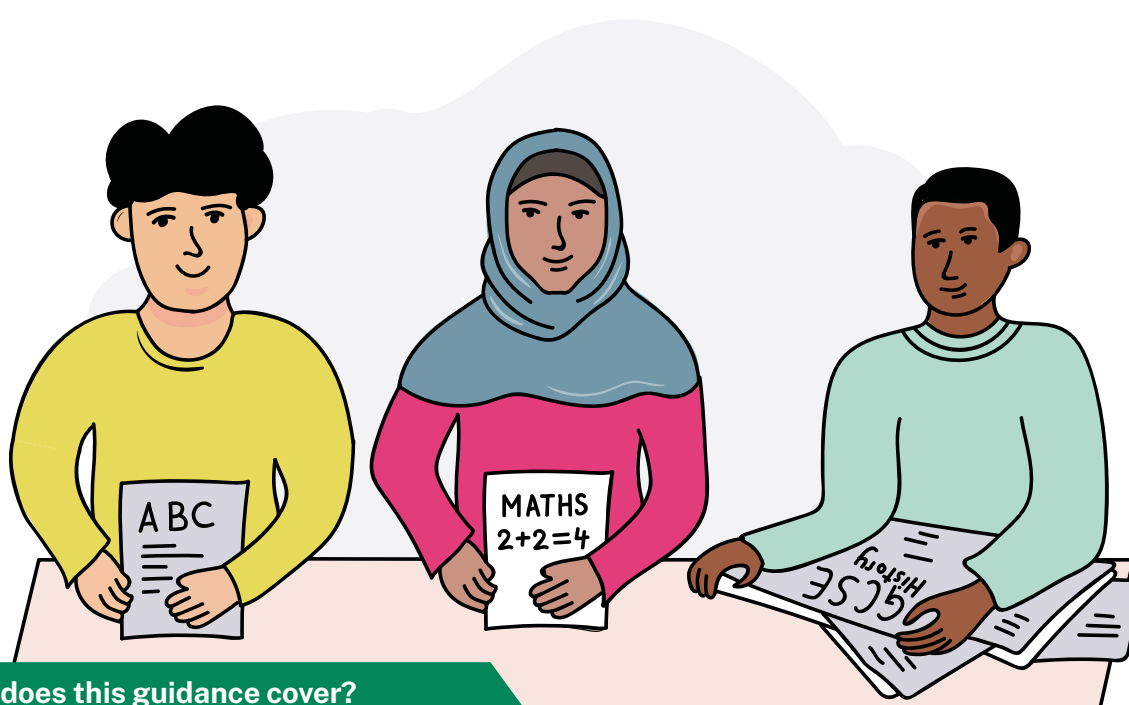


About the Scottish Education System: Secondary Schools

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.
Further Education College	Young people aged 16 or over can choose to attend. Some young people can attend for free. Check with the college.
Higher Education Institution (University)	Young people aged 17 or over can choose to attend. Some students can attend for free.



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 leave secondary school?

Young people who will be 16 years old on or between 1 March and 30 September can leave school on 31 May. Those who are 16 years old on or between 1 October and the last day of February can leave school on the first day of the Christmas holidays.

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.

For your child, there may be:

- Transition days: Primary 7 pupils will have the opportunity to spend some days in their new secondary school to see what it will be like.
- A regular timetable of lessons; each lesson will be taught by a subject specialist.
- Access to a full curriculum – see below for more information.
- An inclusive approach where all children are treated fairly.
- Regular homework linked to the curriculum.

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.

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.
- *Pastoral Staff* –e.g. Pastoral Teacher, Guidance Teacher.
- *Specialist Staff* –e.g. EAL Teacher (English as an Additional Language), ESOL Teacher (English for Speakers of Other Languages).
- *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

There is also a focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills across every subject area as well as Skills for Learning, Life and Work as young people prepare for their adult lives.

At the end of the Broad General Education, young people will be supported in a course of study called the Senior Phase which will support them to gain qualifications, National 1–National 5. The Senior Phase offers opportunity for specialisation leading to qualifications. Young people will have a wide range of opportunities to experience learning and achieve qualifications.

National Qualifications (NQs) are one of the most important types of qualifications in Scotland. They cover different subjects to suit everyone’s interests. Young people may need to complete different types of coursework for each course they are studying. Exams are set by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

Some schools will offer ESOL exams (English for Speakers of Other Languages), please speak to your school for more information. Some schools may be able to offer exams in first languages, please contact your school for more information.

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>

Most schools provide lunch for pupils in a dining area or cafeteria. Young people can choose to bring a lunch from home; if they live near, they can go home for lunch.

Most schools will sell snack items too. Some schools do not accept cash now.



You can apply for free school meals if you are on other benefits, which 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>

An Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is a weekly allowance for eligible students. It is payable on a 2-weekly basis. If you are eligible, you need to apply direct to your school or college. You can find out more here: <https://www.mygov.scot/ema>

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/