

SECTION 18

Travelling Children

Warwickshire LEA is working in partnership with the West Midlands Consortium Service for Travelling Children and schools across the County to increase educational achievement and promote inclusion for Travelling Children in Warwickshire.

The West Midlands Consortium Education Service (WMESTC) supports Travelling families in finding a school place for their children and will support and advise schools with regard to cultural, educational and other issues in order to ensure a smooth transition into school for the Travelling pupil.

The Consortium's team of Advisory Teachers visit schools with Travelling Children on a regular basis, working with classroom teachers and others to provide information and advice and to work with individual pupils where necessary. The Consortium's Senior Field Welfare Officers focus on making contact with roadside families and highly mobile Travellers to ensure their inclusion and access to services. They work closely with the LEA in making visits to sites and in providing a co-ordinated approach to addressing the issues affecting Travelling families.

In addition to this support the LEA, in partnership with schools and the Consortium, also provides support for schools with Travelling Children with a peripatetic team of teaching assistants who work with class teachers to ensure that each pupil's educational needs are being met. In particular they focus on difficulties relating to learning delay due to their mobility and disrupted education.

The LEA recognises the importance of regular school attendance for these children who often have to overcome difficulties of learning delay due to their disrupted schooling. In order to focus further on this aspect of support an ESW with a specific remit to work with Travelling Families is to be appointed shortly.

Increasing efforts are being made by the ESWS to ensure that there is a greater take up of education by Travelling Children particularly in the secondary sector. Emphasis will be given to the age of transition between Years 6 and 7 in order to ensure a smooth transition to secondary school.

The DfES has recognised that Travelling Children are at great risk of underachievement and have set targets for increasing achievement and inclusion as follows:

- Nursery places for a 4 year old Traveller children whose parents want them
- 0 – 3 year olds to benefit from Sure Start programmes
- Increase in number of 11 year olds in school to reach national expectations of level 4 in literacy by 2002
- Increase over 3 years in Travelling children regularly attending at KS3 and KS4
- Work related leave for all Traveller children who desire it at KS4
- Increase in the number of Travelling children participating in further education

Our aim is to ensure that equal access and opportunities for all children and young people is a reality as well as an aspiration and we are looking forward to further developing our links with Travelling families, schools and others to achieve this aim.

Schools who are admitting or have Travelling Children on roll and who wish for specific advice, information or support should contact the consortium or the LEA (contact numbers below).

West Midlands Consortium Education Service for Travelling Children:
The Graiseley Centre, Pool Street, Wolverhampton, WV2 4NE.
Tel: 01902 714646. Co-ordinator: Ms Pat Holmes.

John Sullivan Principal Education Social Worker tel. 01926 412264

