



MITIGATING MOBILITY

Guidance on Pupil Mobility

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Conference version

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1 Background

High rates of pupil-mobility are a defining feature of SCE schools and almost all SCE students attend several schools. In 2006 the average eleven year old in SCE had attended three schools, with more than one in eight attending as many as five.

There are over 11,000 students aged 5-18 in SCE's 43 schools at any one time. Given the high overall mobility rates, many times this number of young people experience part of their education in SCE schools. The Mitigating Mobility Project focuses on developing practices to assist schools, students and families in ensuring that these experiences are as positive as possible.

Information about SCE can be found at www.sceschools.com

2 Introduction and General Principles

The policies and guidance detailed in this document are intended to assist students, their parents/carers, teaching and administrative staff in ensuring that the experience of moving schools is positive and life-enhancing.

This document focuses on movement between schools at non-standard times, defined as other than

- entry at the start of the school year at the beginning of the youngest key stage served by the school and
- leaving at the end of the school year at the end of the oldest key stage served by the school.

The principles and practices will also apply, however, to planned and routine school movements between year groups and key stages, even when the student's residence has not changed.

SCE schools' results show that high mobility does not lead to any lowering of academic performance when it is well managed, either for individual students, cohorts or for schools. Successful management of mobility requires close attention to the linkages and inter-dependence between administrative procedures, emotional well-being, pastoral care and academic induction and continuity.

The policies and guidance that follow draw upon effective practice offered by SCE schools and UK partners. Much, but not all, is reflected in SCE's 2006/7's collaborative project with the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) 'Mitigating Mobility 2'. Acknowledgement is also due to Milton Keynes Council for their 2002 publication 'Changing Faces in our Schools'.

The outcomes from the Mitigating Mobility Project, along with examples and vignettes of the approaches in action will be made available through a

designated web-site, currently under-development. The 'beta' version of this will be shared at the SCE/NCSL Conference on 4th March 2008.

The following principles underpin SCE's policies and guidance for pupil mobility:

A STUDENTS

Students at each key stage deserve and are entitled to be known and understood for their academic and cultural achievements and potential by both the school they leave and by the school they are joining.

Students are entitled to know their own learning targets and to expect these to be taken into account by the receiving schools. Older students are entitled to key information about course work and syllabi.

Students from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 4 are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum that takes into account service moves. Thus, it is essential that attention is given to aspects of personal and social education that support an increasing ability to cope successfully with change, re-location and loss.

B PARENTS

Parents are entitled to full access to attainment, curriculum and pastoral information, particularly that which may have a bearing on school performance across transfer.

Students and parents are entitled to expect SCE and partner schools dealing with any levels of mobility to be highly skilled in ensuring minimal disruption of coursework and academic progress at whatever age and key stage transfer takes place.

For students who board, the expectations are no less. Skilled house-parenting should support students' personal and academic well-being and ensure appropriate liaison with the school's academic staff and with parents.

C RECEIVING SCHOOLS

Receiving schools require accurate information on prior attainment and the extent of student achievement. They should ensure that full account is taken of statutory and non-statutory transfer information including all quantitative and qualitative records from the releasing school. Full account should be taken of the students' own understanding of their achievements and interests.

Receiving schools should ensure that academic induction is of the highest quality. In addition, pastoral induction for the student (and, as appropriate, the family) should be planned and monitored to ensure that full engagement with all the benefits of the new school are rapidly made. New entrants should be

monitored especially carefully, so that any barriers to progress are identified and overcome.

Regardless of the frequency of moves, schools should be mindful that an unstructured start is detrimental to learning and well-being. The schools' systems and routines should ensure that all students can build on prior academic and personal progress as quickly and smoothly as possible.

D RELEASING SCHOOLS

Releasing schools should ensure that information required by the next school is complete, accurate and up to date. Parents should know exactly what information is passed on and to what purpose. Arrangements to ensure its onward transmission and receipt should be secure. All SCE or statutory requirements for information transfer should be met in timely fashion. There should be a secure and routine arrangement for storing and retrieving key information, in case it is required or fails to arrive at the new school.

Releasing schools should prepare students for their next and future moves in general terms through their PSHE programmes and through the wider curriculum. All SCE students move relatively frequently: a personalised curriculum must prepare them to maximise the benefits of this. Preparation for specific moves should be considered and can include assistance in researching new schools and locations as well as support with records of achievement at any age.

E GENERAL

School routines for departure and admission should be clearly understood, consistently applied and kept under review. Review should focus first on the actual impact of the procedures on students and families and second on their organisational efficiency.

SCE schools and others located outside the UK should also be mindful of the need to prepare students for a return to multi-cultural Britain. Full account should be taken of the need for a broad and balanced curriculum which addresses the Every Child Matters' agenda, assisting students to understand the importance of empathy and tolerance within a diverse, multi-cultural society.

SCE schools should take into account their own unique context and the Agency's aim 'to enable students to benefit from their residence abroad'. In addition, SCE schools should seek to build knowledge, understanding and confidence in coping with and, wherever possible, thriving on change.

3 Expectations in SCE

A Joining and arrival

i Information first

Parents and students should be able to access all information about the school via the Internet (SCE school web-sites are linked to www.sceschools.com). School web-sites should enable contact by parents and access to admission information, school brochure and other key documents, including links to Ofsted reports, school profiles and current newsletters. The most effective web-sites enable students and parents to gain a feel for what it is like to belong to the school. Where there is more than one school serving a garrison or station and parents have a choice, the quality of information shared in this way can be a deciding factor.

Some parents will access initial information via the Families Offices and station HIVES of their present unit, or via CEAS (www.ceas.mod.uk)

Parents should be able to make an initial inquiry and contact by email, other web-contact, telephone, post or in person.

Schools should encourage early contact by incoming parents and students.

Service personnel whose children or other dependants have identified special educational needs are required to inform their posting authority beforehand. Further details of these procedures are found in **Appendix 1 'Additional Needs'**.

In secondary schools, particularly at Key Stages 4 and 5, students should be encouraged to bring their coursework and records of achievement to their new school along with clear information regarding courses and examination boards. As a result of this, schools should try to personalise the curriculum to meet students' needs and ensure a level of continuity from their previous school. If the receiving school offers a different course or a different examination board, every effort should be made to ensure the student meets the necessary standard to reach their full potential. In SCE, this may include 14-19 partnership working with other schools or accessing on-line courses.

ii Initial contact

Schools should have established routines for what needs to be covered on an initial contact. For telephone contacts a simple script covering main points can be helpful; schools should also have pre-assembled welcome packs (brochure and key forms) kept up to date and ready for mailing or handing to inquirers where post and hard copy is preferred.

iii **First visit**

Although some first visits are speculative, the majority take place on a pre-arranged initial appointment. The school brochure should set out clearly whether these may be arranged at any time, or whether channelled to certain days of the week so that adequate time can be assured by appropriate staff. Most SCE schools will make particular arrangements for large numbers of new entrants at the start of terms, especially after the summer break. Routines for initial appointment will vary from school to school, but will normally include:

- a basic information check, including date of birth and unit/status, in order to ensure eligibility for a school place;
- ensuring that details of previous school are recorded, any special needs are explored and that the whereabouts of transfer records is established;
- a tour of the school, with an introduction to class teacher if this is known;
- an introduction to assigned 'buddy' or 'friend' if known;
- an opportunity to order or purchase uniform items;
- an agreed date and time for starting school;
- key documentation such as timetables; parent contact books, planners and homework diaries as appropriate.

In many schools, the new arrival will be added to the welcome display, which is often prominent in the school foyer, hall or dining room.

iv **Academic administration**

Standard practice in SCE is that school records normally arrive with the incoming student, having been entrusted to 'parent post' by the releasing school. In many cases, work-books and portfolios are available. In a growing number of cases an e-portfolio may be accessed.

The SCE Policy on Record Keeping and Transfer applies (www.sceschools.com).

In line with SCE policy, a releasing SCE school will ensure that the student and accompanying parent are provided with a leaving report. For primary schools, this will contain details of:

- current National Curriculum levels, or sub-levels as appropriate, for core subjects
- the student's current targets in these core subjects
- details of attainment and achievement in foundation subjects
- summary of any special needs and/or gifted and talented information
- DCSF UPN and CTF (Department for Children, Families and Schools Unique Pupil Number and Common Transfer Form). Note that UPN

and CTF may not be available for students transferring from countries other than England and Wales.

The information above will normally be supplemented with a sample or complete set of current school-work.

Secondary schools will ensure transfer of the same core information and any specific information related to coursework and examination syllabi.

v Ensuring Academic Continuity

The importance of prompt capture and assimilation of incoming attainment data and achievement information cannot be over-stated.

“Making adequate assessment of pupils’ educational experiences and attainment is a key task. The most common complaint made by pupils interviewed in this survey were that they had done work before or that they did not know what was going on in particular subjects. Even when records and samples of work are available, teachers still need to assess new pupils individually. When pupils arrive at very short notice, the need to settle them in quickly can work against the processes required to get the provision right. A false start can have serious consequences, both for pupils concerned and for the groups they join” (ref Managing pupil Mobility, Ofsted 2002)

Receiving schools need to place the highest priority on securing previous attainment and assessment records. This is because:

- Academic progress is more likely to be promoted when full account is taken of previous attainment, achievement, programmes of study and students’ own interests, aptitudes and any special needs;
- The student’s academic progress and record is known in detail by the releasing school;
- The student’s aptitudes, interests and abilities were most likely to be known and understood by the previous teacher;
- Prior attainment data will be used to support subsequent judgements of value-added.

Receiving schools need to be ready and able to undertake key assessments on incoming pupils, particularly when previous school records are missing. It is important to recognise that such assessments can provide misleading information if they are undertaken too soon and without consideration of the social and emotional effects of the recent move. There is evidence from SCE schools that some students do not perform at their best on assessments undertaken during an initial settling-in period. The results of any such assessments need to be treated circumspectly, especially when they mismatch with incoming records. At worst, a student’s under-performance on key assessments will result in the receiving teacher expecting too little of them. As work on the emotional impact of moving schools shows, a too-early

assessment is likely to produce such a result, particularly with primary aged pupils.

Non-Arrival of records and transfer information

The importance of prompt capture and assimilation of incoming attainment data and achievement information cannot be over-stated. Where it does not arrive ahead, or with students, SCE schools should:

For UPN and CTF contact SCE's AEO (Data Manager)

richiewinn@scschools.com .

For leaving report and any current work or portfolio

Telephone the previous school. The date and time of this request should be noted and it should be followed up in the event of no action. In the few cases where records are not received, SCE schools are asked to notify SCE's AEO (Data Manager) so that this can be taken up with the Local Authority concerned. Non-SCE schools concerned about non-arrival of records and reports should contact the school concerned (all contact details via www.scschools.com) and, if required, SCE's AEO (Data Manager).

SCE schools should complete a simple form for return to the releasing school, confirming student arrival and highlighting any missing or incomplete information.

Previous school / course-work

Self-evidently, effective transfer and recognition of GCSE or continuing course-work at KS3/4 is of vital importance in ensuring unimpeded student progress.

School-work provided by previous schools at FS/KS1/2 should also be treated seriously. The investment, pride and achievement it can represent for students should be respected. The work may have been sifted to compile a portfolio and, increasingly often, this may be held electronically. Whichever way it is transferred, time is required for teachers to discuss previous work, achievements and aspirations with new students, in order to ensure full recognition and value for what has gone before. Students' learning targets from their school should be reviewed. When no longer required to support continuity, 'old' school-work should be returned to students and parents, other than in exceptional circumstances.

vi First day in new school

Schools should be fully prepared for new arrivals, even if the notice period has been short. Schools should ensure that responsibilities for co-ordinating arrangements are clear.

Example routines are provided within the Mobility website and 'Toolkit'. Almost all SCE schools assign a 'buddy' to support the new student.

Full preparation includes space to sit, hang coats and keep work and personal possessions. Academic preparation includes attention to teaching groups and provision of information about timetables. Support for finding the way around is useful, such as a clear map.

vii Pastoral and academic follow up (ie one or several weeks later)

Schools should ensure that suitable arrangements are in place for new students to be introduced to peers and to staff working in school as appropriate. Practices from SCE schools include mention in assemblies, a welcome on a newsletter and a photograph and pen-picture added to the school's 'welcome board'.

Entry should be followed up, with student and parent, to ensure that all pastoral and academic issues are addressed. Effective follow-up, formal and informal, demonstrates that 'every child matters' and that the student's interest is at the forefront of the school's efforts.

It is common practice in SCE to arrange meetings with parents or carers after an initial settling-in period. These meetings can also be used to gain valuable feedback on the entry and induction process while it is fresh in the mind.

Some schools have identified benefit in incoming students having a point of contact in addition to the class teacher. In some schools this will be a 'Mobility Co-ordinator'.

B Releasing Schools (children and students departing)

Schools characterised by high mobility should ensure that their curriculum supports students in maximising the opportunities that life-changes present. Preparation for moving, departure and staying in contact will be routine and requires careful curriculum attention.

Such preparation, whether emphasised and articulated through PSHE, Emotional Intelligence or a school's pastoral system should include attention to the needs of all students, not just the majority who move more frequently. Most SCE schools and all of our UK partner schools also serve students who are geographically stable, but are affected by turbulence and change as their friends and cohorts move on.

i Information first

Schools should work with units and families offices to ensure that parents are aware that as much advance warning of postings as possible is helpful. Schools should work with parents and carers to raise awareness of mobility issues and how these can be supported.

General information about moving and principal contact points, such as CEAS (www.ceas.mod.uk), and SCE (www.sceschools.com) should be prominently displayed in schools; consideration should be given to ensuring these sources are easy for parents, carers and students to access.

ii **Preparation for students**

When schools have adequate notification of a forthcoming move, they can assist the student with preparation. SCE schools surveyed reported various means of supporting this:

- Leaving School booklet, produced with teaching assistant, includes details/photo of school, of the learner, samples of work for new school ([Bruggen](#));
- Moving to a New School booklet for children to complete ([St David's](#));
- TA and child research new school on Internet ([St David's](#));
- Presenting the leaver with disposable camera to photograph friends, staff, school building, etc for their new school ([Afnorth, Montgomery](#));
- Children leaving have their names placed on 'Leavers' Board' ([Haig, St Christopher's, Dhekelia](#)).

Schools should ensure that class teachers and administrative staff share advance notification of moving. Some SCE schools expect class teachers to discuss the forthcoming move with the child leaving. In these cases, children are encouraged to share the news with the class; this supports further discussion about the new location. Perhaps other children have been there and can share what there is to look forward to?

Schools should plan opportunities for such discussions. A non-SCE example from Kaiserlautern Elementary School (US – DODEA) is that of lunchtime tables facilitated by the school councillor, where students leaving over the next few weeks will eat and socialise with students who have just arrived. Often, students can share memories and expectations of partner schools. Many SCE schools use 'Circle Time' or PSHE lessons to similar end.

CEAS has a 'Moving Schools Pack'. Aimed at younger children, it encourages parents and learners to gather and maintain a record of achievement to assist the receiving school in getting to know the new student quickly.

SCE's Mount Pleasant School in the Falkland Islands works with departing students to prepare an e-portfolio of their achievements at Mount Pleasant. An example can be found in SCE's Mobility Toolkit..

iii **Leaving Rituals**

The rituals of leaving vary from school to school. The following are examples from SCE schools:

- card from class; card with class photo ([Andrew Humphrey](#))
- sweatshirt signed by class and staff ([Haig](#))
- assembly farewell; leaving certificate ([Akrotiri](#))

SCE schools encourage leaving parents and students to speak to the headteacher; this provides an opportunity for wishing the family well and asking them to stay in contact. Many SCE schools encourage leavers to keep in touch via their school web-site. In other schools admin staff encourage phone calls from parents once in their new home and school and all encourage soon-to-be ex-pupils to pop-in if visiting in the area. One SCE school ([St Christopher's](#)) gives children a postcard and a stamp in order to be able to write back to their former class. Another ([BFS Naples](#)) incorporates leaving students into the curriculum as distant e-mail partners for the school.

iv **Administrative preparation**

Most schools request that parents complete a leaving form ahead of departure. This can also serve as an aide memoir and checklist that transfer reports and records have been prepared and, as appropriate, entrusted to parental courier.

The CEAS Moving Schools Pack contains an optional form for parents to use and encouragement to share the information as far in advance as possible.

Some SCE schools aim to make contact with the receiving school ahead of transfer. This is particularly important where there is anything unusual about the move and may be essential to ensure that provision for any special needs can be prepared. For learners identified as having SEN, and if the move is between SCE and UK, CEAS should be informed. All parents moving from SCE to UK should be reminded of CEAS' services as a matter of routine.

Preparation of school records and leaving reports

Sample school check-lists for departing students can be found in the Mobility Toolkit. Systems should be in place to ensure that teaching staff are able to prepare leaving reports to the standard they expect to receive and as required by SCE's Transfer of Records Policy.

Many schools ask departing parents to complete an exit-survey ([eg Shackleton, Montgomery, Haig](#)) in order to assist with continual review of procedures.

On the actual leaving day, it is routine for the **prepared** portfolio of latest books, folders and assessment records (including a full leaving report with information on progress in core areas and next-step targets) to be placed in

an envelope for parents and for the next school. The ownership of the leaving report and the portfolio is with the parent. Schools should therefore provide a duplicate copy of the leaving report, for handing to the receiving school. It is recommended that schools include a follow-up form for the next school to confirm the student's arrival and admission and safe receipt of transfer information.

Some schools ask parents to sign for receipt of the record package and to undertake its onward transmission; a family forwarding address is retained by school, when it is known.

SCE schools must keep a full copy of the core data handed over in the portfolio. This will include the leaving report, National Curriculum assessment data, next-step targets, and any other key assessments.

v **Immediately after departure**

Pastoral

If not already done, the student's photograph and departure notes are added to the leaving board, if the school has one (eg Haig, St Christopher's, Montgomery, Dhekelia).

Administrative

On leaving an SCE school, the Common Transfer File (CTF) should be uploaded to the DCSF web-site for the new school to access (where it is known). Where the school is unknown it should be sent to AEO (Data Manager) (richie.winn@scschools.com)

The school should update its database of departures and destinations, in line with SCE's Policy for school admission registers.

Some schools (King's) contact the receiving school, where this is known, to confirm the student's arrival. Others (eg Akrotiri) include a form with the record pack, to be returned confirming its safe receipt.

vi **Emotional Dimension**

For most students joining or leaving an SCE school the experience is one of a number of life-changes. For many, a change of location, home, country and parents' situation takes place at the same time. The majority of students prove resilient and resourceful at such times. However, the inherent stresses of moving and of associated tensions can threaten engagement and assimilation in the new school. The Mobility Toolkit contains guidance and support in this area. Many schools find the SEAL materials valuable, these are produced the by Primary and Secondary National Strategies, available from the DCSF website (www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/publications).

The Mitigating Mobility project team would be grateful for responses to this document and for examples of exemplar practice. Please contact Mike Chislett:

Mike.chislett@scseschools.com

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Appendix 1

What does the research tell us?

Gruff Thomas, SCE SIM

Research conducted in England on the effects of mobility [Strand (2006)] on pupil attainment and achievement shows that it is very difficult to isolate the effect of mobility from other contextual factors, such as deprivation, special educational needs, ethnicity and language. Pupil mobility is found to have no significant effect in the primary phase, when other contextual factors are taken into account, on the progress children make in Key Stage 2.

There does, however, appear to be an effect on progress in Key Stages 3 and 4, when prior attainment and contextual factors are taken into consideration [Strand (2007)].

Research conducted within SCE schools has involved relatively small cohort sizes and is on-going, but initial analyses have shown mobility to have little or no effect on progress.

References

- Strand, S & Demie, F (2006) Pupil mobility, attainment and progress in primary school, *British Educational Research Journal* 32(4), 551-568
Strand, S & Demie, F (2007) Pupil mobility and progress during secondary school, *Educational Studies* 33(3), 313-331

Appendix 2

Additional Needs

Kirstin Arthur, SCE AEO (SEN)

The requirement for Service personnel to notify that they have a special needs dependant is to ensure that career management and appropriate postings can be effected with full knowledge of the relevant factors of family circumstances. To this end AGAI 108 also encourages the active and voluntary participation of Service persons who have dependants who await full diagnosis as well as those who are already assessed.

Parents whose children have identified special educational needs (definition as per category – below in dark blue)

- A. *Cognition and Learning Needs*
 - *Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD)*
 - *Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD)*
 - *Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD)*
 - *Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD)*
- B. *Behaviour, Emotional and Social Development Needs*
 - *Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulty (BESD)*
- C. *Communication and Interaction Needs*
 - *Speech, language and Communication Needs (SLCN)*
 - *Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)*
- D. *Sensory and/or Physical Needs*
 - *Visual Impairment (VI)*
 - *Hearing Impairment (HI)*
 - *Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)*
 - *Physical Disability (PD)*
- Other (OTH)*

are required to register with CEAS, so that a Special Educational Needs Service (SENS) can be carried out. The purpose of carrying out a SENS enquiry is to ensure that SCE is able to give the support required to individual pupils thus enabling them to progress in a SCE school.

Pupils with special//additional educational needs (SEN) who are at School Action Plus (SA+) or who are in receipt of a Statement of Special Educational Needs (England) or Coordinated support Plan (Scotland) require a SENS enquiry.

The SENS enquiry carried out by SCE contributes to an overall enquiry which may include advice from British Forces Germany /Cyprus Health Service (BFG/C HS), BFSWS and representatives from G1 (Germany) and J1 (Cyprus) depending on posting area. SO3 G1 PS collates all advice and informs the parents/careers of his final decision for BFG cases.

All pupils seeking admission to a SCE school will be admitted unless there is clear evidence that it would be not possible to provide adequately for their

needs. SCE is committed to supporting as many pupils as possible who have been identified as having SAEN. However, SCE is not able to offer the full range of services commonly available in the UK.

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