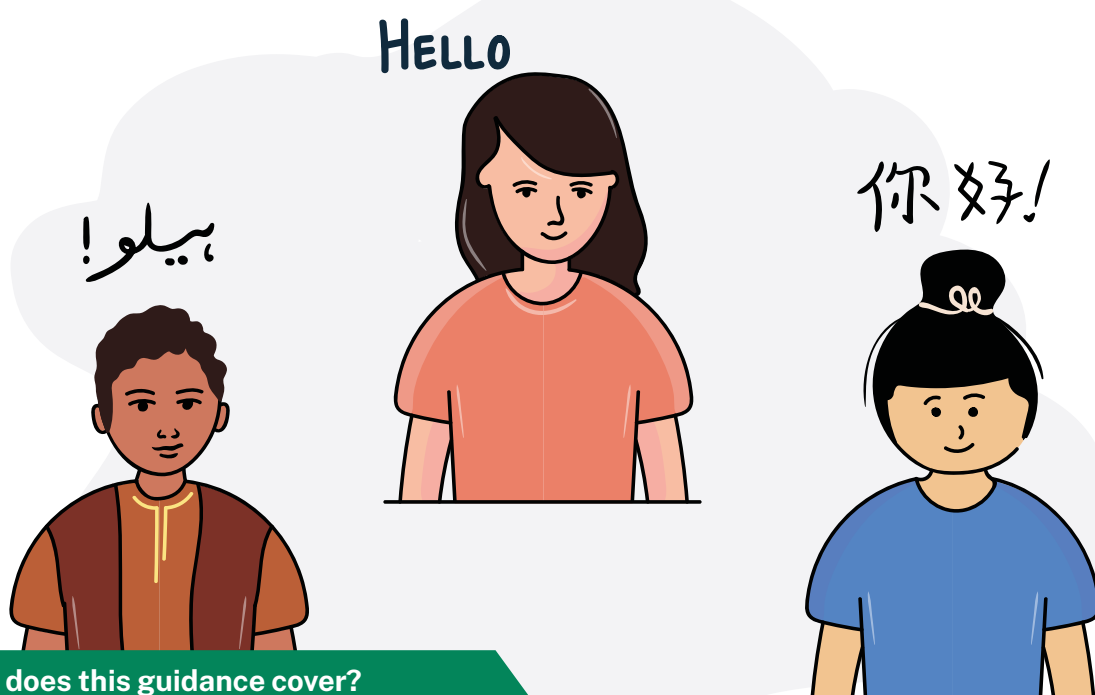


About the Scottish Education System: Primary Schools

Guidance for parents of children and young people who use English as an Additional Language (EAL)



What does this guidance cover?

Here you can find practical information to help you find a school place for your child and to understand the Scottish Education System.

There are different types of schools in Scotland:

- Local schools.
- Special schools.
- Denominational schools.
- Gaelic education.
- Independent schools (fee-paying).

This guidance tells you about Scottish schools which you do not have to pay for.

You can also choose to teach your child at home, either full or part-time. This is called *home schooling*. Find out more here: <https://www.mygov.scot/learning-home-education-flexi-schooling/home-education-flexi-schooling>

Place of learning	Information
Nursery	Not compulsory (your child does not need to attend). Child's age: From 0. There are funded hours for some 2-year-olds and all 3-4-year-olds.
Primary School Primary 1 Primary 2 Primary 3 Primary 4 Primary 5 Primary 6 Primary 7	Compulsory (your child has to attend). Child's age: 4½-12 years. School is usually from 9am to 3pm, times can vary.
Secondary School S1 S5 S2 S6 S3 S4	S1 – S4 is compulsory. S5 and S6 – children can choose to attend. Child's age: 12-16 years.



1. How can I find a school place for my child?

Councils (also called the local authority) use “catchment areas” to determine at which school your child is given a place. Your nearest school may not be in your catchment area. To find out which schools are in your catchment area, look on your council’s website and use your postcode. Find out more here: <https://www.mygov.scot/register-your-child-for-a-school>

You can speak to your catchment school if you cannot access forms online or if you are joining the school during the school year.

You can apply to other schools outside your catchment area.

- If there is space, your request must be granted.
- If there is no space, you can either find a school with free places, send your child to the school in your catchment area or choose a fee-paying private school.
- You also have a right to appeal if your request is not granted.

2. What age will my child start school?

Children in Scotland start school when they are aged between 4½ and 5½ years old.

- If your child's birthday is on or between 1 March and 31 August, your child will usually start school at the beginning of the Autumn term in the August the year they turn five.
- If your child's birthday is on or between 1 September and the last day in February, your child will usually start school at the beginning of the Autumn term in the August before they turn five.
- If your child is still four years old on the date they are due to start primary school, you can choose to delay your child's entry to primary school by a year. Children who have deferred entry to primary school are entitled to an additional year of funded early learning and childcare.

3. How do I find out the school term and holiday dates?

School term and holiday dates vary across Scotland.

Speak to the school to find out the dates or look at this website:

<https://www.mygov.scot/school-term-holiday-dates>

4. What can I expect from school?

Read the *school handbook* to find out more about the school. Every school should have a handbook.

- The national maximum class sizes for a single year group are:
 - Primary 1 – up to 25 pupils.
 - Primaries 2-3 – up to 30 pupils.
 - Primaries 4-7 – up to 33 pupils.

The maximum size of a composite class of any age group is 25 pupils.

A composite class is one where children from two or more year groups are taught together (this is due to staffing and not the ability of your child).

For your child, there may be:

- Induction activities to help your child settle into school.
- A regular timetable of lessons taught by the same teacher.
- Some lessons taught by a specialist teacher.
- Access to a full curriculum – see below for more information.
- Homework linked to classroom learning.

What else will my child do at school?

Your child will be able to take part in extra-curricular activities, school trips and other events, including:

- *Assemblies* and opportunities for *collective worship*.
- *Extra-curricular activities* and *clubs*, e.g. sport, music and drama.
- *School trips* to places of interest/theatres/sports events.
- *Class assemblies* and *productions* to watch children perform.
- *Social events* and *fundraising events* such as *sports days*, *fairs*, *discos* and *quizzes*.



How will I know what is happening at school?

Your school will communicate regularly with you so that you know what is happening in your child's class. Schools will use different forms of communication, including:

- *School website*: important dates, information and announcements.
- *Notifications*: text messages, social media (e.g. Twitter) and apps.
- *Online systems*: *school meals* and *parents' evening* appointments.
- *Emails* and *letters*: school, classroom and holiday information.
- *Parents' evenings* and *reports*: face-to-face meetings and reports.
- *Meetings* and *information evenings*: about school life and subjects.
- *Direct communication*: one-to-one conversations by phone or email.
- *Parent Council/Parent Teacher Association*: this is a group of parents selected by the parents to represent their views.



Find out more information by talking to other parents in the playground.

5. What will school expect from me?

As a parent, you will be expected to:

- Send your child to school every day and on time, unless they are ill, have an appointment or it is a religious holiday.
- Find details on *free school transport* from your local council here: <https://www.mygov.scot/free-school-transport>
- Contact the school to tell them why your child is absent. Tell the school in advance when you can.
- Tell the school about any important events or circumstances for your child or family. They will try their best to support you.
- Provide *medical* details and *contact* details.
- Complete *consent forms* to say that your child can go on school trips, have photographs taken, etc.



6. Who is who in school?

Look at the *school handbook* or school website to see photographs and names of staff members; sometimes these are on display in the school entrance too.

Ask the school which staff members will be working with your child. These may include:

- *Senior Leaders* – e.g. the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher, Principal Teacher.
- *Office Staff* – e.g. the school Receptionist.
- *Teaching Staff* – e.g. the Class Teacher.
- *Specialist Staff* – e.g. EAL Teacher (English as an Additional Language).
- *Support Staff* – e.g. Pupil Support Assistants, Support for Learning Workers.



7. What is taught and tested in school?

Curriculum for Excellence is Scotland’s curriculum for children and young people aged 3-18.

It is an approach designed to provide young people with the knowledge, skills and attributes they need for learning, life and work in the 21st century.

It aims to enable every child or young person to be a:

- Successful learner.
- Confident individual.
- Responsible citizen.
- Effective contributor.









Stages and levels

The curriculum is broken into two broad stages:

- a Broad General Education, from the early years until the end of S3.
- a Senior Phase, which will include studying for qualifications (from S4-S6).

Broad General Education (BGE)	
Age 3 – P1	Early Level
P2 – P4	First Level
P5 – P7	Second Level
S1 – S3	Third/Fourth Level
S4 – S6	Senior Phase

The Broad General Education is divided into five curriculum levels (Early, First, Second, Third and Fourth) across eight curriculum areas.

 Expressive arts	 Health and wellbeing	 Languages	 Literacy and English
 Numeracy and mathematics	 Religious and moral education	 Sciences	 Social studies

Each curriculum area is broken down into a set of experiences and outcomes (often referred to as Es and Os):

The “experiences” describe the learning. The “outcomes” represent what the learning will achieve. Teachers will assess what children know, understand and are able to do within the experiences and outcomes. Assessment is not based only on tests. Find more detailed information here:

<https://education.gov.scot/learning-in-scotland/>

National Standardised Assessments for Scotland (NSA)

Children and young people in P1, P4, P7 and S3 complete online standardised assessments in literacy and numeracy. The assessments help to identify children’s progress and provide information to support teachers’ professional judgement.

Children and young people do not have to revise or prepare for these assessments and there is no pass or fail.



8. What will my child need?

Ask your child’s school if there is a school uniform and where to buy it.

- Most schools in Scotland expect children to wear a school uniform.
- Your child’s school will provide a list of what to buy and tell you where you can buy it; ask about PE (physical education) kit and swimming kit too.
- You may be entitled to a “school clothing grant”. You can find out more here: <https://www.mygov.scot/clothing-grants>



Ask your school about lunchtime meal options for your child, which include:

- A *school meal* – sometimes called a *school lunch* or *dinner*.
- A *packed lunch* – brought in from home.
- A *home dinner* – going home for lunch.



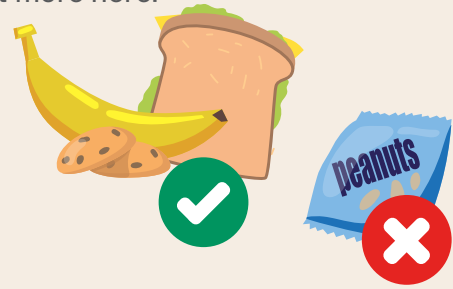
Ask about the *school meals* menu, the cost and how to pay, because:

- Primaries 1–5 can get free school meals, your family’s financial circumstances do not matter.
- The school can help with special diet requirements, e.g. Halal meals.
- Some schools provide free milk and/or fruit.

Apply for free school meals if you are on other benefits as this can help with school clothing grants. Apply on your local council’s website. You can find out more here:

<https://www.mygov.scot/school-meals>

Many Scottish school pupils take a small snack with them to eat during the break (the break is sometimes called the interval, or “playtime”). Their snack might be a piece of fruit, a sandwich or biscuit. Do not give them food which contains peanuts, because most schools are peanut-free zones.



9. What extra support is there for pupils who need it?

All children and young people have the right to get the support they need to reach their full learning potential. In Scotland, there is an inclusive educational system which focuses on overcoming barriers to learning and *Getting it right for every child* (GIRFEC).

Some children and young people need additional support.

A child may need additional support for different reasons, including:

- The learning environment.
- Family circumstances.
- Health or disability needs.
- Social and emotional factors.



Your local authority will have a policy explaining how they identify, plan and provide support to children and young people who need additional help with their learning.

10. How can I help my child to learn?

Find out how to help your child to learn [here](#) or go to www.bell-foundation.org.uk/eal-programme/guidance/parental-involvement/