

ADMISSION

PROCEDURES

FOR NEW

E.A.L. ARRIVALS

Ethnic Minority Achievement Service  
E.A.L. Team

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## ADMISSIONS

Investing time in good admission practices is important for all pupils, and especially for those who arrive mid-term. Successful admissions policies will enable them to settle quickly and begin learning.

The admission and induction of pupils needs to be a whole-school initiative. Staff need support and training to feel confident about meeting the needs of EAL pupils. The school's Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) Co-ordinator should take a key role in developing and implementing the induction programme. It is important that office staff is consulted, as they are usually the first point of contact for the new arrivals.

The first meeting with a family and child will establish the basis of the home-school relationship and will provide information which will enable the child to settle into the new school quickly. For some minority ethnic parents or carers this may be their first experience of an English school.

Provide a pack for the admission of bilingual pupils and take the opportunity to discuss the information with the parents/carers.

It could include :

- Information about the English school system.
- A school prospectus and the school's expectations of pupils including school rules.
- Plan of the school with pictures.
- An outline of the school day with the same design of pictures or diagrams.
- Pictorial timetable plus teachers' names in full.
- Travel arrangements for secondary school pupils.
- The homework system and how parents/carers might support children at home.
- Extra-curricular activities with pictures.
- Calendar of term dates.
- Additional support provided by the school.
- How to get information about their children's work and progress, and who to contact if they have any concerns.
- Pictures of photographs of uniform, suppliers and information about grants.

- Lunch arrangements, including information on benefits such as free school meals.
- Information about school resources, for example, Family Literacy classes or toy libraries.
- Contacts for local services, such as; welfare advice, doctors and health clinics; the local Race Equality Council, community and faith groups.

At the interview, arrange a time for a review meeting or home visit with the parents/carers to review the student's progress.

## DELAYED START

### Informing the Staff

It is important that staff are informed about the new arrival and this is most easily organised if there is a gap of a couple of days between interviewing the pupil and the pupil starting.

Information collected at the interview can be used to produce an information sheet to go to teachers and be displayed on the staff notice board.

This information can also inform decisions about placing the new pupil in an appropriate form/tutor group.

## BEFORE THE NEW PUPIL ARRIVES

### Information for Form Tutors and Class Teachers

- Talk to your form/tutor group about the new pupil and discuss with them the difficulties the pupil may have and how they might be able to help. Emphasise the fact that he/she is able to speak another language.
- Organise a 'buddy' to guide the new pupil during the first few days. Choose a pupil who has good social skills and responds well to being given responsibility. The 'friend' need not speak the same language as the new pupil, but if there are pupils in your form/tutor group who do, introduce them to the new arrival.
- Discuss with the 'buddy' ways of helping the new pupil, e.g. being with them at break and lunchtime, showing them around the school (including the toilets), helping them in class to organise their work, their homework diary, equipment etc.
- If pupils are in different groups for different lessons, organise a 'buddy' for each subject.
- Find out how to say 'hello' and a few phrases in the new pupil's language and teach your form/tutor group to say it.

- Display examples of the pupil's home language and familiar images to make the child feel welcome.
- Nominate a member of staff to act as pupil mentor.
- Provide a 'sanctuary' / 'time out' area for cases of overload or emotional needs. This could include giving the pupil a 'time out' card at secondary.
- In secondary schools consider a short induction period with staggered integration to a full timetable.



## WHEN THE NEW PUPIL ARRIVES

### Initial Ideas

- Establish a relationship with the new pupil and help them to feel comfortable in the form/tutor group/class and school.
- Introduce the new pupil to non-teaching staff e.g. school secretaries, lunchtime supervisors and canteen staff. This is particularly important if the student has very limited English.
- For total beginners, especially in a big school, it may be useful to prepare a card that they can carry with them in case they get into difficulties.

My name is .....

I am in .....

I don't speak much English yet.

- Help the new pupil to understand any changes in school routines (e.g. non-uniform day, trips, fire drill etc).

## INTRODUCING THE PUPIL TO LESSONS/THE CLASSROOM

- Set up the 'buddy' system and ensure that it is working.
- Give the buddy/buddies an opportunity to think about the needs of a newly arrived bilingual. Review progress and give advice to the buddy/buddies.
- Assign a seat and tray/locker so that the pupil gains a sense of belonging and security. Sit the pupil near to the front of the class, to facilitate frequent eye contact with the teacher.
- Make opportunities for the pupil to become practically involved in the classroom, with a partner at first. This might include giving out exercise books.
- Allow the pupil to remain "silent". It is quite normal for a new EAL pupil to "remain silent" initially. This is not a "passive" stage. During this time the pupil will be watching, actively listening and tuning in, and developing new meanings. Previous experiences will be related to new contexts. Keep talking to the pupil, picking up on non-verbal responses.

- A new pupil in the early stages of learning English will need differentiated work on the same topic as the rest of the class but at their language level. A beginner will need as much visual support as possible, including diagrams, illustrated glossaries etc. He or she should be given a vocabulary book and helped to put key words from each lesson in it. Pupils who are literate in their first language should be encouraged to use a dictionary.

Well planned pair and group activities will help the new pupil to develop their English language skills. He or she will need to be placed in a group with pupils who are best able to involve him or her in the learning task.

Pupils should be encouraged to ask for help if they do not understand the task.

Pupils in the early stages of English language will need differentiated homework tasks. These could include learning new vocabulary, matching short sections of text to pictures, diagrams etc.

- Encourage awareness of the way the pupil is spoken to. It is common for people to raise their voices when a pupil does not respond or seem to understand. There may be cultural issues when addressing a pupil.

- You need to remember that cultural differences may lead to misunderstandings. For example, where we expect pupils to look at us, in many cultures pupils avoid eye contact with teachers as a sign of respect.

## PLACING A NEW ARRIVAL IN APPROPRIATE TEACHING GROUPS/SETS

- Pupils who have English as an Additional Language learn alongside fluent users of English who are good language models. If a new arrival is placed in bottom sets with peers who are poor language models and poor behaviour models, he/she will underachieve and may misbehave.
- The new arrival may already have acquired the relevant skills and concepts of a subject, they just need the words to express them in the new language. A learner of English is capable of tackling work which is cognitively demanding if the task is designed to provide them with the words they need.
- Pupils with English as an Additional Language are likely to make more rapid progress than pupils with Special Educational Needs. Their needs are not the same.
- Bilingual pupils are likely to achieve more highly in a class where there are plenty of opportunities for pupil interaction and support through pair or group work and opportunities to explore the topic and the language of the topic in groups. They are likely to make less progress in a class which is very

teacher directed with little opportunity for exploration.

- EAL pupils can cope in high sets if lessons allow for differentiation of response, and the teacher has realistic expectations of what can be achieved at different stages of the language learning process.
- Test scores do not reflect the potential of a pupil who is still learning English and should not be used as the main criterion for placing the pupil in a teaching group.

## NEWLY ARRIVED PUPILS - FACTORS THAT MAY INTERFERE WITH LEARNING

Newly arrived pupils usually settle into school quite happily and cope well with the task of learning a new language. However, normally happy and confident pupils can become frustrated or angry in situations where they cannot make themselves understood.

- After being competent language users and language learners in their home country they suddenly find themselves not understanding simple tasks and instructions.
- Listening to and trying to concentrate on a new language is very tiring, even for adults and even for a short time. Such concentration hour after hour, day after day, can make a child feel very tired.
- They may be missing friends and relatives that they have left behind, their home and all the known routines that have been part of their lives until now. Some pupils arrive as unaccompanied minors.
- Families may have few support networks and may be experiencing emotional and or financial difficulty - this is especially true in the case of Asylum Seekers who may have left home because of political upheaval.
  - They may not have chosen country.
  - They have usually minimal belongings and few tangible reminders of home e.g. photos/momentos.

- New school maybe very different from any they have known before and they may be expected to learn in totally new ways.
- Script or orientation may be completely different.
- Pupils have little control over their new environment and experience. Sometimes their frustration and deep unhappiness may lead to difficult classroom behaviour and a few children become aggressive and disruptive, constantly restless, tearful or very withdrawn
- It is important to be aware that disruptive and disturbing behaviour may be caused by what the pupil is experiencing and not necessarily indicative of their usual behaviour.
- Newly arrived pupil must be expected to observe the same classroom rules and behaviour as the rest of the class and as far as possible follow normal classroom procedures.
- Teachers can do little about many of the stresses on newly arrived families - it is vital that in the classroom the pupil feels accepted and given many opportunities to be successful.

Ideas for confidence building :-

- Allow the pupil many opportunities to do what he or she is best at.
- allow extra time.



- Pace activities during the day so that the pupil does not become exhausted.

- activities which do not require new arrival to produce language i.e. listening to tapes stories interspersed with activities which require speaking and writing.

- Class : allow pupils a quiet time during the day so they can choose what to do and switch off from classroom demands.



