not nearly new.
- ✓ Explain to the parent/carer the absence procedure and what to expect from the school should the pupil not be in school
- ✓ Robustly deal with every racist incident (see section on Recognising and Responding to Racism)



# Longer Term

- ✓ Children are able to recognise words from their first language on the displays and signs around school
- ✓ Peer mentors could be recruited from members of the GRT community who are well established at the school to offer support to newly arrived pupils
- ✓ Your school could organise coffee mornings for GRT parents/carers to attend in a less formal atmosphere (these have proved to be good opportunities to invite services to the event which offer advice on money, services etc)
- ✓ Encourage members of minority communities to stand for school council/governors
- ✓ Extra curricular activities take place at lunch/break time. It may not be possible for GRT pupils to stay after school, therefore extra-curricular activity could be arranged during school time
- ✓ There may be difficulty for some GRT young people to find the space and time to do homework outside of school. You could provide homework club at lunch/break times
- ✓ Take time to share the positive aspects of a pupil's day with parents/carers so that they are not only contacted when the school needs something or there are discipline issues
- ✓ All staff are given the opportunity to access training to support their knowledge of GRT cultures
- ✓ All staff are given the opportunity to access anti-racism training to further their knowledge of recognising and responding to racist incidents
- ✓ A safe space or 'sanctuary' is set up in the school where young people can have supported 'time out', if they are feeling worried, angry or anxious
- ✓ A lead member of staff, perhaps in conjunction with a TES, could visit a pupil's Site (or house) on an ongoing basis, if appropriate
- ✓ Your school could invite GRT parents/carers to be helpers on school trips
- ✓ Role models from within the GRT communities could be invited to work in school
- ✓ Your school could map the community and voluntary agencies who work alongside GRT communities and you could explore how you could better work in partnership
- ✓ Your school could work to translate information that is given to pupils/parents/carers and information found on Facebook, or the school's website, into community languages

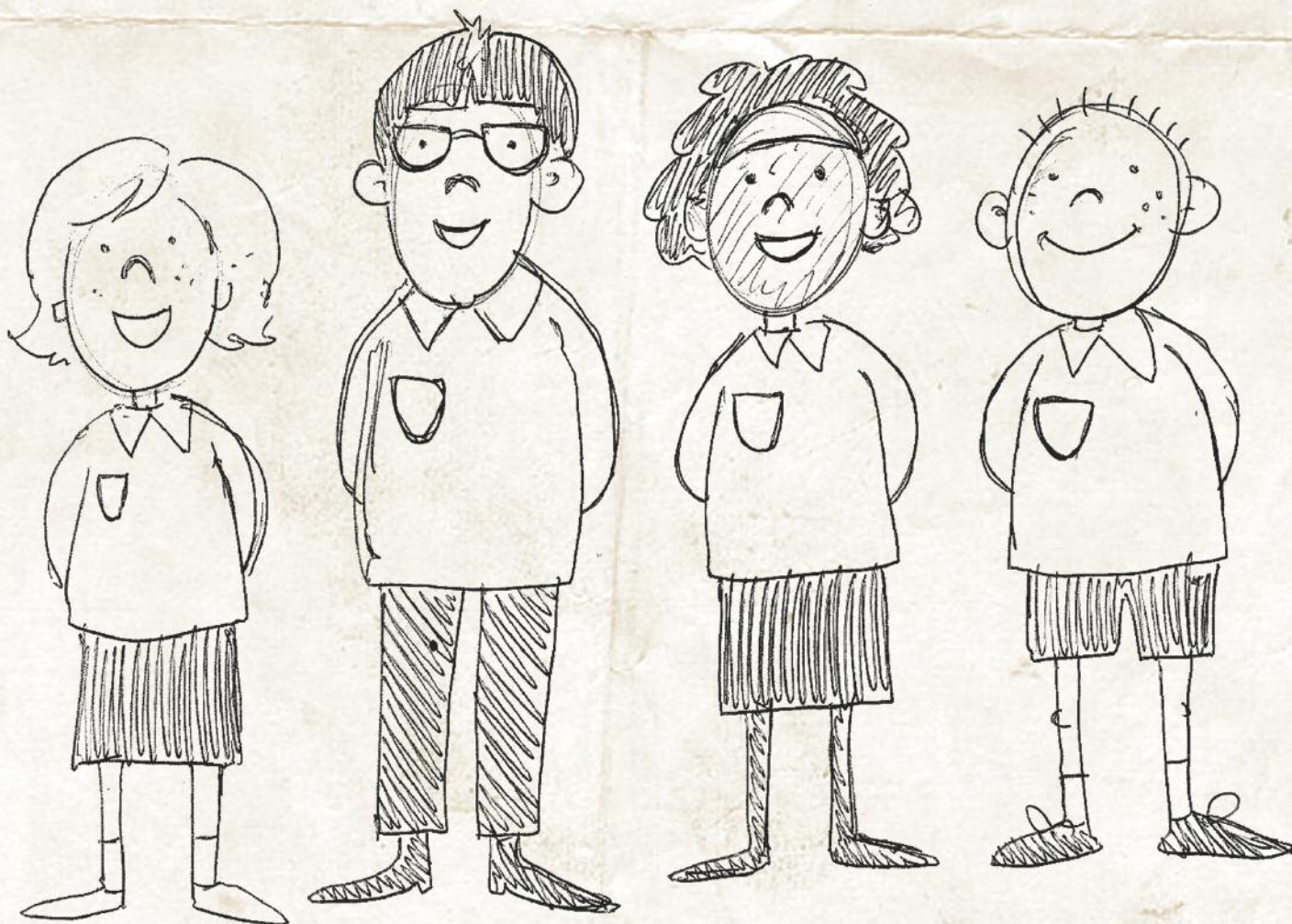
## Whole school projects

- Children at the school could help to design a leaflet/brochure which features pictures and images explaining school rules and ethos
- Your school could produce a DVD or Video clip to be displayed through YouTube, explaining the culture and ethos which could be distributed to a local traveller site so that parents/carers know of the school's ethos

## Case Study

To see an example of good practice when working alongside the Roma community please visit the following link <http://www.babington.leicester.sch.uk/> then click on **Results, Reports, Reviews** and scroll down to 'Good practice in working with the Roma community'

For more information on Outreach and Community Engagement please see Appendix 6.



# Roma & Language



Most Gypsies and Travellers in Britain (English, Welsh and Scottish Romany Gypsies/Travellers) tend to speak English or Welsh and a variation of the Romani/Romanes language. Alternatively, Irish Travellers speak Cant, Shelta or Gammon, alongside English. The historical residence of GT groups in the UK has meant that they have assimilated the English language into their culture and similarly, some Romani/Romanes words like 'kushti' (good) and 'pal' (friend) have crossed over to the non-GRT population.

Roma migrants from Eastern and Central Europe are the most likely to need English as an additional language (EAL) support.



**Note:** For many Roma migrants, English may be their second or third language. They may speak a variation of romani/romanese or other roma languages, plus that of the country within which they were born e.g. Czech or Slovak.

**Research has shown that being bilingual has a positive effect on intellectual growth, and enriches and enhances a child's mental development. The benefits of bilingualism include:**

- Flexible and critical thinking i.e. problem solving and less bias
- Attentive listening
- Broader communication skills and wider social connections
- Greater awareness of cultural diversity

Successfully acquiring EAL skills can not only help to improve a child's overall academic achievement, but enhances their personal and social development too.

**In 2013, there were 31,132 (6.7 percent) of primary and secondary pupils in Wales acquiring English as an additional language.**

## Initial assessments

For Roma pupils with EAL, your school will need to consider their level of English, their previous experience of different areas of the curriculum and their attainment in different areas of the curriculum. To adequately assess EAL pupils, follow the same principles as for other learners but the following considerations need to be taken into account:

- ✓ Assessments need to be sensitive to the age, language and culture of the EAL learner. For example, assessments based around experiences which are culturally unfamiliar may put them at a disadvantage.
- ✓ Any criteria and tools used in assessment need to be accessible to all. Teachers will be expected to consider how accessible assessment criteria and tools are in relation to their EAL learners.
- ✓ Limited ability in English language often masks abilities in other areas.
- ✓ Assessment is a continuous process and needs to be integrated into normal classroom practice.
- ✓ Assessment needs to provide opportunities for learners to reflect on their own learning.
- ✓ Assessment is about identifying what learners can do in order to determine next steps in learning.
- ✓ Additional background information is required for EAL learners in order to contextualise assessment data and provide reliable information.



Like all pupils who have EAL, Roma children have many characteristics in common with pupils whose first language is English; however, their learning experience differs because they are learning in and through another language. They also come from another cultural background which means their understanding and expectations of formal education may vary.



**Note:** It is also important to keep in mind that Roma groups have been stigmatised and institutionally discriminated against in their former countries and so some children may have developed an aversion to authority figures from statutory services.

Studies suggest that language barriers remain the key factor affecting the performance of English as An Additional Language (EAL) pupils in British schools<sup>1</sup>. There is a strong relationship between the stage of fluency in English and educational attainment. Findings have shown that once the disadvantage of language is overcome, it is possible to attain high levels of achievement. This underlines the importance of additional targeted support for Roma pupils to improve their levels of fluency in English.

### When developing targeted support for Roma we would suggest that you:

- Acknowledge that having English as an additional language is not the same as having special educational needs (SEN). EAL pupils can have SEN but this is not by default
- Contact the Traveller Education Service or Ethnic Minority Traveller and Refugee Achievement Service for tried and tested tailored resources
- Recognise and affirm a pupil's first language
- Maintain high expectations and negotiate targets with pupils, and where appropriate, parents
- Provide opportunities to develop language skills informally and creatively e.g. language clubs that develop ability through songs and drama
- Use innovative approaches to stimulate and enthuse e.g. multi-media resources and inviting community members who share their first language into school for storytelling
- Allocate 'thinking time' for mental translation or interpretation in lessons
- Offer peer support such as a 'buddy scheme' which brings together pupils who share the same first language
- Do you have the opportunity to pre-teach topics to small groups? This may then allow for familiarity when being taught the subject in class



**Tip:** For more detailed guidance on supporting EAL pupils we recommend that you refer to the British Council's EAL Nexus <https://eal.britishcouncil.org/>

<sup>1</sup> 'English as an Additional Language: An empirical study of stages of English proficiency' Feyisa Demie accessed via [www.naldic.org.uk](http://www.naldic.org.uk)

# Transition



The transition from primary to secondary school is a huge milestone in any child's educational experience. This is also the point at which attendance rates amongst GRT groups decline significantly.

Research has shown that this is a key time during which to focus or introduce interventions that will encourage and enable GRT children to remain in school and actively participate in the learning process and school life.

## Parental barriers

Transition to secondary school generally coincides with the onset of puberty and adolescence. If a child is due to transition to a mixed sex secondary school, this can be of concern to parents with strong beliefs about gender norms and roles, who fear that close interactions with the opposite sex may lead to sexual contact or promiscuity. They may also fear their child being exposed to sex education, or other harmful/unacceptable cultural influences, such as drug use, by young people from the settled community. Such beliefs and anxieties can in part stem from religious influences, and so are not exclusive to GRT parents; however they have been identified as a genuine concern. Similarly, the idea of cultural dilution is associated with school attendance by some GRT people. A perception that prejudice-related/identity based bullying may occur more frequently may also be a barrier. Parents may have personal experience of this resulting in negative feelings about secondary school.

Of those pupils recorded as being persistently absent, the figure increases from **45.3%** of Travellers and **29%** of Gypsy/Roma in primary school to **60.7%** and **34.8%** of Gypsy/Roma in secondary school (Pupils attendance record and PLASC, Welsh Government).

***'Slowly but surely they are trying to wash it out of you, just keep putting that extra bit of water in & diluting the squash until there is nothing left.'***

*(GRT adult quoted in 'Turning Point', a GRT project film)*

***'GT parents are anxious about the physical, cultural & moral safety of their children in secondary school.'***

*(ISOS partnerships seminar report, All Wales group on Attendance of GT children, March 2004)*

Your interventions will need to reassure both parents and pupils who may be worried about what to expect at secondary school, and support them as they arrive and settle into a new school environment.



**Tip:** Translate information into the pupil's first language where this is needed or have it explained to them and their parents via a reliable interpreter.

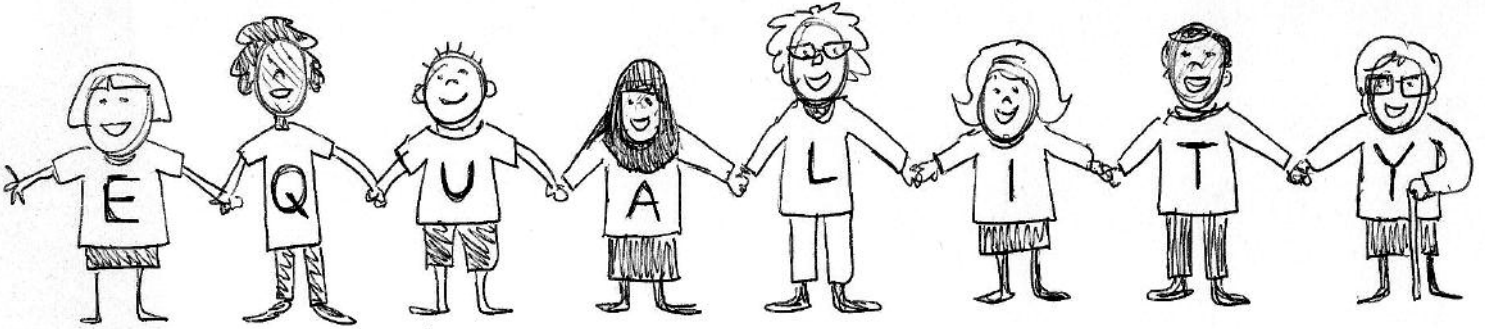
## Potential Solutions:

- ✓ Assist parents with relevant paperwork and application forms
- ✓ Introduce pupils and parents to their local secondary school/increase their familiarity with it. This applies to premises, policies and practices
- ✓ Reassure them about safety and convey the benefits of secondary school education
- ✓ Provide additional support where needed in the early stages of secondary school attendance (to be continued until no longer necessary)
- ✓ Establish links or working relationships with the secondary schools most likely to take in pupils from your school. Similarly secondary schools should make links with their primary feeder schools. This will allow you to jointly co-ordinate how you both manage their transition. This work can be done alongside the TES
- ✓ Start preparing children for transition early on during Year 5 or earlier to reduce any anxiety around what to expect at secondary school. The more time children have to accept the idea that they will be moving to a new school after primary school, the more likely it may be that they can adapt to this change without distress
- ✓ Make transition into a special occasion worthy of celebration, like a rite of passage to enhance its appeal. Secondary school provides the context for a unique, character building chapter in a child's life. Primary schools have a key role to play in presenting this as an exciting new beginning as opposed to a sad ending
- ✓ Develop individualised 'transition plans' that take into consideration the particular needs of each child and the provision, and resources available at their new school. Some GRT families cannot afford a school uniform or access transport to take them to school. These are the types of needs that could be catered for by a robust plan
- ✓ Take families to visit the secondary school and tour the building. Give them the opportunity to meet/speak with staff and other pupils and participate in community engagement activities such as family learning sessions, celebration events, open evenings or coffee mornings. Offer a choice of these 'tasters' but remember to include options that can demonstrate how going to school can benefit pupils and parents
- ✓ Provide a 'starter pack' which includes all the information a child will need on arrival and materials created to mark the occasion, such as photographs
- ✓ Organise 'transition' days for groups of pupils to get a feel of their new school and experience taking part in lessons with Year 7 teachers and pupils at the school
- ✓ Secondary schools could establish a 'buddy' system whereby a pupil can support the GRT child through their first few weeks at the school (this could be an older GRT member of the school)
- ✓ Secondary school could consider a reduced timetable during the first week to minimise the intensity of the experience
- ✓ Secondary schools could contact the parent/carer with positive news about the first/second week of school and enquire as to how they feel the young person is settling in
- ✓ GRT role models (existing or former pupils) who have had a positive experience in secondary school could be very effective here. They can talk about their academic successes where these have been achieved, or offer advice on how to cope with situations pupils are likely to face in school. If they are still in school, especially the secondary school in question, they can act as mentors and offer peer support

The purpose of the above suggestions is to make transition as comfortable as possible for GRT families, without creating an unsustainable dependency which could jeopardise attendance if resources are no longer available.



# Embedding Equality: A Whole School Approach



This section is intended to provide practical tips and activities to begin embedding a culture of inclusion for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) children within your school environment. This section cannot pretend to know your school, or to know the often complex identities of the children within your care; therefore many of the suggestions will need to be tailored to your specific school, to the young people and to your geographical location.

Equality is often misinterpreted as sameness, that as long as we treat all of our young people the same, then equality will reign. We know however that many, if not all young people have needs that are specific to their identities, be it linguistic, to do with a disability, their socio-economic status or their culture and ethnicity. Therefore to truly enable equality we must recognise the diversity in our school and treat each young person according to their needs. In ignoring the particular identities of young people we may also be sending out a message that their identity is not valued or is somehow shameful. It could also create an environment where discrimination and racism on the grounds of difference are missed or even supported.

***Recognising and respecting pupils' identities, stories and backgrounds helps them to feel secure and self-confident. Children who feel safe, comfortable and included in their environment are in the optimum state to learn.<sup>2</sup>***

For Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children to feel included in your school it means assessing the whole environment and critiquing the way in which your school operates with a preparedness to change some of what you do. Change can sometimes be met with resistance and a perception that you are treating one group more favourably than another. This resistance should be met with patience and training for staff so that they understand the societal conditions which lead Gypsy and Traveller communities to be one of the most marginalised and socially excluded groups in Wales and England (Estyn, 2011)<sup>3</sup>. This will help staff to fully understand the barriers that exist when accessing education for some of these diverse groups. Staff need to be confident about the direction of change so that they invest in the strategies. They need to be convinced and know that inaction can replicate the conditions of exclusion that some of these groups meet in society.

***“With integration, the child fits into the school. With inclusion, the school adjusts to the child.”***

*Primary Headteacher*

## Hearing the voices of young people

To truly inform how you make your school environment more equal for all pupils, but particularly those from minority communities, you must know how young people experience your school and have a genuine interest in using their suggestions to implement change. Wales is the first country in the United Kingdom to embed the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into legislation, meaning a rights based approach to decision making emanates from the highest echelons of Welsh power. The impetus for pupil voice to be central to the decisions you take stems from Article 12 of the UNCRC.

**Article 12**  
*Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.*



**Tip:** A good practice guide on pupil participation can be found at: [www.pupilvoicewales.org.uk](http://www.pupilvoicewales.org.uk)

### Reflection

- Are there members of the GRT communities (or other minority groups) present on your student council?
- Are you providing young people with the opportunity to anonymously say how they feel about their school?
- Are you implementing the thoughts and words of young people in the decisions you take in school?
- Does your pupil participation work comply with the Pupil Voice Wales 'National Children and Young People's Standards'?

### Note the 7 standards are;

1. **Information** - which is easy for children and young people to understand
2. **It's Your Choice** - enough information to make good choices
3. **No Discrimination** - every child and young person has the same chance to participate
4. **Respect** - your opinion will be taken seriously
5. **You get something out of it** - you will enjoy the experience
6. **Feedback** - you will find out what difference your views have made
7. **Improving how we work** - adults will ask you how they can improve how they work for the future



**Activity:** You could use focus groups with a mixture of year groups to inform your consultation with pupils. Focus groups allow you to ask more probing questions. Young people from minority communities may want the opportunity to talk about their school environment without majority groups being present.

<sup>2</sup> Richardson, R and Miles, B 'Racist Incidents and bullying in Schools: how to prevent them and how to respond when they happen'. (2008)

<sup>3</sup> Estyn 2011 'The education of Gypsy Traveller pupils: An update on provision in secondary schools', March. Cardiff: Estyn publications.



**Tip:** You could provide a 'pupil voice box' where young people are able to write their thoughts and feelings about the school. This could be monitored by a lead member of staff in conjunction with the school council and termly updates could be given to pupils about action taken.

Your equality objectives will in part be organisationally defined, however the ideas and action should be informed by the young people themselves, no equality objective should be based on assumptions.

***“Nothing about me without me”***

**Tip:** Could your school become a rights respecting school? For more information finding out how your school could receive the award visit [www.unicef.org.uk/rrsa](http://www.unicef.org.uk/rrsa)



## The School Environment

Because some GRT groups are part of a transient culture and may experience many schools in one academic year it is important that the school feels welcoming from the very moment the young person and parent/carer enters the school. The following activities may be useful for one or more members of staff to start the process of reflecting on the school environment.

**Activity: Diversity Diary** (Adapted from an activity by Heather Smith, University of Newcastle)

A member of staff is given the opportunity to imagine they are a pupil from a GRT community (please note that this activity can also be carried out in relation to other minority communities in your school). The teacher is asked to consider everything; the posters on the walls, the resources in the classroom, the messages given out by staff, the play equipment, the school displays and information boards. Ask them to consider “is this school welcoming to me?”, “do I feel included?”, “what messages am I being given?”, “how do staff relate to me?”, “do I have people to play with?”. The member of staff should record their thoughts in a diary over the duration of a week in the school and the findings should contribute to the schools Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Objectives and their overall inclusion strategy.



**Activity: Walking in the Pupils Shoes** (Adapted from an activity by Jane Davies, University of Sunderland)

A teacher is given two copies of the statements on pg 27 and asked to consider the experiences of two different children in the school. Child 1 is from a **majority** ethnic group and Child 2 is from a **minority** ethnic group (specifically a Gypsy, Roma or traveller group). Imagining they are the child the teacher should use the happy and sad faces on pg 27 to position how true each statement is for the pupil. This activity can be used by an individual teacher to reflect upon the school environment or in staff training.







**Caution:** It is almost impossible to be able to 'walk in somebody else's shoes', however we very rarely consider what our environment is like for people from minority communities, this activity therefore has its limits and should not be used instead of gathering young people's thoughts.



**Activity:** If done in safety, this activity could be used with young people in your school as an assessment of how they feel about their own experience. This could be done via an online or paper document. It is not recommended that you ask young people to imagine they are another pupil but rather ask them to think about their own school experience in relation to how true the following statements are...



|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| I feel safe when I come to school.  | I like it when my parent/s/carer comes in to school.             | My teacher/s talk to me about my life outside school.                               |
| I am made to feel that the school is interested in me and understands my cultural background.                 | I see words in my home language around the school.               | I am made to feel that I am an important part of the school community.              |
| The books we read in school feature children who are like me /are about things which are relevant to my life. | I am happy to play with anyone at playtime.                      | I understand the school rules and its expectations of me, and I behave accordingly. |
| I talk to my mum/dad/carer about what I do at school and they are interested and keen that I do well.         | I try never to miss school unless I am ill.                      | My teachers talk to my parent/s/carer about my time at school.                      |
| Sometimes I need extra help and the school helps me to understand by providing extra support.                 | My mum and dad enjoy coming to special events at the school.     | I find school a fun and exciting place to be.                                       |
| When I have a problem I feel that my teachers listen to my point of view.                                     | I have opportunities to make my views heard when I am in school. | I am comfortable to be me when I am at school. I feel accepted and welcomed.        |

| Child 1   | Child 2  |
|---|--|
|  Very True       |  Very True       |
|  Not True At All |  Not True At All |



**Caution:** Staff may not be very confident in talking about cultural differences as they may be worried about causing offence or getting things wrong about communities they feel they know little about. This unease can be picked up on by children. Each school should strive to create a community whereby diversity is seen as the norm and teachers and pupils alike are confident talking about their differences. It is important therefore that staff are asked their opinions about what their training needs are and what concerns they have in engaging with all pupils. It is helpful if there is an anonymous way of doing this so that staff can be free and open about what help/support they may require. Please note however, that if a member of staff does not recognise their own training needs in relation to promoting equality it does not necessarily mean that there are none.



## Activity: Embedding Equality

Schools across Wales are involved in promoting equality and tackling racism. Much time and attention is taken to celebrate the differences and explore similarities between groups. Young people are taking part in extremely exciting events that are devised with very good intentions.

**First**, ask the staff members to think about all of the **positive action they already take** in school, to think about all of the ways in which your school tries to promote equality throughout its ethos. Make a list of all of your ideas.

**Next** the participants will reflect on some of the unintended consequences of common practice. They will think of ways in which they could make their practice better. Each statement could be considered in staff training. Staff are asked to place the statements into one of three columns: **Good Practice**, **Proceed with Caution** and **Inappropriate**. For the purposes of this toolkit guidance notes have been provided and can be shared in training.

### Statements

**1 Pupils learn about the contributions of many cultures to the development of science and mathematics and their use in all societies / Good Practice**

**2 Literature and drama in a range of genres from a variety of cultures is used / Good Practice**

**3 Children who speak English as an Additional Language are taught that English is the only language that should be used in school / Inappropriate**

*There is a broad consensus that a ban on the speaking of languages other than English in school is inappropriate. It is understood that for many curriculum subjects, to be academically successful, a proficiency in the English language is key. However there is concern over restrictions being placed on those learners who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) or English as a Second Language (ESL). The perceived challenges that result from languages other than English being spoken in school need to be carefully considered and balanced with the human rights of the young people speaking languages of their choice during recreation time at school. A policy that bans young people from speaking a language that is more comfortable may also send the message that their language is not valued by the school.*

**4 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children are asked to explain their culture to other pupils in their class / Inappropriate**

*It is recognised that young people in your classroom can offer a richness of experiences that will enhance their fellow pupils' education, that they are a school's greatest resource. However any sharing of a pupil's culture and background must be a gift rather than a demand. Asking a young person who may be the only Gypsy, Roma or Traveller child in the class, to explain their culture may apply unwanted pressure to the child and would be considered as inappropriate. There may also be the assumption that this young person can speak on behalf of a community which does nothing to reduce the gross generalisations of these homogenised groups. Any offering of a child's experience needs to be framed in a way that makes clear that they only speak on behalf of themselves and not an entire community. If however the whole class is asked if anyone would like to talk about their culture and a child from a minority community offers and there is a culture of safety and appreciation of diversity, this would be good practice.*

**5 The terms 'they' and 'we' are used when discussing difference in culture and belief / Inappropriate**

When talking about differences in culture, it is often easy for teachers to slip into the 'they' and 'we' narrative. This would be considered inappropriate. Take for example the following sentence: "Gypsies live in caravans and they travel, while we live in houses." Whilst it is true that some Gypsies live in caravans and travel, we cannot say this is true about the entire group, some of course will live in houses and not travel at all. We also cannot assume we know the identities of all of the young people in the class and therefore what do we mean when we talk about 'we'? Such broad generalisations can encourage the view that 'other' people are strange and different from 'us'. Small changes can make a big difference, substituting the word 'they' for 'some' becomes more accurate.

**6 Maths activities, tasks, games, problems and examples reflect the multicultural nature of society and relate to pupils' everyday experiences / Good Practice**

**7 A diversity day is held in the autumn term, to explore Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Culture / Proceed with Caution**

This can be a very good starting point and a very worthwhile activity, but it is important that this does not happen in isolation. The content of the day is also important. What constitutes a 'Diversity Day'? What messages are we sending out about Gypsy, Roma & Traveller culture, when we know there is a vast amount of diversity in and between these supposed groups? Ask yourself "What messages will the young people take from today?" There is sometimes a perception that only people from minority communities are diverse but compared to whom? Young people who are not Gypsy, Roma or Traveller also have a huge amount of cultural diversity and therefore we should not frame our conversations to present a stark comparison between GRT and 'others' i.e. assume diversity only exists in minority communities, and place all non GRT individuals into one homogenous group. This practice is therefore Proceed with Caution.

**8 Children are encouraged to explore and value their own cultures and those of other people / Good Practice**

**Reflection:** Think about all of the identities in the school on your Diversity Day, could you celebrate them all in a creative way?



**Caution:** Think too about the activities that the young people take part in, are they activities that are born out of stereotypical aspects of a groups culture? E.g drawing pictures of 'Vardo's' or making a mock 'wedding dress'.

**Sometimes 'cultural diversity' is presented as 'other', as 'exotic' or in a slightly patronising way. Such practice is not acceptable and learners should understand and accept diversity as a normal part of everyday life.**

*Unity and Diversity*


For more activities to help with staff training please see Show Racism the Red Card's **Guidance for Initial Teacher Trainers** visit [www.theredcard.org](http://www.theredcard.org) click on the **Teachers Area, Resources**. Check the website too for upcoming teacher training in Wales.



## Embedding Equality within the Curriculum

To truly enable equality, young people from all backgrounds and cultures need to see themselves reflected in what they learn. To fully engage in the curriculum young people need to see that it is relevant to them and their lives. This is especially true if you are from a minority community. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children are rarely referenced in the curriculum in a 'normalised' way. Very often their lives are spoken about as a separate entity to what is learned, either in special lessons or as something different to the 'norm'. Just because a culture or tradition takes place less frequently or the communities are less in numbers does not mean they are not normal. The Welsh Government has produced an excellent document to support schools in embedding GRT inclusion throughout the curriculum, *Travelling Together* includes comprehensive guidance for teachers to be used in schools across Wales.

You can access Travelling Together at [www.learning.wales.gov.uk](http://www.learning.wales.gov.uk) and click on the **Resource Library**



***The aim is not to have separate lessons that are specifically about Gypsies and Travellers, but rather to integrate resources identified into the general context of learning that takes place.***

*Travelling Together*

Comprehensive Curriculum Audits which look to promote equality in the school curriculum are located in the Welsh Government document Unity and Diversity which can also be found at [www.learning.wales.gov.uk](http://www.learning.wales.gov.uk)

There are many opportunities which would allow you to reflect Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people within what you already do, however this is heavily reliant on your school having resources that include a diversity of people.

### Reflection

- Are there people from GRT communities reflected in the books young people can read?
- Are GRT people referenced when discussing significant historical events?



**Tip:** For a list of books and other resources which feature Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people please visit the National Association of Teachers of Travellers+ Other Professionals where you will find a comprehensive e-shop. [www.natt.org.uk](http://www.natt.org.uk)

**Note:** Unless teachers specifically mention the existence of minority communities in whatever they teach, young people can be left with a sense that the group they belong to was not present and have no relevance in the history of the nation.



## Example: Teaching about the Holocaust

Each school at some point will teach about the atrocities of the holocaust as it has immense historical significance and considerable contemporary relevance, not least because it showed the most extreme consequences of human prejudice.

It is estimated that between 500,000 and 1.5 million GRT people were murdered in many parts of the Nazi empire, chiefly through mass shootings, although several thousands were sent to concentration camps. It cannot be right that we negate the fact that the fate of European Roma in some ways paralleled that of the Jewish people. Their history cannot be missing.

**Note:** It is important when teaching about all of the persecuted groups that they are not just seen as victims, but also people who were involved in resistance and rescue activities.



**Caution:** Young people need to understand that before the process of systematic persecution the target group had a life and an existence. Young people should therefore be given the opportunity to learn about GRT communities across Europe before their extermination. We do not want to leave young people with the impression that such atrocities occur simply because of the weakness of a persecuted group.



**Note:** The term holocaust has become the standard word used to describe a specific historic event: the murder of approximately six million Jewish women, men and children by Nazi Germany and its collaborators during the Second World War, and therefore caution needs to be taken when using this specific word in relation to other persecuted groups.



**Tip:** Talking and teaching about genocide and particularly the Holocaust can be very difficult. It is essential that teachers avoid perpetuating stereotypes and giving a sanitised, oversimplified account of how humans can commit such acts. It is strongly recommended that you visit the Holocaust Educational Trust website for practical guidance tools for this topic. [www.het.org.uk](http://www.het.org.uk)



## GRT History Month (GRTHM)

Whilst it is recognised that the most effective way to promote inclusion is through embedding equality throughout the curriculum, it is also necessary to take positive action to redress the widespread ignorance and historical amnesia about the contributions of GRT groups to Welsh history and to the history of the world. Raising awareness about these communities in a way that is positive, concentrated and that elevates their achievements will mean that pupils who are part of GRT communities may see themselves reflected in history and have their self-esteem raised.

Your school could plan activities to run throughout the month, hold competitions, have external speakers from GRT communities, invite historians who specialise in GRT history to visit the school and much more. **Please note: GRTHM runs throughout June**

**Caution:** Sometimes there can be resentment levelled by both staff and children at events dedicated to recognising minority communities like Black History month and GRTHM. If people are unaware of the structural, contemporary and historical racisms that occur which have resulted in gross inequalities, then you can see why this resentment has arisen. It is therefore extremely important that such events are explained sensitively to all pupils. Young people and adults from majority communities may not have considered that the achievements of majority communities are present in all that is taught and celebrated.



For more information about GRTHM visit [www.grthm.natt.org.uk](http://www.grthm.natt.org.uk)

# Recognising and Responding to Racism in School

In my school all the boys out of year 6 call us dirty gypsos and I dont like it.

This section is designed to begin exploring what racism looks like in your schools and to look for practical ways to respond appropriately. Whilst the examples that are given relate to incidents where GRT children are the target, the conditions which allow racist incidents to occur are similar for other aspects of a person's ethnicity.

## The Barriers to promoting Equality and Tackling Racism:

Below are some of the common misconceptions about why schools need to engage proactively in anti-racism strategies in their school.

### *“But, surely racism is not an issue nowadays?”*

There is a perception that racism is an issue that has been dealt with, that it was something that went away with the introduction of equalities legislation. Unfortunately, many communities in Wales are frequently targets of racism, with 37,484 racist hate crimes recorded in 2013/14 in Wales and England and 88,000 racist incidents were recorded in British Schools between 2007 and 2011. We know that these statistics are merely the tip of the iceberg as many hate crimes and racist incidents go unreported.

### *“We don't have any Gypsy, Roma or Traveller Children”*

There is sometimes a feeling that anti-racism work should only be carried out if the school is diverse or if there are a large number of pupils from a minority community at the school. In areas with little diversity people often have increased levels of “learned misinformation” (Gaine:2005) <sup>4</sup> about people. It could be argued that anti-racism education is even more important in these schools. Not only should we ensure that young people are aware of their prejudices and provide guidance to unpick them but they should also be being prepared for a life outside of their town or immediate community. It is very important to remember too that many GRT pupils will not disclose their identity for fear of being targeted, and therefore you cannot be sure that you know the cultural identities of everybody in your class.



## ***“Shouldn’t we just treat racist bullying in the same way as other bullying?”***

Of course many of the behaviours that exist with other types of bullying also exist with racist bullying. However racism is seen as particularly difficult for the target because of the way the abuse is symbolic of an attack not only on the individual but the community they belong to. Racism has a long history, affecting millions of people. People have been seriously harmed, injured and murdered, on a scale which cannot be compared to other forms of abuse, such as an attack on a person’s weight, height or hair colour.

## ***“I don’t need this information or training, I am not racist”***

Everyone is affected by external influences and every teacher brings a set of cultural norms and practices into the classroom, which can influence their conscious and subconscious behaviour and attitudes (Ross, 2002: 2). If teachers are not aware of the unconscious prejudice and stereotypes that they carry and are not empowered with tools to allow them to reflect on these, it can result in negative outcomes for the young people in their care. If teachers are prepared to acknowledge their prejudices and do something about them, i.e. request training, this is a much more powerful position to be in.

## **What is a Racist Incident?**



### **Activity**

Teachers may have taken part in the completion of the schools Strategic Equality Plan and may be aware of the schools equality objectives. They may also have a good understanding of the Equality Act, yet they may still be unsure about what constitutes a racist incident and why racist incidents must be recorded. This activity will help teachers understand how to recognise a racist incident and how to respond appropriately. Guidance notes have been provided.

1. Ask participants to consider what they believe to constitute a racist incident and ask them to write down any ideas and thoughts onto post it notes. After receiving feedback share the following definition with participants.

#### **The definition of a racist incident is:**

**‘Any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person’**

2. Allow some time for reflection and ask participants how they feel about using this as a definition in their school?



**Note:** It is important to explain at this point that this is a working definition and would signal the start of an investigation. For behaviour or actions to be deemed racist there would have to be supporting evidence.

<sup>4</sup> Gaine, C (2005) “We’re All White Thanks”

## Common Challenges to the Definition:



***“The definition is really broad”***

*The definition is intentionally broad. It is designed to encourage people to report racism should they see, feel or hear it. The definition invites people to come forward in the knowledge that they will be taken seriously. When complex human situations are involved there is no way there could be a guide book of all of the incidents that would be considered as racist.*

***“Is there not the potential that this definition could be abused, that people could play the ‘racism card’?”***

*Each and every societal system is open to abuse. However systems cannot be built for those that seek to abuse them. Racist incidents in school and racist hate crime is notoriously under-reported. A teacher who is from a majority community may not consider a situation to be a racist incident because of their own world view and everyday experiences as being part of a majority group. It is difficult to understand the potency and power of racism if you have never experienced it.*

***“Why is there no mention of intention? Why is perception stressed?”***

*Intention is not relevant in defining the existence of prejudice. Even if a pupil or member of staff did not intend their behaviour to be racist does not mean that racism does not exist. The most pertinent question which needs to be asked is ‘what are the potential consequences of allowing such a comment/language/behaviour to exist in our school, what environment is this creating for our pupils?’ Intention may become relevant when assessing if there are any punishments or sanctions which need to be issued because of the behaviour.*

***“If nobody appeared to be upset should I still take action?”***

*Yes. The definition of a racist incident does not require an immediate target, the emphasis should be on the potential consequences of an action.*

3. Next explain to the participants that ‘any incident that is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person’ should be recorded in school.

4. Ask the participants why they think racist incidents should be recorded in school.

**Points to draw out of discussion:**

- Schools need to be able to identify any patterns to racist incidents.
- It allows schools to monitor the success of any strategies they have put in place to prevent or reduce racism.
- To identify training needs for teachers, pupils and school staff.
- It demonstrates a positive ethos where all pupils are valued and racism and discrimination are not accepted.

**Note** In its publication *Respecting Others: Bullying around race, religion and culture*: (2011), the Welsh Government identifies best practice in monitoring and recording incidents of bullying:

***“Most schools have mechanisms for recording incidents of bullying. Monitoring incidents of bullying enables a school to identify patterns of behaviour and the extent of bullying, and then take pro-active steps to challenge it. It is best practice that schools record all incidents of bullying, as well as specific types of bullying, including bullying around race, religion and culture. Schools that use monitoring processes are able to modify their bullying policies to respond to specific trends and issues.”***

Document can be accessed at [www.gov.wales](http://www.gov.wales)

5. Next allow the participants to put this into practice. Use the following scenarios to explore your potential responses. Hand out the blank racist incident form (**Appendix 3**) and ask participants to consider the following:

- What action needs to be taken immediately in relation to potential target and perpetrator?
- Does anything need to be done in the longer term?
- Would your school record this as a racist incident? If not, why not?
- Consider the ‘Red flags’ (responses that may escalate the conflict).

**Note:** Please refer to the guidance notes in **Appendix 4** for suggested good practice.

**Scenario 1:** You overhear a pupil say the following in relation to a child looking messy (both non-GRT pupils): ***“Errrrrrr...you look like a gypsy”***

**Scenario 2:** You are in conversation with a colleague in the staff room discussing the progress of a pupil (Jane, a Roma pupil) when your colleague states ***“I wouldn’t like to explain that to her mother, she will probably put a curse on you”***

**Scenario 3:** ***“Shut up you Gyppo”*** Comment heard in class directed at an Irish Traveller pupil


**Scenario 4:** Comment made by a Welsh pupil to a Czech Roma Pupil: ***“Why don’t you go back to where you come from and stop stealing our jobs”***



**6. Summing up:** The participants may have heard or had to deal with similar scenarios in their school context and on reflection they may not have dealt with it in the most appropriate way. Taking time to reflect on the cumulative impact of prejudice and discrimination away from the ordinary business of a busy school day is essential, but be prepared for potential conflict within the session. (Refer to group rules and the creation of a Safe Space)

**To conclude:**

- Inaction can mean that prejudice can escalate, it can send a message to pupils that you do not take racism very seriously
- Attendance and attainment will continue to be lower than the average if racism/discrimination is allowed to go unchallenged
- Schools have a huge amount of power in sending a message that they care about an equal society. If teachers consistently challenge racism, no matter how 'small' they think the incident may be, they can reinforce this message



**Reflection:** Racism often occurs when adult supervision is lessened. Consider, what adult supervision do you have at lunch time, playtime or before and after school? Are you including lunch time supervisors in any training that is delivered so they know how to respond and record racist incidents?

**Further Activity:** Please see **Appendix 5** 'Sweeping the racism away' for a more detailed activity which can be done with young people or adults in exploring the consequences of not challenging racism and how hate can escalate.

## Racist Language

**Common anxieties:** There is often a feeling that language relating to ethnicity is constantly changing, a fear that a person may be accused of racism should they use a wrong word and a sense that the way in which people wish to be described changes over night. Language, however, changes over a long period of time, words become racist because of the way in which they are used throughout history. If a word is constantly used as a form of abuse, like the word 'Gyppo', the word gathers power and can feel like a weapon being used against an individual and a community.

For a comprehensive guide to terminology relating to all of the protected characteristics see **Diversity in Diction: Equality in Action** accessible via the Show Racism the Red Card website at [www.theredcard.org](http://www.theredcard.org)

**Tip:** When exploring language with young people it is important to use the words that you are trying to educate about. Young people will have heard the words you are exploring in society and it will be rare that you are introducing them to anything new. Of course it is essential that a safe environment is created and the words are not used unnecessarily.



## Anti-racism education

Celebrating the positive aspects of diversity is important, so too is embedding equality within the curriculum and the school environment. However this must go hand in hand with acknowledging the negative attitudes and behaviours which exist in school. Providing opportunities for young people to understand racism and how it manifests in their own personal prejudices and how this subsequently plays out in school is essential if they are to change. It is not easy for teachers to know best how to talk about racism with young people. Conflict can arise and tension can exist. To support you in facilitating anti-racism activities with young people please go to [www.theredcard.org](http://www.theredcard.org) and download the teacher's Education packs which are available in both Welsh and English. They are packed with activities to support you in facilitating anti-racism lessons and projects.

## Appendix 1

# Creating a safe space

In order to share their views, beliefs, experiences and ideas in an open and honest way, it is important that teachers, young people, parents and other members of the community feel comfortable. When participants feel 'safe' i.e. free from anxiety and attack, they are more likely and able to contribute. During discussions around racism and the right to or need for inclusion, problematic attitudes and challenging emotions can often come to the fore. Negative stereotypes and feelings such as anger, frustration, shame and sadness may be shared. It is useful to negotiate and agree ground rules that communicate expected standards of behaviour and ensure safety and respect for all participants.

As you facilitate these discussions, you will need to pay attention to how people respond; allow time for them to process their thoughts and feelings, and provide support when needed.

**Here are examples of some useful ground rules:**

**Respect others:** You may hear opinions that may be different or new, or with which you disagree. As you participate and interact, try to take in new information without judgement and to keep an open mind. Make sure that your words and body language reflect a respectful attitude towards others. Learn by listening to others.

**Own your own values:** Speak using 'I', 'I feel' or in 'in my experience' avoid saying 'you should' or 'you all think that'. If you are going to disagree with something, challenge the opinion or the behaviour, not the person.

**Be open and honest:** Ask questions without fear of judgement, there is no such thing as a silly question, it is important to try and understand as much as possible. If you are not confident to ask questions publicly then speak to the facilitator privately.

**Respect confidentiality:** Everything said in the room stays in the room. When sharing personal anecdotes, make sure to avoid using real names, don't disclose any personal information about anyone else. Carefully consider what personal information you choose to share.

**Share air time:** You are encouraged to express your ideas and opinions, take it in turns to contribute, help create a safe space where everyone is encouraged and feels comfortable to speak, don't monopolise the discussions. You are not obliged to speak, its fine to 'pass'.

It's important to consider how you will respond if participants fail to follow these rules. We advise that you negotiate and agree this with the group in advance and explicitly ask for their support in maintaining the safe space.

# Gathering Voice



It is essential that you seek the perspectives of those who you will be working alongside in creating an inclusive environment for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children or in fact any pupil at your school. Doing this will provide you with an insight into what position, in terms of values and understanding, different people are starting from, and what attitudinal barriers need to be overcome. This can be done as part of an overall discussion amongst your school community (pupils, parents and staff) about how to make the school more inclusive. It can be incorporated within usual school activity, as well as specifically designed activities e.g. a community engagement event organised in partnership with statutory and or voluntary and community sector agencies. Below are some suggestions on how this could be done.

**Caution:** Negative attitudes towards particular groups may be revealed during this process. However the purpose is not simply to provide a platform for these views, but to acknowledge their existence in an effort to then consider how to counter or compensate for them.



## Pupil voice



### Activity: Burning questions

Hand out slips of paper to each young person in your class. Ask them to write down any questions, concerns or frustrations they have about racism or issues surrounding racism.

Explain that they are permitted to write down racist language if that's what their question or concern is regarding. Ask the young people to be as open and honest as they can and instruct them not to put their name on the paper as you would like this to be done anonymously in the hope that they will feel comfortable writing down their genuine questions and feelings without fear of judgement or punishment.

This activity is very useful as a baseline assessment for you, as it will identify the young people's existing prejudices and pre-conceived ideas about different groups in society. Allowing young people the opportunity to freely and anonymously express their ideas is extremely important as they will often be resistant to voicing their true feelings about an issue for fear of punishment and judgement. Provoking them to be honest and protecting them with anonymity will inform you and illustrate a clear picture of the kind of work that needs to be done.

If you are teaching about anti-racism for just one lesson, be sure to answer these 'burning questions' at the end of the lesson (whilst still ensuring anonymity). To increase the young people's participation in this, it is a good idea to throw some of the questions back at them, to see if anyone in the group already knows the answer and would like to share it with the group. You do not need to be an expert in anti-racism to deliver this activity effectively – if you are in doubt as to the correct answer for a question, use it as a learning tool for both you and your students and find out the answer together using the internet or any other resources you have to hand.

If you are teaching about anti-racism for an extended period of time, you could collect in their questions and use them to inform your whole body of work with the young people.





## Activity: True and False

A group (class) is read out a statement then given the choice of whether to stand by a sign marked either True or False based on whether they believe the statement or not.

Here are some sample statements:

- **Racism is a problem in our school**
- **Our school welcomes all pupils**
- **I know what to do if I see, hear and feel racism**
- **I know who to go to if I want to talk about something difficult**
- **Everybody thinks our school is friendly**
- **I have fun at school**

Some of the more difficult and probing questions, for example about how safe a child feels or if they have experienced bullying in school, may not be appropriate questions to ask in front of other pupils. A safe, private space may be better for this, say in a questionnaire.

## Activity: Sentence Starters

Young people are given the start of a sentence which they are encouraged to finish with their own ideas.



### Example sentence starters:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • The best thing about my school is<br>.....                            | • One piece of advice I would give to improve play/break times would be<br>..... |
| • The worst thing about my school is<br>.....                           | • One piece of advice I would give to improve school clubs would be<br>.....     |
| • My favourite time of the day in school is<br>.....                    | • One piece of advice I would give to improve homework would be<br>.....         |
| • The time of day I like the least in school is<br>.....                | • My school would be more interesting to me if<br>.....                          |
| • One piece of advice I would give to improve lessons would be<br>..... | • I feel happiest in school when<br>.....  |

The statements should be altered to capture what you want to know from the young people.



## Activity: Circle Time

Circle time each morning could take on a different 'theme' in an attempt to gather voice more informally. Young people could be prompted with discussion starters and their ideas could be captured on a flip chart.

Discussion starters could include:

- **How could our class/school welcome new people?**
- **How could we make our school safe and enjoyable for everybody? What would this look like? What would need to happen?**
- **How could we learn about everybody's culture?**



### The role of the School Council

As democratically elected members and advocates on behalf of their fellow pupils, the School Council has an integral role to play in raising issues, receiving feedback from their fellow pupils and monitoring the progress of suggestions being implemented.

#### The School Council could:

- Present findings of surveys, circle time, burning questions and other gathering voice activities
- Keep students up to date with changes being implemented
- Be consulted on their specific ideas for making school a more equal place
- Create an Equality group from interested school council members to help design community events, progress 'buddy' schemes, etc



**Tip:** For more information about listening to learners please visit: [www.learning.wales.gov.uk](http://www.learning.wales.gov.uk)  
Click on Resource Library, browse all and then search for Listening to Learners

## Staff Voice

Successful and sustainable inclusion of GRT pupils requires a commitment from the whole staff team. Everyone has a role to play in making children, young people and parents feel welcome, safe and adequately supported. Skills audits can be used to determine to what extent staff are ready and able to address the needs of GRT pupils by highlighting relevant skills, knowledge, understanding and experience amongst the team. Once the results of staff audits have been assessed, suitable training can then be provided to resolve any skill shortages.

When gathering staff voice, you should aim to ascertain what they think about the current school inclusion provision, if they have any fears, anxieties or resentments about the direction of change, what ideas they can contribute to progress and what training needs they may have.

**Activity:** The following questions may be useful to include in a staff survey:



## Including GRT pupils

Use this space to provide us with your honest thoughts/opinions on how we can make our school a more inclusive environment, with a particular focus on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

What do you believe to be the biggest barriers to attendance and academic achievement for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children in our school?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

What practical solutions do you think would contribute to lessening these barriers? (Think practically about things that are within your power to change)

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

What is our school currently good at in relation to including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils? Consider the whole school environment, lessons, play/break times, lunch times, our resources, extra-curricular activities, safety, celebrations etc.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

What provision or activities could make our school better?

.....  
.....  
.....

What resources would we need to implement your ideas?

.....  
.....  
.....

What training would you/other staff need to implement your ideas?

.....  
.....  
.....

What would be the biggest barriers that would prevent our school implementing your ideas?

.....  
.....  
.....

How could we overcome these barriers?

.....  
.....  
.....

Are there any skills you have which you think would be particularly useful to support our school being a more inclusive environment for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children?

.....  
.....  
.....

What examples of good practice have you seen elsewhere? Perhaps at a previous school you have worked at?

.....  
.....  
.....

Are there any particular worries or frustrations you have at the moment which you would like to share?

.....  
.....  
.....

Do you have anything else you would like to contribute?

.....  
.....  
.....



## Parent/ Carer Voice

Parents and carers are extremely important stakeholders in the process of gathering voice; they should be viewed as experts as they often know what is best for their child. Gathering the voices of parents however is often the most difficult and takes more time than colleagues or pupils to whom you have immediate access. It is especially difficult to gather the voice of those who are perhaps less trusting of the school community or intimidated by what may be perceived to be the 'authority' figure of a teacher. It is also recognised that relationships with parents and carers can take time and rely upon trust.

You will need to rely upon a mixed method of strategies, what works for one parent or carer may not work for another. Some parents may fill in surveys/questionnaires, but more informal conversations may be more advantageous and allow for more natural responses.

**Below are some tips which may help the process of gathering parental voice:**

- ✓ Provide informal opportunities to access school, drop in sessions may appear to be less intimidating than if you have 30 young people's parents/carers all at once
- ✓ Provide space on the school website for 'parent or carer views' so that they can express their ideas without talking to a teacher
- ✓ Make time to speak to parents before and after school in the playground (note this is easier in primary settings)
- ✓ Support Staff within the school may be better positioned to have conversations about how parents/carers feel about the school, there may be more balanced power relations
- ✓ Provide positive opportunities to showcase children's work, where informal conversations can take place about the school, curriculum topics and how the parent/carers feel about their child's progress
- ✓ Food can often be a good vehicle to engage parents, the sharing of food at events and occasions and may be a hook to get parents or carers through the door
- ✓ Newsletters/Website/Facebook page and other communications could seek out opinions as well as informing parents

**Note:** It is crucial that if informal conversations are taking place and invaluable information is being listened to, that there should be some way of recording this and sharing with other staff. It is also very important that if parents do offer suggestions they also see their ideas being implemented.



## Guidelines for effective outreach

- Meet people in an environment they are comfortable with
- Be respectful
- Listen to your community
- Build trust and relationships
- Get the word out in a non-stigmatising manner
- Offer services and information in a variety of locations (including on site) and at unconventional times, such as evening and weekends
- Make written information friendly and easy to understand
- Provide information in the primary language of those who will use the service
- Follow-up, follow-up, follow-up!

Scenario:

**Show Racism the Red Card**

**Action**

Immediate

Longer term

Would you record? (If not why not)

Red Flags (Triggers that may escalate the conflict)

**Scenario 1:** You overhear a pupil say the following in relation to a child looking messy (both non-GRT pupils): *“Errrrrr...you look like a gypsy”*

## Show Racism the Red Card

### Action

#### Immediate

- Respond calmly to the young person and explain that what they said is not acceptable, most importantly explain why the comment was not acceptable
- Ask the young person what they meant by looking like a ‘Gypsy’?
- Ensure those who may have heard the comment know that you are taking action and did not find it acceptable
- Affirm the target to make sure they are ok and that they know that you will deal with the issue

#### Longer term

- Further work about stereotyping and its dangers possibly with whole year group/school
- Work about the influence of the media and their inaccurate portrayal of GRT communities as dirty
- Ensure there are positive images of GRT groups displayed in the school
- Work on critical thinking with young people
- Reflect on the way pupils are taught about different cultural groups to ensure stereotypical ideas and generalisations are avoided

### Would you record? (If not why not)

Yes

### Red Flags (Triggers that may escalate the conflict)

- To call the young person a racist
- To make light of the situation may send a message to the target that you are on the side of the perpetrator

Although the specific wording/context has been amended, these are all incidents that Show Racism the Red Card has encountered. The advice provided is for guidance only and is based on our staff members’ experiences, current legislation and guidance from teaching unions and local government officials. You must always take into account your own professional judgement when considering an appropriate response.



**Scenario 2:** You are in conversation with a colleague in the staff room discussing the progress of a pupil (Jane, a Roma pupil) when your colleague states: *“I wouldn’t like to explain that to her mother, she will probably put a curse on you”*

## Show Racism the Red Card

### Action

#### Immediate

- Don’t ignore the comment; if you have a close relationship with the colleague you could challenge in a way that does not create too much conflict, questioning is a good way to stimulate discussion. Ask her/him ‘What do you mean put a curse on me?’
- Make it clear you do not agree

#### Longer term

- Discuss the comment with a member of SMT, request anti-racism training for the whole staff team
- Ensure all staff are aware of expected behaviour and that they are aware of the schools disciplinary procedures
- Try to facilitate discussion around the dangers of stereotypes and prejudice, as it is very difficult to detach these feelings from our actions and behaviour and this could lead to discriminatory practice and the creation of a hostile environment for some pupils

Would you record? (If not why not)

Yes

#### Red Flags (Triggers that may escalate the conflict)

- Calling the colleague racist
- Trying to embarrass them or belittle them

### Scenario 3: “Shut up you Gyppo”

Comment heard in class directed at an Irish Traveller pupil during an argument.

## Show Racism the Red Card

### Action

#### Immediate

- Respond calmly and explain to the perpetrator(s) that those words are not acceptable and can be very offensive
- Question the pupils to see if they understand what the words mean
- Explain to the pupils that the words have a long history and are often used as weapons against people and can be very hurtful and are racist even if used without malice
- Ensure anyone who may have overheard the comment understands that racist language is not allowed in school and that you are taking action
- Affirm the target; discreetly ask if they need time out with the support of an adult
- Follow up with the pupil to ensure they know action has been taken and the school treats this kind of behaviour very seriously
- Investigate what the argument was about

#### Longer term

- Inform SMT
- Reinforce the school’s position on racism; ensure that all pupils are aware of acceptable and unacceptable terminology
- Facilitate lessons about racism, including discussions about terminology and how allowing racist language can lay the foundation for more manifestations of racism like bullying, exclusion and abuse

### Would you record? (If not why not)

Yes

### Red Flags (Triggers that may escalate the conflict)

- Calling the pupil racist
- If it has been found that the pupil who used racist language was aggrieved and called names during the argument, ensure that this pupil knows that the other pupil will be spoken to, so that anger is not created out of a perception that it is one rule for ‘them’ and another rule for ‘us’. The behaviours of the two pupils need to be separated from the racist language used.

**Scenario 4:** Comment shouted by a Welsh pupil at a Czech Roma Pupil:  
“*Why don't you go back to where you come from and stop stealing our jobs*”

## Show Racism the Red Card

### Action

#### Immediate

- Respond immediately and tell the perpetrator that their comment is not acceptable, ask the perpetrator to leave the class
- Support and affirm the target
- Reinforce the schools position on racism
- Make sure any witnesses know that the incident will be dealt with and that that type of behaviour will not be tolerated
- Focus on the behaviour rather than the person

#### Longer term

- Inform tutors/heads of year/SMT
- Deal with any underlying issues
- Longer term support for target and guidance for perpetrator
- Work about stereotypes/ myths about immigration and employment
- Reinforce the school's policy on racism to whole class/year/school
- Inform parents, who do have the right to refer the case to the police if they wish

### Would you record? (If not why not)

Yes

### Red Flags (Triggers that may escalate the conflict)

- Calling the young person a racist
- Not explaining why the comment is so offensive and unacceptable
- Not dealing with any underlying issues
- Punitive action only



# Sweeping the Racism away



### Main Aims:

To examine how hate escalates and the difficulty of stopping the progression once it begins. To illustrate the relationship between the different forms (less and more severe) of racism. To encourage participants to see how changing their behaviour can make a huge contribution to the fight against racism.

### Delivery:

This can be done with staff and pupils. Hand out one sheet of blank paper to each participant, tell them to tear it in half. On one piece ask them to write down a racist incident that they have experienced or heard about first hand, perhaps at school or at a football game, it could be something like incorrect use of terminology. On the other piece ask them to write down another racist incident that they have heard about, perhaps on the news, in the papers or in a history lesson. For example the Holocaust, Transatlantic Slave Trade, the murder of Johnny Delaney etc.

Illustrate that there is a scale across the classroom, one side represents the least serious and the opposite side represents the most severe, encourage all participants to come up and place their two examples where they think they fit on the scale. Participants can move examples up or down the scale if they disagree with their current position.

Talk through the different examples of racism and question if there is any relationship between them. Physically move away all of the less serious incidents and ask participants if the more serious incidents (Deaths, physical assaults, genocide etc) would ever be possible without the rest? The only way we can stop and prevent further deaths, hate crime and genocide is by stopping the prejudice, name calling, racist jokes and apathy. Show the Pyramid of Hate (Pg 49), and discuss.

### Discussion:

- What factors cause hate to escalate?
- How can an individual stop the escalation? How can communities stop the escalation? (New laws, school policies, education)
- Could any of the sections of the pyramid (see Pg 49) happen in isolation?
- What is the relationship between the top and the bottom / two ends of the scale?
- What is the cost to the individual who doesn't act to challenge hate? What is the cost to the targets of hate? What is the result for society?

# Pyramid of Hate

## GENOCIDE

The deliberate systematic extermination of an entire people

## VIOLENCE

### Against people

- Threats
- Assault
- Terrorism
- Murder

### Against property

- Arson
- Desecration (violating the sanctity of a house of worship or a cemetery)

## DISCRIMINATION

- Employment Discrimination
- Housing Discrimination
- Educational Discrimination
- Harassment (hostile acts based on a person's race, religion, nationality, sexual orientation or gender)

## ACTS OF PREJUDICE

- Name calling
- Social avoidance
- Telling belittling jokes
- Ridicule
- Social exclusion

## PREJUDICED ATTITUDES

- Accepting stereotypes
- Not challenging belittling jokes
- Scapegoating (assigning blame to people because of their group identity)



## Extension / Alternative Activity:

Write up the following words: Genocide, Discrimination, Scapegoating, Hate Crime, Prejudice, and Stereotype, ensure that participants understand the meaning of the words.

**Genocide:** Systematic destruction or the attempted extermination of a group of people.

**Scapegoating:** Unfairly blaming an individual or group for circumstances that have varied causes.

**Stereotype:** An oversimplified generalisation about an entire group of people without regard for individual differences.

**Hate Crime:** A criminal act directed at an individual or property because of the victim's real or perceived ethnicity, gender, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, or disability.

**Prejudice:** A negative attitude towards a person or a group formed without examining individual characteristics.

**Discrimination:** To treat an individual or group of people unfairly because of a shared characteristic e.g. their skin colour sexual orientation, disability, sex or religion and belief etc.

**Give the participants, the following statements and ask them to consider which definition applies to each statement**

1. 'There has been an increase in crime and anti-social behaviour in our area; it will be because all the Gypsies that have moved in.' **Scapegoating**
2. It is estimated that between 500,000 and 1.5 million GRT people were murdered in many parts of the Nazi empire, chiefly through mass shootings, although several thousands were sent to concentration camps. **Genocide**
3. A parent who is Roma tries to register her child in a local school; the school explains that there are no places available. A friend of hers who is not Roma, enrolls her child in the same school later on that day. **Discrimination**
4. Johnny Delaney, a 15yr old Irish Traveller was beaten to death in Cheshire in 2003. When asked why they did it, the attackers replied "He deserved it, he was only a f\*\*\*\*\*g Gyppo". **Hate crime**
5. 'There is no way I would want to live anywhere near a Gypsy or Traveller, I don't really like them'. **Prejudice**
6. 'All Gypsies have ridiculous weddings, steal stuff, live illegally on land and don't pay any taxes'. **Stereotype**

Show participants the 'Pyramid of Hate' and discuss where each of the statements fits in.



# Outreach and Community Engagement



## Establish a working relationship with the Traveller Education Support Service

Local Authority Traveller Education Services (TES) are specialist agencies that lead on the provision of education and training for GRT children and young people in 18 of the local authorities in Wales. They offer support to parents, teachers and pupils and are often the bridge between GRT communities and schools. Due to their remit, TES staff are well placed to offer practice based guidance on how to effectively reach out to, engage and co-operate with GRT groups. We highly recommend they be your first point of reference during the initial planning of outreach and community engagement activities, and throughout your implementation.

## Pupil and parent focus groups

A focus group brings people together to discuss a specific subject or issue. They allow for an in-depth exploration and analysis of people's perspectives, and the exchange of ideas. These discussions can take place in class (for pupils) or during a meeting (for either pupils or parents). You may choose to target the settled community, GRT groups or both, providing that you acknowledge and respond to the potential for tension or conflict arising where any underlying prejudices between the two have not been explored and addressed in advance. Asking a cross section of pupils and parents for their views about the inclusion of GRT communities within your school, shows that you are interested in what they have to say and are prepared to listen. This can help to build the trust necessary to allow you to lead the process of GRT inclusion.

### Tip:

- Explain the purpose of the focus group/discussion and what you want to achieve.
- Agree ground rules and what happens when these are repeatedly ignored.
- Be careful to avoid creating a platform for prejudice and racism to go unchallenged, and/or trivialising the concerns of pupils and parents.
- Practise effective questioning as a useful facilitation skill during these discussions.



## Build relationships with GRT communities via outreach and community engagement activities

The purpose of building these relationships is to gain trust and generate the understanding and support that is needed for parents to regularly send their children to school. Many GRT parents have themselves had negative experiences of school and may not appreciate how formal schooling can benefit their child in the long term or is necessary for their way of life. This creates the need to reassure parents that adequate measures are in place to make the educational process engaging and appropriate, and to ensure that their child will receive fair treatment and protection from (prejudiced related) bullying.

There are many ways in which outreach work can be done and this depends on your specific goal, timeframe and resources. The general aim of outreach is to increase both access to, and the use, of a service. In this instance, the intention is to encourage GRT people (parents/children) to come to your school and actively participate in school life.

As part of your outreach activity, you will need to share information about your services and/or deliver directly to your targeted community. You want GRT parents to know what services your school can provide that will be of benefit to their family (school age children and where appropriate themselves) and ultimately feel ready, willing and able to make good use of these opportunities. To do this you will need to develop your own case specific understanding of these communities, so that you are able to tailor your information and activities to suit them. You may find that it is necessary to change attitudes and/or offer incentives for participation.

## Reflection:



**What can their child learn at your school that will help them later in life?**

**How can you help them with their child's education?**

**Below are some examples of outreach and engagement activities that can be done during your preparatory stage, and as part of an ongoing process.**

### Designate a lead worker

For consistency and quality, it is wise to identify someone within the staff team that is most suitable in terms of skills, knowledge, understanding and experience, whose remit it will be to co-ordinate your GRT outreach and engagement. This person could also be the main contact within your school for GRT pupils and parents. Ideally choose someone with GRT heritage, or with a specialist capacity in relation to GRT communities. They will be responsible for the planning, monitoring, recording and evaluation of this work.

### Visit the site

Be proactive and introduce yourself to GRT parents, carers and the wider community. Where possible, ask for permission, give advance notice and accompany someone who is familiar with the people who live on that particular site, such as a worker from the TES. Use these visits to distribute information and/or run family orientated or learning activities, such as a play session or workshop.

### Home visits

These apply to those GRT families that live in houses, particularly those of Roma origin. Where you have details of school age children within your catchment area, who are not attending school or are due to transition from primary to secondary, you can arrange to visit them to talk about what they can expect from your school and what your school expects from them.

## Getting your message out there

You may want to produce information that explains the benefits of participating in formal education and/or attending your particular school. Leaflets, flyers and posters can be distributed locally, and community members from the school and local site can be identified to spread positive messages in the surrounding area (community champions). Facebook and Twitter can often be used to distribute your message in the most immediate way. Wherever necessary have information translated into community languages and use visual representations to cater for varying levels of literacy. This approach is useful wherever you discover a cultural stigma is attached to school.

## Coffee mornings and open evenings

Allocate time for parents to come to the school and meet/speak with staff. This will familiarise them with your premises and give them an opportunity to express, discuss and potentially alleviate any concerns they may have. It also enables you to share information with them directly and facilitates ongoing contact during which information can be regularly exchanged, and familiarity and trust established. An informal drop-in style is most flexible. For effective communication, provide language support for those who need it wherever possible. Use reliable interpreters who will convey what is said accurately and not add or omit information at their own discretion.

## Local media

Media outlets can be used to promote your school's initiatives that target GRT communities, and the achievements of GRT pupils. You can approach local newspapers and radio stations and ask them to cover/run positive stories about your work with GRT communities or provide them with regular press releases. The intention here would be to spread the message that your school welcomes and values GRT children and young people, and respects their wider community. Positive stories in the local press will counter misinformation and negative stereotypes of GRT people that can cause tensions and conflict between them and the settled community, therefore contributing towards community cohesion.

## Events

You may decide to host a one-off event (or series of events) that targets GRT groups. This could be a family fun day with entertainment for all ages or a celebration of GRT pupils' achievements and cultures e.g. provide a platform for traditional music, food and dance as identified by your local community. Consultation and awareness raising exercises can be included in this.

## Specialised sessions

Stay and play, language and literacy sessions are other useful ways to engage parents in their child's schooling that can be adapted to target or meet the needs of GRT groups. These can be held on school premises or where practical, on a local site or community setting GRT people feel comfortable accessing.



## Working in Partnership

This approach allows you to tap into additional skills, knowledge and understanding, that can inform and enrich your outreach and community engagement. By working in partnership, you can often access information, advice, support and resources from others with an interest in, commitment or remit to, and/or experience of working alongside GRT communities. Statutory agencies such as educational welfare, family support services and the youth service may want to work alongside you, amongst others in the voluntary or community sector. We highly recommend becoming cognisant of the principles of effective partnership working.

Please see **Salford City Partnership Principles for Effective Partnerships** by visiting [www.partnersinsalford.org/principles-in-good-governance.htm](http://www.partnersinsalford.org/principles-in-good-governance.htm)

## Staff skills audits

These are a useful way to assess your existing human resources. They will help you to identify who within your workplace is most suitable to undertake and support this work.

## Attitudinal surveys

It is essential that you gain an understanding of the values, beliefs and perspectives relevant to GRT inclusion that exist within your school. These will inform conscious and unconscious behaviour and can indicate whether challenges may arise in cultivating a welcoming and supportive school environment for GRT children and young people. GRT groups have been subject to persecution, discrimination and are often negatively stereotyped.

You will need to examine attitudes towards equality and diversity within your school at all levels - amongst governors, staff, pupils and parents – if you want to be thorough and address any institutional or cultural barriers to GRT inclusion. These surveys will also highlight support for your work.



**Tip:** It has been noted that people need to hear about something three to seven times before they act. With this in mind, remember that your outreach activity needs to be varied and constant. As well as "Follow-up, follow-up, follow-up," another key phrase for an effective outreach program is "Repeat, repeat, repeat!" Similarly, community engagement is an ongoing and reflective process which makes use of different activities and methods, until the desired outcomes are achieved and sustained.

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**'Travelling Together: Resources to Promote the Integration of Gypsy and Traveller Culture into the National Curriculum'** Welsh Government (2014)

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**'Travelling to a Better Future: Gypsy and Traveller Framework for Action and Delivery Plan'** Welsh Government (2011)



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