

School Breakfast Provision and Children's Rights

Magic Breakfast is the UK's leading school breakfast charity, making a difference to over 350,000 children and young people by partnering with schools to provide breakfasts and expert advice across Scotland and England. Currently, over 7% of young Scots can access a "magic" breakfast every school morning supporting educational equity, reducing barriers to learning, and delivering for busy families. Our mission is to ensure that every child and young person in Scotland is nourished, empowered, and able to thrive.

The [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#) was a piece of cross party legislation that can improve the lives of a generation. The last Parliament passed this law, and it's up to this Parliament to ensure it is implemented properly. **The 54 Articles of the [UNCRC](#) are the bedrock of building a better Scotland** to grow up in.



School breakfast provision must be part of this. The far-reaching benefits of breakfast support a variety of the 54 Articles. From delivering better health outcomes to supporting academic advancement, school breakfast provision should be part of Scotland's new chapter with UNCRC incorporation.

Alleviating poverty

In [Bringing Hope, Building Futures](#) – the last tackling child poverty delivery plan before we reach the 2030 targets – **the Scottish Government rightly acknowledged the poverty-relieving elements of school breakfast provision.** This includes delivering effective wraparound childcare at the start of the school day. [Our Annual Breakfast Survey](#) shows that **71% of our mainstream partner primary schools see a direct link between breakfast provision and parental access to work opportunities.** Whilst access to work is a strong way out of poverty, we already see that [almost three quarters of children in poverty come from a working household.](#)

Article 24

State parties ... shall take appropriate measures to ... combat disease and malnutrition ... through the provision of adequate nutritious foods.

Article 26

State parties shall recognize for every child the right to benefit from social security.

That's why **school breakfast provision is more than childcare**, it delivers a nutritious food intervention supporting children at risk of hunger. [Across Scotland](#), **210,000 children and young people are living in food insecure households.** [According to Trussel](#) this means that 'at some point in the previous year, they ran out of food and were unable to afford more, reduced the size of their meals or ate less because they couldn't afford food, or went hungry or lost weight due to a lack of money.'

The high cost of living, rising inflation, high cost of food (especially healthy food), low household incomes, food insecurity, and regional inequalities all contribute to the factors affecting children and young people being at risk of hunger.

A school breakfast provides a nourishing meal at the start of the school day contributing to poverty alleviation benefits which support the implementation of UNCRC. This includes children's right to access the social security system, have an adequate standard of living, and receive adequate food (Articles 24, 26, 27).

Article 27

State parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for social ... development.

Supporting children's health

Article 24

State parties recognize the right of the child to the ... highest attainable standard of health.

Magic Breakfast's partner schools and parents show significant support for the health and wellbeing benefits of school breakfast provision.

- [A majority of schools report](#) **positive impacts on physical health and wellbeing (86%) and mental health and wellbeing (86%).**
- [Most parents](#) (92%) see **a direct positive impact on their child's physical health.**

[Children in the most deprived areas](#) are **more than twice as likely to be living with obesity (13.9%) compared to those in the least deprived areas (6.8%)**. A typical, balanced breakfast provides [one third](#) of a school child's recommended daily food intake, and those who eat breakfast are more likely to develop positive habits.

Article 27

State parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for physical ... development.

Beyond nutrition, **breakfast clubs provide safe, welcoming spaces that support emotional regulation, routine, and connection**. These protective factors are particularly important for children experiencing poverty, trauma or instability, and align with wider Scottish priorities around prevention, early intervention and child wellbeing.

School breakfast provision's health benefits support the implementation of UNCRC. This includes children's right to a high standard of health and of physical development (Articles 24 and 27).

Improving academic attainment

Article 28

State parties recognize the right of every child to education.

Evidence shows that **children and young people who regularly eat breakfast do better in school**. In primary schools [a study of Magic Breakfast's school breakfast provision](#) shows that Primary 3 aged children can receive **an extra 2 months of academic progress in key subjects like English and Maths**. In secondary schools, [breakfast consumption has been linked](#) on average to achieving two grades higher in key exams than those who don't have breakfast.

Attainment is supported by the classroom environment and attendance. [A majority of Magic Breakfast partner primary schools](#) see **a benefit to attendance (89%) and punctuality (90%)**. Behaviour is also improved, delivering a more cohesive classroom environment even for those who don't access school breakfast provision.

School breakfast provision's academic benefits also support the implementation of UNCRC. This includes children's right to a high standard of education and an education system which supports their development. (Articles 28 and 29)

Article 29

State parties agree that ... education ... shall be directed to ... the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential.

Article 12

State parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all mater affecting the child.

Delivering school breakfast in Scotland

The Scottish Government has committed to universal breakfast provision in all primary and special schools from August 2027. It is vital that children and young people's needs and views are at the heart of the policy development process and its implementation. They have a right (Article 12) to have their voices heard on breakfast development both directly and through advocates like Magic Breakfast.

MSPs across the Scottish Parliament can support delivering the school breakfast commitment. Between now and August 2027 we're calling on MSPs to support school breakfasts by:

- **Ensuring the Scottish Government delivers its commitment to provide universal school breakfast provision for all primary and special schools from August 2027.**
- **Scrutinising the delivery of the Scottish Government's commitment by drawing on the experiences of children and young people, schools and local communities to deliver effective and workable national guidance for all communities.**
- **Working with the Scottish Government to ensure national school breakfast provision is fully aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).**



If you would like to get in touch or learn more about our work, please don't hesitate to reach out to our Scotland team:

Finlay Allmond

Devolved Nations Strategic Lead
finlay.allmond@magicbreakfast.com

Emma Murphy

Policy & Public Affairs Officer
emma.murphy@magicbreakfast.com