

Managing Mobility

Mobility is increasingly an issue that is providing a challenge for our schools. Various Sage schools within Downham and Bellingham have been addressing this issue and this Good Practice Sheet contains some positive and effective ideas on how to tackle mobility.

"Our aim is to add something positive to every child's life that attends our school, whether they are here for one day or eight years."

(Haseltine School)

Janet Dobson and Kirsty Henthorne from University College, London have stated that:

"High rates of mobility affect the whole social and learning environment of the school and makes heavy demands on staff, with implications for non-mobile pupils too." (Pupil Mobility in Schools', September 2000)

By working with the child, family, school and other pupils Sage has come up with some tried and tested ideas to make the transition to a new school easier and reduce the negative implications for all concerned.

Key areas when managing pupil mobility are induction, assessment and appropriate classroom provision. Below is a list of ideas to help address these points:

- Give new pupils information packs, a prompt induction and explain school routines.
- Quickly establish good relationships with parents and carers and deal effectively with issues of immediate concern.
- Obtain attainment information from pupils' previous schools and pass this on, with the results of their assessments, to their new teachers.
- Place new pupils in appropriate teaching groups, taking account of the subject options already selected by secondary school pupils, where appropriate.

- Prepare existing pupils for the arrival of new comers.
- Discuss schemes of work with new pupils, to establish their familiarity with areas covered and assess how any gaps in knowledge can be filled.

Managing mobility requires a 'whole school' policy; all staff and children have a role to play in welcoming new arrivals. Certain members of staff could carry out particular tasks to help with mobility. Some examples are listed below:

School Office Staff:

- Welcome families who visit the school and inform them about school places.
- Provide families with information about the school.
- Record initial information on relevant forms.
- Arrange a date and time for a welcome interview with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.
- Provide information about other schools in the area if places are not available in their own school.

Headteacher and/or Deputy Headteacher:

- Carry out a welcome interview with new families and children on a set day and time each week.
- Complete a new pupil's admission form with parents and carers, taking note of EAL issues, the amount of schooling already received etc.
- Provide families with a welcome pack, with relevant translation if required.
- Assist families in applying for free school meals where applicable.
- Ensure copies of the new pupil's admission form are passed on to class teachers and the support department.

Class teachers:

- Ensure that the class is a safe and welcoming place for all new arrivals by:
 - Preparing a coat-hook, tray, books, locker etc.
 - Deciding where the child will sit and which groups s/he will work in.

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- Helping children to learn class routines, rules and expectations.
- Preparing the class for new arrivals.
- Employing the skills of classroom peers to welcome children through 'buddying' activities.
- Setting up and maintaining a class Welcome Folder.
- Ensure that learning and pastoral needs are met by:
 - Reading the new pupil's admission form.
 - Acknowledging their previous learning, achievements and experiences, and their cultural backgrounds.
 - Building on and extending existing progress and achievement.
 - Passing relevant information to classroom assistants.
 - Liaising with the learning mentor and support department as appropriate.

Learning Mentor:

- Prepare forms and materials needed for welcome interviews.
- Maintain 'Welcome' and 'multi-lingual information' displays in the school entrance.
- Ensure that a photograph of each new child is on the welcome board and on the memo board in the staff room, for everyone to familiarise themselves with the new arrival.
- Assist the Headteacher and Deputy in welcome interviews.
- Welcome children on admission day (ideally restricted to Mondays).
- Maintain a record of new pupils.
- Monitor how new arrivals have settled into school and maintain appropriate records.
- Liaise with class teachers on the progress of new arrivals.
- Liaise with and refer to the Support Department as appropriate, in consultation with class teachers.
- Plan activities and interventions to support the pastoral care of new arrivals.

- Develop effective ongoing communication with children and families.
- Help with the wider needs of new arrivals, by making referrals to other agencies and services as appropriate.
- Attend in-service training to support any professional development needs identified by themselves and school management.

The Support Department (including EAL and SEN):

- Set up a 'peer buddy' system for new arrivals.
- Have designated teaching assistants to provide support and encouragement in the first few weeks.
- Undertake assessment of the child under the direction of the class teacher and review settling in on a weekly then a half-termly basis.
- Ensure that the department is kept up to date with information about new arrivals, on a weekly basis.
- Ensure that newly arriving EAL pupils are assessed and assigned a stage of English within three weeks of arrival.
- Ensure that this information is conveyed to the class teacher and school office.
- Advise class teachers on strategies and resources for accessing the curriculum.
- Liaise with the Learning Mentor where appropriate.
- Liaise promptly with class teachers when a child arrives with identified SEN.
- Liaise with SENCO and EAL departments at previous schools where appropriate.

These are just some ideas that have been shown to help with managing mobility. Schools with a large number of casual admissions have demonstrated a direct connection between those pupils' levels of attainment and attendance. We hope that these ideas will help your school to manage pupil mobility.