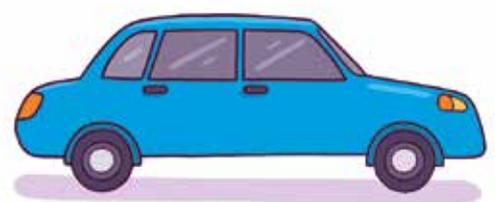


# Parents' / Carers' Guide



This book is a gift from The Educational Institute of Scotland



Scotland's largest  
and most effective  
education trade union

## How to translate this booklet

### Tłumaczyć traduire ترجمة

To translate any of this booklet into a different language,  
you can use the PDF version on the EIS website:

**[www.eis.org.uk/welcometoscotland](http://www.eis.org.uk/welcometoscotland)**

with **[www.translate.google.co.uk](http://www.translate.google.co.uk)**

Google can also translate the websites  
which are listed on pages 13-16.



# Welcome to Scotland

This booklet is for parents/carers of any child or young person who has recently arrived in Scotland from another country and who has received a Welcome Pack from the EIS (Educational Institute of Scotland) teacher trade union.

The EIS campaigns for a good education for every child and young person. Our members wanted us to welcome all children and young people who have newly arrived in Scotland, and to let them know their rights. That is why we created the Welcome Packs.

The Welcome Pack that your child has received is to tell them a bit about Scotland, and what their rights are here. This booklet is to provide parents/carers with some information about the education system in Scotland. We hope you will find it useful.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMIE SQUIRE

## Children's rights

'Rights' are things that every child or young person should have or be able to do to live safe, healthy and happy lives. The United Nations says that all children and young people who are under the age of 18 years old have the same rights no matter who they are, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or a girl, what their culture is, whether they are disabled or not, or whether they are rich or poor.

The rights of all children and young people are listed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which almost every country in the world has signed up to. All of the UNCRC rights are connected to each other, and all are equally important.

There is a guide to children's rights here: [www.unicef.org/rightsite](http://www.unicef.org/rightsite)

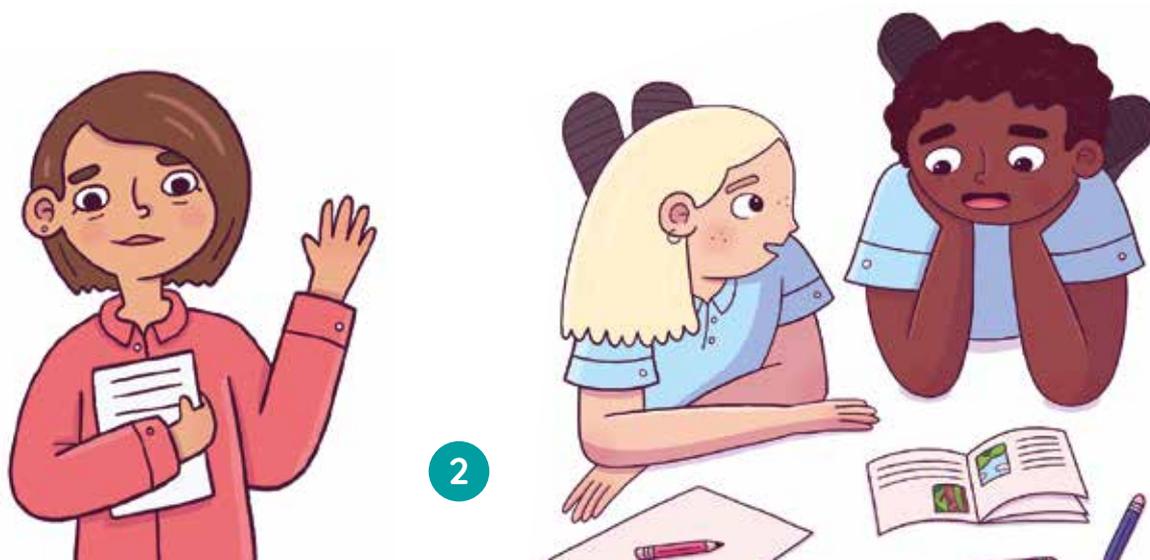
### Children's right to education

The right to education is very important. All children and young people in the world have the right to go to school and to receive a good quality education.

Children and young people who have left their own country and arrived in a new country as migrants, and those who have had to leave their own country as refugees, also have the right to a good education.

Every child in Scotland has a right to a free place at school between the ages of 5 and 16. The law expects everyone to take part in education between these ages.

After age 16, young people can choose if and how they want to continue their education.



## The right to extra support with their education

All children and young people in the world have a right to extra support with their education if they are disabled. In Scotland, children and young people, or their parents/carers on their behalf, have the right to ask for extra help and support with their learning in school when they need it, even if they aren't disabled.

In Scotland, the Additional Support for Learning Act (2004) and the accompanying Code of Practice set out your rights as a parent/carer and the rights of your child to get the additional support they need in school. They also tell schools, local authorities and other agencies how to make sure this happens.

You can find out more here: [enquire.org.uk/advice-for-parents](https://enquire.org.uk/advice-for-parents)

## The right to learn from education

Children's education should be designed to help them to use their talents and abilities, and to help them live peacefully, to protect the environment and to respect other people.

All of the world's children and young people have the right to their own culture, religion and language, and to learn about their own family's history, background and beliefs. They have the right to learn about these things from their education.

At school your child will be able to find out and discover things in many areas of knowledge, and to learn new skills. They will be able to share their thoughts and opinions with others through writing, talking and artistic expression unless this would cause harm and distress to others.

## Children's right to choose their friends

All children and young people in the world have the right to choose their own friends. School gives many good opportunities to meet new people who are around the same age as them, from backgrounds which may be similar or different to theirs, and to make friends with them.



| Place of learning   | Who it's for   | When they attend  |
|---|--|---|
| Nursery   | Children aged 3 or 4   | Children in Scotland who are aged 3 or 4 years old (and some who are 2 years old) have a right to 600 hours per year of early learning and childcare. This usually means around 16 hours per week during term time.   |
| <p>Primary School</p> <p>Primary 1 – Age 5*</p> <p>Primary 2 – Age 6</p> <p>Primary 3 – Age 7</p> <p>Primary 4 – Age 8</p> <p>Primary 5 – Age 9</p> <p>Primary 6 – Age 10</p> <p>Primary 7 – Age 11</p> <p>(*Sometimes children start school at age 4 depending on when their birthday is.)</p> | Children aged 5 – 12   | <p>Monday – Friday, usually around 9am – 3:30pm, 190 days per year.</p> <p>Schools close for holidays over winter and summer, and at various points during the year. Check with your local council when your local schools open and close, or with the school itself.</p>                               |
| <p>Secondary School</p> <p>Secondary years 1-4 are mandatory – children must go.</p> <p>Secondary years 5-6 are optional - children choose to go.</p>   | <p>Children and young people aged 12 – 16</p> <p>Young people aged 16 - 18</p> | <p>Monday – Friday, usually around 9am – 3:30pm, 190 days per year.</p> <p>Schools close for holidays at various points during the year. Check with your local council when your local schools open and close, or with the school itself.</p>   |
| <p>Further Education College</p> <p>College is optional for young people aged 16 or over who qualify for entry.</p>   | Young people aged 16 and over  | <p>Times vary – it depends on the young person and what they are studying.</p> <p>Some students can attend for free. Check with the college.</p>  |
| <p>Higher Education Institution (University)</p> <p>University is optional for young people aged 17 or over who qualify for entry.</p>  | Young people, usually aged 17/18 and over                                      | <p>Times vary – it depends on the young person and what they are studying.</p> <p>Some students can attend for free.</p> <p>Young asylum seekers may be able to access a scholarship to undertake learning at university. Check with the university.</p> <p>* For further information see appendix.</p> |

## The school year

In Scotland, the school year starts in August and ends in June. There are various holidays during the year, and a long summer holiday during late June, July and early August, when there is no school. Schools are open 190 days per year.

### A typical school day

The school day usually runs from about 9am until about 3:30-4.00pm, from Monday to Friday, although every school has its own timetable. Some schools close at lunchtime on a Friday. Your school will provide your child with a timetable with information about when school starts and finishes each day and on the timing of lessons.



In primary schools, pupils usually have most of their lessons in one classroom, and also some time learning in the school library, gym or computer room. They usually have the same teacher for most of the time.

In secondary schools, pupils usually move between classrooms for different lessons, and have different teachers for different subjects. Their timetable will tell them which classroom to go to for each lesson and will usually tell them the teacher they will have for each too.

Most schools have an outdoor play area, called the playground. This sometimes has play equipment, a garden or a shelter. Children are able to spend time playing during the morning break and at lunchtime; and there is sometimes an afternoon break too. Many lessons will involve play too.

### Attendance at and absence from school

Parents/carers of children who are registered with a school need to tell the school if their child will not be at school because of illness or any other reason. This is so that the school knows that children and young people are safe when they are not at school. If your child has to be absent from school you should let the school know why, either by phone-call or email, on the first day that your child is absent, or by letter when they return to school.

## The curriculum

Schools in Scotland provide a curriculum (meaning all the things that are taught in nursery, school and college) for children and young people aged 3 to 18. The aim of the Scottish curriculum is to make each child a:

- **successful learner**
- **confident individual**
- **responsible citizen**
- **effective contributor**



## Curriculum content

The curriculum covers eight areas:

- **expressive arts**
- **health and wellbeing**
- **languages**
- **mathematics**
- **religious and moral education**
- **science**
- **social studies**
- **technologies**

Pupils in 'the senior phase' – years 4, 5 and 6, within secondary schools can study various qualifications in Scottish schools, across these curriculum areas.

## School ethos

Schools in Scotland aim to be places where everyone can feel safe, included and involved, and where everyone can achieve. Scottish schools aim to provide an excellent education for every child.

## Making sure children and young people are OK in school

Children and young people have the right to be safe, healthy, and cared for both at home and in school. It's everyone's job – parents, teachers, school support staff- to make sure children and young people are okay in school.

## Pastoral care in school

Teachers care about the children and young people in their school. As a parent/carer, you can talk to staff at the school about any issue that might be affecting your child's learning or causing them to be worried or upset at school.

If you are the parent/carer of a child at primary school and would like to talk about your child with the staff of the school, you should visit, send an email or make a phone call to the school office requesting this. Or you could send a note or a letter with your child to give to the headteacher, asking for a meeting to be arranged.

In secondary schools, there are teachers called 'Pastoral Care Teachers', or 'Guidance Teachers' whose job is to help pupils with any worries they have and to give them support and advice. You may have been introduced to your child's Pastoral Care Teacher already. She or he will be interested to know how they are doing throughout your child's time at secondary school and will try to talk to you, as their parent/carer, from time to time.

If you are the parent/carer of a child at secondary school and would like to talk about your child with the staff of the school, you should visit, send an email or make a phone call to the school office requesting this. Or you could send a note or a letter with your child to give to their Pastoral Care Teacher or to the Depute Headteacher, asking for a meeting to be arranged.

## Religious observance

All schools in Scotland have some kind of religious observance or 'time for reflection'. How often and in what form this happens varies from school to school; it can be every week, or a few times a year.

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from religious observance; and young people's preferences should also be respected.

Talk to your child's Headteacher or Pastoral Care/Pupil Support/Guidance Teacher if this is something that you'd like to discuss with the school.

## Behaviour and discipline

Schools in Scotland are not allowed to hit students, or punish them with any kind of violence. Physical punishment is against the law in Scottish schools.

Schools have positive behaviour policies to try and encourage good behaviour so that everyone feels safe at school and able to learn.

Schools also ensure that unacceptable behaviour, such as bullying, is dealt with and can withdraw privileges, give detention and exclude pupils whose behaviour has caused harm to others.

## Bullying, racism and religious prejudice

Bullying behaviour makes children and young people feel hurt, threatened, frightened or left out. It can happen face to face and online.

Racism involves treating someone differently and unfairly because of their race, culture or skin colour.

Religious prejudice can lead to people treating others differently and unfairly because of their religion or because others think that they belong to a particular religion or faith.

Bullying, racism and religious prejudice are never acceptable. If your child experiences these at school, you can help by listening to what they have to say about it and contacting the school about the matter too. The Headteacher, Guidance, Pastoral Care/ Pupil Support Teacher will take the matter very seriously and take action to prevent any further bullying, racist or prejudiced behaviour against your child.

## Additional Support Needs

The law (Additional Support for Learning Act, 2004) says that pupils who need extra support to help them to learn should have that support provided. There might be lots of different reasons why a pupil needs extra support for their learning, for example having difficulties with reading or writing, being disabled, being looked after by the local council rather than by family, or having experienced bereavement or loss. It is very common for children and young people in Scottish schools to ask for and get extra help with their learning. You and your child will be able to ask the school for extra help when it's needed too.



## English as an Additional Language (EAL) support and ESOL qualifications

A child having English as an additional language can be considered an additional support need covered by the law.

Schools offer particular kinds of support to students who speak English as an extra language as well as the language(s) they speak at home. This is offered by the EAL services.

Young people who are multilingual can also study ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) qualifications which are aimed at developing knowledge and skills in speaking, writing, listening and reading in English.

Ask your child's school about what help and qualifications they can offer if you think that this would help your child.

Scotland values having learners who speak many different languages and would encourage young people to be proud if they speak a different language at home than they use at school.

## Cost of the school day

Although school education is free in Scotland, there can sometimes be costs linked to school attendance.

Some subjects ask parents to pay a little towards materials, for example Home Economics might ask for a payment towards ingredients. Some music lessons can also have a cost.

Sometimes there are charges for school trips, or for days when students are allowed to wear casual or 'dressing up' clothes instead of school uniform. Sometimes there are sales in school, of books or cakes, which pupils might want to bring money for.

You should talk to your child's Headteacher if in primary school, or the Guidance/Pastoral Care/Pupil Support Teacher if in Secondary school, about any issues related to any costs associated with school activities. All children should be able to participate fully in the life of the school.



## Uniform/clothing grants

Most schools have a uniform, meaning that pupils should wear certain items of clothing, in certain colours. Parents on low income can get some money called a 'clothing grant' to help them buy school uniform for their children. Clothing grants are set at a minimum of £100 per child in Scotland. Speak to your child's school about clothing grants and how to apply if you think your family might be eligible.

Some schools also have supplies of spare items of uniform such as ties and jumpers. Ask if your school has extras that they can give out.

Pupils usually need a set of clothes for P.E. (physical education, or sport/games), called a 'P.E. kit', such as leggings, shorts, tee-shirt and gym shoes/ trainers. Some schools also have spare items of P.E. kit that students can have or borrow. Again, speak to your Guidance/ Pastoral Care/Pupil Support Teacher about this.

## Lunch/Free School Meals

Free School Meals are provided for children in Primary 1, 2 and 3 (and in Glasgow for Primary 4). Children from Primary 4 to S6 can also receive a free school meal if they are from a family which has a low income. Higher income families have to pay for school meals for children from Primary 4 through to S6. If you think that your child might be entitled to a free school meal, ask the school about this and how to apply.



Schools provide lunch for pupils in a special dining area or cafeteria. Pupils can choose to bring a lunch from home (called a packed lunch) or, if they live near enough, they can go home for lunch.

## Snacks

Many Scottish school students take a small snack with them to eat during the break between morning lessons (the break is sometimes called the interval, or 'playtime'). Their snack might be a piece of fruit, a sandwich or biscuit. In most schools the cafeteria is open in the morning selling snacks and some schools have tuckshops where pupils can buy snacks too. Most schools do not allow any snacks with peanuts in them because of allergies.

## Clubs and sports

Many schools have clubs and sports teams that pupils can get involved with, outside of lessons and/or school hours, for example, at lunchtime or after school. Many of these are free though some have a cost. The school can tell you more about what is available, and how they can help with any costs of taking part.

## Trips

Most schools take pupils on occasional day trips to places of interest like museums, historical sites and leisure parks; or longer trips, for example, to outdoor education centres, as part of their education. Many of these trips are free though some have costs. The school should be able to tell you about any trips that your child might be involved in and offer help with any costs that there might be, if needed.

## Home education

Families in Scotland have the right to educate their children at home. However, it is a choice which only a small minority of parents make.

## Providing data to schools

Schools in Scotland usually collect information about the children, such as their religion, and background, e.g. what languages they speak, or if they have any extra needs. This is to help them to understand their community better and to plan for the best learning and support for the children. This information is kept safe and confidential.

## Transport

Children travel to school in different ways, depending on where they live and how close to the school. Many children walk to school. Some travel by car, bus or bike. Pupils who have to travel more than a certain distance can be entitled to free transport. Your local council can help with this.



## Parental engagement

Parents/carers are strongly encouraged to get involved with the schools their children attend, and to support their children's learning. Schools provide advice to parents on how they can help their children with their learning. Parents of pupils at primary school are encouraged to contact the Headteacher if there is something that they would like to discuss about their child. For secondary pupils, parents can contact the child's Pupil Support Teacher. At different times in the year parents are invited to visit the school and talk to their child's teachers about how they are getting on with their learning. Parents are also invited to fun events and shows that the school might be running.

## Things to do outside of school

There are lots of FREE, fun things to do with your children when they are not in school.

Libraries are places where you can borrow books. Sometimes you can also use computers, borrow CDs, borrow audio-books, and join in with arts and crafts activities. It is free to join the library and to borrow books. Your local council can help you find out more.

Scotland has many museums which offer free entry. Museums are places where interesting objects are stored and displayed, and lots of them have special activities and fun things for children and young people to do. Some of the free museums in Scotland include:

- **National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh**
- **Museum of Childhood, Edinburgh**
- **Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow**
- **Riverside Museum, Glasgow**
- **People's Palace, Glasgow**
- **Aberdeen Maritime Museum, Aberdeen**
- **Broughty Castle Museum, Dundee**
- **Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, Inverness**

Some areas also have art galleries which can be free and fun.

Scotland also has many parks and gardens where you can play, run around, walk your dog, or have a picnic. Some are small local parks, with swings and other play equipment, and some are big country parks. Most parks are completely free. Some large country parks are free to enter, but you have to pay for parking. Your local council can tell you more about parks in your area.

Some coastal parts of Scotland have beaches where it can be fun to play and swim (if you don't mind the cold water!).

Most councils provide swimming pools and leisure centres where you can play sports such as football, tennis or table-tennis. Some of these offer free entry to children at certain times (e.g. summer) or all year. Ask your local council what they offer.



## Useful contacts

### Education

**3-18 curriculum:** [education.gov.scot/parentzone/learning-in-scotland/About%20the%203-18%20curriculum](https://www.education.gov.scot/parentzone/learning-in-scotland/About%20the%203-18%20curriculum)

**General information for parents:** [education.gov.scot/parentzone](https://www.education.gov.scot/parentzone)

**Information about parental involvement with schools:** [www.connect.scot](https://www.connect.scot)

**Education guide for asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland:**  
[www.gov.scot/Publications/2005/05/04143503/35049](https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2005/05/04143503/35049)

**Additional Support for Learning, parents' guide:**  
[enquire.org.uk/information/parents-guide](https://enquire.org.uk/information/parents-guide)

### Advice services

**Scottish Refugee Council:** [www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](https://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)

**Citizens' Advice Bureau:** [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland)

## Local government

[www.cosla.gov.uk/scottish-local-government](http://www.cosla.gov.uk/scottish-local-government)

## Keeping safe

Anti-Bullying service: [respectme.org.uk](http://respectme.org.uk)

Children's free helpline: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) / 0800 1111

## Outside of school

Free things to do: [www.visitscotland.com/see-do/attractions/free](http://www.visitscotland.com/see-do/attractions/free)

Country parks: [www.list.co.uk/article/69045-the-best-country-parks-near-glasgow-and-edinburgh](http://www.list.co.uk/article/69045-the-best-country-parks-near-glasgow-and-edinburgh)

### Free museums:

[www.museumsassociation.org/members-free-entry/scotland](http://www.museumsassociation.org/members-free-entry/scotland)

[www.moneysavingexpert.com/deals/free-museums-and-art-galleries](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/deals/free-museums-and-art-galleries)

**Young Scot:** a charity which offers a card for young people aged 11-26 living in Scotland, which includes various benefits including travel discounts: [young.scot/the-young-scot-card](http://young.scot/the-young-scot-card)



## Asylum seekers' access to Higher Education

Asylum Seekers and those staying in the UK on humanitarian grounds because of their immigration status are not supported through the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) which funds most Scottish students.

However, there is other support available such as scholarships and from other organisations who support asylum seeker students or those without immigration status.

### Scholarships

Scholarships meet the cost of tuition fees and include an allowance for essential study-related expenditure. In seeking entry to a university on a scholarship basis, applicants should apply for their preferred course through UCAS.

Universities look at scholarship applications from potential students who:

- hold a conditional or unconditional offer for study at the institution that they have applied for; and
- have submitted, or are the dependant of someone who has submitted, an application to the Home Office for recognition as a Refugee under the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees (hereafter “The Convention”) and who has not yet received a decision from the Home Office on that application or the outcome of an appeal on that application; or
- have been offered leave to remain in the UK on the grounds of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, provided that the student has not become eligible for Student Support from the relevant student funding body in Scotland, England, Wales or Northern Ireland.

Applications will also be considered from students who have already started their course of study but have subsequently applied for asylum and can no longer access their original funding. In these cases, it will be necessary to establish that the original funding for study is no longer available and applicants will be required to provide supporting evidence.

### Scholarships for asylum seekers are available at:

- The University of Strathclyde via [asylum-scholarship@strath.ac.uk](mailto:asylum-scholarship@strath.ac.uk)

More detail on this scholarship can be found here:

[www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/scholarships/asylumseekersscholarship](http://www.strath.ac.uk/studywithus/scholarships/asylumseekersscholarship)

- Glasgow University via [mrio-scholarships@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:mrio-scholarships@glasgow.ac.uk)

More detail on this scholarship can be found here:

[www.gla.ac.uk/scholarships/humanitarianscholarships/#/eligiblecountries](http://www.gla.ac.uk/scholarships/humanitarianscholarships/#/eligiblecountries)

[www.gla.ac.uk/scholarships/humanitarianscholarships/](http://www.gla.ac.uk/scholarships/humanitarianscholarships/)

### Fee waivers and home fees

The University of the West of Scotland and the University of Glasgow both consider fee waivers and granting of home fees on a case by case basis.

The Carnegie Trust is also a potential funding source for prospective students who have lived in Scotland for a while. The Carnegie Trust can help with fees if a university has agreed to consider granting home fees on an exceptional basis.

[www.carnegie-trust.org/schemes/undergraduate-schemes/fee-assistance.html#background](http://www.carnegie-trust.org/schemes/undergraduate-schemes/fee-assistance.html#background)

### Glasgow Refugee and Migrant Network (GRAMNet)

Glasgow University also helps asylum seekers through a group called GRAMNet: [www.gla.ac.uk/research/az/gramnet](http://www.gla.ac.uk/research/az/gramnet)

You can email general enquires to David Wright, Network Administrator at: [david.wright@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:david.wright@glasgow.ac.uk) or [gramadmin@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:gramadmin@glasgow.ac.uk)

Or write to: 11 The Square, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, G12 8QQ

Advice on these matters and referrals for legal advice are available from the Scottish Refugee Council and/or appropriate UK agencies.



