

The school breakfast advantage: improving outcomes for Scotland's pupils

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.

Scotland continues to face a persistent poverty-related attainment gap, with educational outcomes closely linked to socioeconomic background. Despite sustained investment of [around £200 million per year](#) through the Scottish Attainment Challenge, progress remains uneven.



School breakfast provision improves attainment, attendance & behaviour



School breakfast provision can improve attainment, attendance and behaviour while addressing some of the [underlying barriers](#) that prevent children and young people from engaging fully with education.

The Education Endowment Foundation found that **providing a free, universal school breakfast offer** can deliver the equivalent of **around [two months' additional academic progress](#)** for pupils.

Feedback from Magic Breakfast's [2026 Annual Breakfast Survey](#) shows that Scottish partner schools are already seeing these benefits in practice. Schools report improvements across the key drivers of educational success:

Attainment

95% of primary schools reported **improved pupil concentration**

88% of secondary schools reported **positive impacts on attainment**

Attendance

81% of primary schools reported **improved attendance**

72% of secondary schools reported **improvements in both attendance and punctuality**

Behaviour

81% of primary schools reported **improved behaviour**

68% of secondary schools reported **improved behaviour**

Because *I don't get to have breakfast some days*, it is important to have *breakfast at school to help my learning*.

Pupil, Magic Breakfast partner school, Edinburgh



School breakfast provision tackles the underlying causes of pupil disengagement

Magic Breakfast's [The Root Causes of Child Morning Hunger](#) report demonstrates that **the barriers facing children and young people are interconnected**. Poverty, food insecurity, housing pressures, mental health challenges and barriers to accessing breakfast can all contribute to poorer attendance, reduced readiness to learn, lower attainment and increased disengagement from school.

These barriers can have implications far beyond hunger alone. Research commissioned by Magic Breakfast shows that skipping breakfast and poor diet are associated [with increased aggression, fighting and low-level offending amongst adolescents](#), while food insecurity can increase vulnerability to exploitation and gang involvement.



School breakfast provision helps address these underlying drivers by creating safe, structured and supervised environments where children and young people can access food, build positive relationships and develop a stronger sense of [belonging within their school community](#). In doing so, breakfast clubs strengthen informal pastoral support, improve opportunities for early intervention and create conditions that help young people engage positively with school.

How MSPs can maximise the impact of school breakfast provision on attendance, attainment, & behaviour



The impact of breakfast provision is being felt in communities across Scotland, helping children and young people arrive at school nourished, engaged and ready to learn. This shared experience is reflected in communities across the country.

The Scottish Government has committed [£44 million annually to fund universal breakfast provision for primary and special schools](#) from August 2027. As the policy is developed and implementation begins, Parliament can position breakfast as a strategic intervention (both in terms of [cost](#) and [impact](#)) for improving attainment, attendance and behaviour while tackling the root causes of educational inequality.

Between now and August 2027 we're calling on MSPs to support school breakfast provision 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:

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