

## **EDUCATION FOR TRAVELLING CHILDREN IN HEREFORDSHIRE**

Herefordshire Local Authority is member of the West Midlands Consortium Education Service for Travelling Children.

WMCESTC is a statutory agency dedicated to the access and inclusion of all Traveller children aged 3-19 into mainstream education throughout the West Midlands.

A priority of the Service's work, as directed by the Department for Education and Skills is supporting highly mobile children who may have no legal stopping place.

Herefordshire Council assists WMCESTC in its work with families by:

- ❑ Notifying WMCESTC of unauthorised encampments.
- ❑ Notifying WMCESTC of families taking up tenancies on Local Authority Caravan sites/ housing association accommodation.
- ❑ Conducting initial checks that encompass education needs health and general welfare, and subsequently informing relevant agencies.

Our joint commitment under the Children Act 2004 is to ensure that Traveller children, including those resident in unauthorised encampments, enjoy their legal entitlement to the minimum standards detailed under the five outcomes of Every Child Matters, namely:

- ❑ Be Healthy
- ❑ Stay Safe
- ❑ Enjoy and Achieve
- ❑ Make a Positive Contribution
- ❑ Achieve Economic Well-being

WMCESTC currently deploys two Advisory Teachers and a Senior Field Welfare Officer to support children and families in accessing education and other mainstream services. The Advisory team offers in-service training and support to all statutory agencies.

For further information please contact...Pat Holmes (Co-ordinator)

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## **THE SERVICE OPERATES:**

A public record transfer system to ensure that the educational records of the children keep pace with the childrens, movements from school to school and LEA to LEA.

A system for monitoring records ensuring that individual children make progress and that the schools receive advisory support.

An advisory welfare service for the benefit of the Travelling families and the Local Authority Social and Welfare Services.

A pool of Advisory/Support Teachers experienced in teaching communication skills and who are familiar with the lifestyles of the travelling communities.

A transport budget to provide immediate assistance to schools registering travelling children, but experiencing transport difficulties.

An advisory education service through the pool of Advisory/Support Teachers under the direction of the Senior Advisory Teacher to assist schools in meeting the need of travelling children.

A resource Centre containing appropriate and tested materials for use with travelling children.

A library/archive for use by teachers, students and colleagues in other agencies.

An in-service training program for school staff, welfare staff, students and others involved with Travelling families to promote awareness of Traveller culture and lifestyles, positive attitudes towards the children and an understanding of their educational needs.

## **PLANNING FOR SUCCESS AND CONTINUITY – RESOURCES**

In order to assist Traveller children towards being confident and successful learners, the Service has concentrated on developing and providing resource materials to encourage their positive self-image and also to support better understanding of Traveller lifestyle amongst all children.

Attainment Targets and levels of National Curriculum are taken into account when developing materials, ranging from wooden toys, matching, sequencing and jigsaw items using real photographs taken within Traveller communities; materials for project work, wooden inset scenes for language extension, pre-literacy and numeracy booklets, projects, a phonic program, reading books and an introductory reading and writing program “The Literacy Trail”.

“The Literacy Trail” is intended to give some structure support and continuity to Traveller children’s early reading experiences as they move between schools, Authorities and regions. It is not intended to provide their sole reading and language experience.

As with all children they should be given access to a wide variety of books, reading materials and language experiences.

A display and master copy of “Literacy Trail” and other materials are also available for sale outside the West Midlands Region (price list on request).

## **DISTANCE LEARNING: FAIRGROUND, CIRCUS AND SEASONAL TRAVELLERS**

Families travel for work purposes usually between Spring and Autumn each year. Children attend the schools near to their winter sites. All West Midlands schools provide children with Distance Learning Work when they leave each Spring. The work is discussed with their parents who will provide support for them when they travel. The Service supports schools in preparing the work, supports the children's work during the travelling season and supports the winter schools when the children return. The school, the parents, the children and the Service work together in partnership. Distance Learning Work passes between families and schools throughout the travelling season and the Service plays a vital link role in the process.