

Information on Unique Pupil Number

1. Item 4 of the agenda

2. Action required

TWG members are asked to note the attached information about the Unique Pupil Number (UPN).

3. Any comments on the attached paper should be sent to:

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Background

1. TWG members also asked for some more information about how pupils are allocated a Unique Pupil Number (UPN) and the following paragraphs explain this process. Further information on the UPN is available at Annex A in the form of Frequently Asked Questions.

Allocation of UPN

2. All pupils in schools that return Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC) data to the Department are issued with a UPN when they first join one of these schools. The UPNs are generated by the software in the school management information systems. They are held electronically alongside other pupil level data (name, dob, gender, etc). PLASC currently covers LEA maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools, non-maintained special schools, Academies and City Technology Colleges.
3. If a pupil moves to another "PLASC school" then the UPN is passed on electronically to the new school - it makes no difference if the pupil changes name (or even gender!), the UPN is (in theory, at least) fixed for the duration of their education. We strongly encourage schools and LEAs to pass on UPNs (and other PLASC data) promptly when pupils move schools but this sometimes doesn't happen. In this case the new school can issue a temporary UPN until the original UPN arrives. LEAs can access the records of all pupils who move schools across the country and can search for missing UPNs. When the data comes into the Department we run checks to look for duplicate pupils (different UPNs but matching characteristics) and ask LEAs to investigate what we find. If a pupil changed name and was issued with a new UPN at the same time then this would be very hard to spot.
4. Pupils who have never been in one of the school types mentioned above will not have a UPN.
5. TWG members also raised concerns regarding UPNs of children who are adopted and this is currently being investigated by the Department.

Isabella Craig
Department of Education and Skills
8 September 2004

ANNEX A

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT UPNS

1. What are UPNs used for?

UPNs were introduced in the maintained schools sector in the autumn term of 1999. All pupils attending a maintained school should now be in possession of a UPN. UPNs facilitate the tracking of pupils' progress through the school system, yielding better information (for schools, Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and central government) on pupil performance and related factors. This information strengthens procedures for target setting and monitoring, and so contributes to raising standards. Within the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) pupil level information will be used solely for statistical purposes.

2. Are schools statutorily required to allocate UPNs to their pupils?

Yes, for schools in the maintained sector. Section 537A of the Education Act 1996 enables the Secretary of State to require maintained schools to provide certain information to LEAs including Key Stage assessment information and Pupil Level Census returns (which contain UPNs). Section 408 of the same Act enables the Secretary of State to require the transfer from school to school of pupil records with UPNs.

There is a statutory duty on schools to provide UPNs with Key Stage assessment information, Pupil Level Census returns, and pupil records transferred to other schools using the Common Transfer File (CTF).

3. Which types of school are required to allocate UPNs to their pupils?

The table below shows the types of school which are required by DfES to allocate UPNs to their pupils: -

School type	Required to allocate UPNs	
	YES	NO
Nursery (not nursery classes in Primary schools).		✓
Maintained Primary school (including nursery classes, Early Years education/ pre- reception classes).	✓	
Maintained Secondary/ Comprehensive school	✓	
Maintained special school	✓	
Non- maintained special school (see also question 12).	✓	
Independent/ Public School		✓
City Technology Colleges	✓	
Voluntary Aided.	✓	
Maintained Pupil referral units	✓	
Non- maintained pupil referral unit (see also question 12).		✓
City Academies	✓	
Overseas schools		✓

Service schools	✓	
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The table above is a guide to those schools required by DfES to allocate UPNs, it is permissible for any school ticked 'No' to allocate UPNs if they have the ability or desire to do so. Maintained schools should consult with their LEAs for any possible local variations.

4. What should independent schools do with UPNs?

When a pupil joins an independent school from a maintained school the pupil's UPN may be provided. Independent schools may wish to keep a record of the UPN, but are not otherwise required to do anything with it. Likewise when a pupil leaves an independent school and joins a maintained school, the maintained school may ask for a UPN. If independent schools do not have a UPN for the pupil, it is sufficient for them to say that, as an independent school, they are not required to hold UPNs for pupils, and so do not have one.

5. Can nursery schools issue UPNs?

Nursery schools can generate UPNs: if they have a DfES Establishment Number then there is no problem; if they don't then they can be allocated a 'dummy' one, by the LEA, from a range set aside for this purpose.

6. Do schools in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland allocate UPNs?

Schools in both Scotland and Wales have the ability to issue UPNs, based on the same algorithm used to create English UPNs, via their schools MIS. Due to the different codes used to represent Local Authorities or their regional equivalents, UPNs issued by Scottish schools cannot be fully integrated into the current system operating in England for two reasons.

- (i) There is a duplication of LEA codes between England and Scotland. This duplication creates a situation where UPNs coming into the English schools system have been created using pre-existing English LEA codes and possibly school numbers. As generation of the number is based on the same algorithm it is possible that duplicate UPNs will be created by the use of the same LEA code and school number.
- (ii) There are additional problems caused by some of the Local Authority codes used in Scotland, which are invalid LEA codes in the scope of the English UPN system. UPNs with invalid English LEA codes cannot be transferred into English schools software systems.
- (iii) UPNs issued by Welsh schools can be fully integrated into the English system.

- (iv) Northern Ireland do not issue UPNs. (check with Roy)

7. For whom do LEAs have the responsibility of allocating UPNs?

LEAs have the responsibility for allocating and maintaining UPNs for pupils not educated in a maintained school and fall into one of the following categories:

- i) Pupils with statements of special educational need who are in non-maintained or independent education
- ii) Home-educated pupils and
- iii) Permanently excluded pupils not attached to a maintained school.

8. When are UPNs allocated?

UPNs are usually allocated during a pupil's first entry into the maintained schools sector. This is usually when a pupil first joins a primary school (including joining nursery classes in a primary school), but can be another date if entry to the maintained sector is later in a pupil's school career. If a pupil transfers to a maintained school from an Independent school which issues UPNs, the UPN from the Independent school should be retained.

9. How are UPNs generated?

In schools with access to a school management information system software (MIS) UPNs may be produced automatically using routines programmed into this MIS software (for more information please consult your software supplier). All school MIS software can now produce UPNs.

Schools without access to these types of software can use the DfES Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. This spreadsheet will generate UPNs for pupils on the basis of a school's DfES LEA and establishment number. The spreadsheet can be obtained electronically by emailing DSC.helpdesk@dfes.gsi.gov.uk, or telephoning 01325-392626. A new spreadsheet is required each new academic year.

10. What are temporary UPNs and when are they allocated?

Temporary UPNs are allocated when a school receives a pupil who is already likely to have a UPN, but the receiving school does not yet know the UPN. The formula for temporary UPNs is identical to that for permanent UPNs, except that characters 11-13 are a two-digit serial number plus a letter (rather than a three digit serial number), for example, G801200001**01A**. Temporary UPNs should be replaced immediately when the valid UPN is known.

11. For whom do LEAs have the responsibility of allocating UPNs?

LEAs have the responsibility for allocating and maintaining UPNs for pupils not educated in a maintained school. These will include SEN pupils who are in non-maintained or independent education, home-educated pupils and

permanently excluded pupils not attached to a maintained school.

12. How do LEAs generate UPNs?

LEAs can make use of the DfES produced spreadsheet to generate UPNs for these pupils. There is also provision in the UPN system to use 'dummy' school numbers between 3950- 3999 and these numbers should be used in place of a DfES establishment number in the generation of UPNs. If, and when, a pupil is subsequently admitted to a maintained school the LEA is responsible for notifying schools of any UPN it has allocated.

13. What is a valid UPN?

In order to be valid a UPN must:

- (a) be 13 characters long;
- (b) have a recognised LEA (or "pseudo LEA", .eg the Service Children's Education Authority) code for characters 2-4;
- (c) have digits for characters 5-12;
- (d) have a digit or an upper case letter other than I, O or S for character 13;
- (e) have the correct upper case "check letter" at character 1 derived by a specified formula from characters 2-13, as detailed in question twelve.

14. How are UPNs formulated?

A UPN has thirteen characters and is allocated according to a national formula.

A UPN is made up from the following formula components: -

Character 1	Check Letter. This verifies that the UPN is valid and is calculated from the other 12 characters (character 2 to 13).
Characters 2-4	LEA Number of the School allocating the UPN
Characters 5-8	DfES Establishment Number of the School
Characters 9-10	The last two digits of the year in which the UPN is allocated
Characters 11-13	A serial number of three digits for UPNs allocated by the school in that year.

UPNs are generated by school software or alternatively by an excel spreadsheet. They should not be calculated manually. To see a breakdown of how the UPN is constructed please refer to Annex 1 at the end of this document.

15. What if the UPN received from a previous school is invalid?

When a school enters a UPN that it has received from a pupil's previous school, the software will check the validity of that UPN. If the UPN is invalid, then the school should (1) check that it has keyed it in correctly, and (2) check with the previous school that it has provided it correctly.

If it transpires that there has been no error in the transmission or keying of the UPN (i.e. that the UPN as held by the previous school was already invalid), then the school should ignore the invalid UPN, and allocate a new **permanent** UPN to the pupil instead.

16. What are temporary UPNs and when are they allocated?

Temporary UPNs are allocated when a school receives a pupil who is already likely to have a UPN, but the receiving school does not yet know the UPN. The formula for temporary UPNs is identical to that for permanent UPNs, except that characters 11-13 are a two-digit serial number plus a letter (rather than a three digit serial number), for example, G801200001**01A**. Temporary UPNs should be replaced immediately when the valid UPN is known.

17. What action should be taken if a pupil from overseas joins an English school?

Usually a pupil from overseas including Scotland and Northern Ireland will not have been allocated a UPN and should therefore be issued a UPN by the first maintained school they attend. Pupils from British Forces Schools or British Overseas establishments may have already been issued with a UPN and if this is the case their original UPN should be kept. Even if the pupil is only entering the English education system for a limited amount of time, he or she should still be issued a permanent UPN and not a temporary UPN. Temporary UPNs are not used for this purpose (see Section 10).

18. What should be done if a pupil has more than one UPN?

Unless another UPN has been used to register for Key Stage assessments the first UPN allocated to a pupil should be retained and should replace any other numbers.

If a UPN has been used for registering a pupil for Key Stage assessments that UPN should be kept for data continuity purposes. Any previous UPNs should be recorded as a "Former UPN".

19. How should UPNs be allocated to Dually Registered pupils?

Dually registered pupils should be allocated with just one UPN; this UPN should come from their **main school**. A pupil's main school should be the school in which a pupil spends the greater proportion of time. For pupils under 5 attending morning and afternoon nursery classes the pupil's morning school

should be the main school. Pupils from Traveller families should be issued UPNs by their winter base school or the school they return to most frequently.

20. What are the data protection issues surrounding UPNs?

To comply with data protection legislation a number of measures have been placed on the use of UPNs

- the UPN to lapse when pupils leave school, at the age of sixteen or older;
- the UPN to be **as far as possible** a "blind number" held by schools on the pupil's electronic record, and only output when required to provide information to the LEA, to the DfES or QCA, or to another school to which the pupil is transferring. The UPN should **not** be regarded as an automatic adjunct to the pupil's name routinely appearing on any record or document relating to them;

21. What are the implications for schools?

The Data Protection Act has the following implications for schools:

- pupils have the right under the Data Protection Act to receive on request a copy of any information the school holds about them (including their UPN). But schools should not give out details of pupils' UPNs unless specifically requested;
- UPNs should be stored electronically and schools should not enter UPNs on their admission register, or on pupils' paper files, and should continue to use the admission number, rather than the UPN, as a general pupil reference number within the school.
- Schools should always consider carefully any requests for information that include the UPN and should only give out this information in accordance with paragraph 20 above.

22. What are the implications for the use of UPNs by other local agencies and for research purposes?

There have been a number of requests from local agencies, such as Social Services for permission to use UPNs to enable data matching. However, the UPN is individual pupil information and as such may only be passed to other persons in accordance with the Regulations governing this (the Education (Information about Individual Pupils)(England) Regulations 2001. There are certain prescribed bodies to whom the UPN may (but does not necessarily have to) be provided and they include the relevant LEA., the FAS, Ofsted, QCA and the TTA. There are also circumstances in which the UPN may be provided to persons carrying out research into the educational achievements of pupils and who require individual pupil information for that purpose. Any transfer of such information will also need to comply with the Data Protection Act.

UPNs should not be used as a replacement for pupil identifications systems already in place in local non -educational departments or in research programmes. The use of UPNs in this nature could undermine the commissioner's wish that UPNs are not widely and openly displayed in a manner that could compromise their confidentiality.

Transfer of UPNs to the Connexions service.

There are specific provisions governing the passing of information to Connexions and the Connexions Card service. Although schools will normally be under a duty to pass on a pupil's name and address when requested by Connexions they must only pass on other information (including the UPN) where a parent (or a pupil if over 16) has not instructed the school to withhold it.

23. What are the implications for the use of UPNs by national agencies that are not directly involved in education?

There have been requests for the use of UPNs by other Government Departments (OGDs) for data matching purposes, as a method for identifying pupils. There have also been proposals for the use of UPNs in the post -16 sector to create a lifelong Unique Learner Number (ULN) .

(Not sure what you want to say about this – at the moment we have no power to share this information with OGDs but the current Bill is going to change this – at least in relation to DWP,IR and ONS. I leave this bit to you therefore)

In the interests of effective service delivery, the DfES wishes to share appropriate information with colleagues in OGDs . This information sharing, however, has to be carried out under the terms of the Data Protection Act and guidance from the Information Commissioner.

Public consultation on the feasibility of introducing a ULN has taken place and the results of this consultation will be published in due course.

24. What should happen to a pupil's UPN who is on witness protection or has had a change of Identity?

Issue a new UPN and delete all previous UPNs. In these cases, previous UPNs must not be recorded as a "Former UPN".

25. Should children who have been adopted be issued a new UPN?

The issue of adopted children is currently being discussed.

Further Information

- **In the first instance please consult your LEA if you have any queries regarding UPNs.**
- **The following links will provide more specific UPN information**

National Introduction of Unique Pupil Numbers (UPNs)
(<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/circulars/dfespub/oct99/131099/>)

Collection and publication of the 2000 Key Stage 1 National Curriculum Assessment results (independent schools only) and UPNs
(<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/circulars/dfespub/apr00/150400/index.htm>)

Common Transfer Format and UPNs
(http://www.dfes.gov.uk/circulars/esea/01_03/docs/transferform.doc)

Pupil records and reports and UPNs
(http://www.dfes.gov.uk/circulars/dfespub/mar00/15_20/15_2000.doc)

UPNs and QCA: -

- UPNs and Key stage 2 registrations (2001)
(http://www.qca.org.uk/ca/tests/ara/ks2_changes.asp)
- UPNs and Key stage 1 registrations (2001)
(<http://www.qca.org.uk/ca/tests/teacherhelp/ks1.asp>)

Link to original UPN guidance sent to LEAs in autumn 1999 (courtesy of Devon LEA)
(<http://www.devon.gov.uk/eal/scomis/pubs/upnpolicy/upnpolicy.html>)

Annex 1: Constructing UPNs
Example of UPN format

Character number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
UPN (Example)	H	8	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
UPN Component	Check Letter	LEA Number			DfES Establishment Number				Year of Allocation		Serial Number		

Calculating the Check Letter

- Remember that the first digit of the 12 numbers after the check letter is in fact the second character of the UPN, the check letter being the first.
- To calculate the check letter:
 - Multiply the individual digits by their character number (shown on above table) as follows:

- character 2 (i.e. the first digit) multiply by 2;
- character 3 multiply by 3;
- character 4 multiply by 4;
- character 5 multiply by 5;
- character 6 multiply by 6;
- character 7 multiply by 7;
- character 8 multiply by 8;
- character 9 multiply by 9;
- character 10 multiply by 10;
- character 11 multiply by 11;
- character 12 multiply by 12;
- character 13 multiply by 13;

(b) Sum the individual results, divide the total by 23, and take the remainder.

(c) Calculate the check letter from the result as follows:

If the remainder is 0 then the check letter is A, i.e. 0 = A, then:

- | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1 = B; | 2 = C; | 3 = D; | 4 = E; | 5 = F; | 6 = G; |
| 7 = H; | 8 = J; | 9 = K; | 10 = L; | 11 = M; | 12 = N; |
| 13 = P; | 14 = Q; | 15 = R; | 16 = T; | 17 = U; | 18 = V; |
| 19 = W; | 20 = X; | 21 = Y; | 22 = Z; | | |

(Note that the check letter cannot be I, O or S)