

Education Visits Programme 2019 – 2020

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Find out how your school, college or university can engage with the Parliament

The Scottish Parliament Education Service delivers sessions to over 22,000 Scottish pupils through our visits to the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh, as well as our team coming to your school.

Our sessions are designed to develop the principles of Democracy and Citizenship and are in line with A Curriculum for Excellence, SQA Examinations, and contribute to aims on [Political Literacy](#). We prioritise school groups who are studying the Scottish Parliament.

Age / Stage

Our education sessions are aimed at Scottish pupils in P5 – S6 who are studying the Scottish Parliament.

We recognise some schools have younger composite classes so please get in touch to discuss the suitability of our sessions.

All age groups and stages of students from colleges and universities are welcome.

Pupil numbers

Each Education Visit session can accommodate 40 spaces (including adults).

On Mondays and Fridays, we can take larger groups of up to 70 spaces (including adults).

Outreach sessions are generally designed for a standard class size of around 30. However, you can specify larger groups in the booking form, and we will call to discuss how our team can [visit your school](#) and deliver an education session to one or more classes, or a year group.

Frequency

Given we are a service of limited spaces, we ask schools to book only one visit, per class, per academic year.

If you book an Education Visit for a class, you cannot also book an outreach visit to your school for the same class.

Where Primary schools teach the Scottish Parliament to more than one year group, we ask schools to consider how best to participate in our programme. If you wish to visit the Parliament, please consider which year group you wish to focus on per school calendar year or how our tours might meet your needs. Please contact us for advice.

Cost

All our education sessions and resources are delivered free of charge. Since our team can come to the school to deliver the education service, we do not offer travel expenses for schools.

Engagement with MSPs

All our sessions include finding out about the MSPs who represent your school and whenever possible meeting with some of them.

On Mondays and Fridays, MSPs tend to be working in their constituencies and regions rather than at the Parliament and it is less likely you will meet your MSPs if your visit is on these days.

MSPs can be invited to schools as part of the Outreach Education programme. These visits take place on Mondays and Fridays only.

MSPs visit schools outside of our programme, as well as book tickets for Parliamentary business for constituents and conduct their own tours. If you wish to speak to your MSPs, please contact them directly. You can find who represents you through the [Find your MSP webpage](#).

Education Service and the Scottish Curriculum

Our services are aligned to the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence. We produce resources for use by teachers to support their own teaching. More information can be found on our webpages www.parliament.scot/education

You can bring a Pupil / School Council for a standard education session. You may find an [Outreach Education Session](#) can be more tailored to the needs of a pupil council group.

If you are an educator outside of Scotland, please call us to discuss the suitability of our sessions. A tour of the Scottish Parliament, delivered by our Visit Scotland 5-star Visitor Services colleagues, might help meet your needs.

When visiting the Parliament:

The Education Service at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh is delivered in line with the sitting of Parliament. You can check these dates [here](#).

Visit start times	Duration
Mondays 10.00 / 10.30; 13.00 / 13.30	90 min

Tuesdays	09.30; 10.15; 11.30; 13.15 ¹ ; 14.00	90 min
Wednesdays	09.30; 10.15; 11.30; 13.15; 14.00	90 min
Thursdays	09.30; 13.30	90 min
Thursdays	11.00 ²	2 hrs15
Fridays	10.00 / 10.30; 13.00 / 13.30	90 min

Each visit lasts 90 minutes and typically includes:

1. Activity (see list below)
2. One of:
 - a) Tour (All mornings & Monday/Friday pm) *or*
 - b) Tickets for Chamber Session (Tues/Wed/Thurs pm)
3. MSP Q&A³ (typically on Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday)

Please note, we are a working parliament, meaning business can change at the last minute.

1 Activity - Session content

The table below outlines what each activity covers and includes an indication of what level this has been designed for.

The team also develop new products throughout the year for piloting, as special events or in association with visiting exhibitions. These are listed on our website <http://www.parliament.scot/education> and promoted on our twitter feed [@Education_SP](https://twitter.com/Education_SP).

¹ Chamber session includes Topical Questions. Suitability of content cannot be guaranteed – not recommended for primary school groups

² FMQs session - S3-6 classes have priority booking for first 2 weeks after opening

³ Please note, non-Scottish schools will not have the MSP session, so education visits will be an hour rather than 90 minutes.

Exploring your Scottish Parliament P5 – P7

Through handling objects and working in groups, pupils explore the story of the Scottish Parliament from 1235 to present day. Pupils learn about the Devolved Powers of the Scottish Parliament and identify the key figures and their roles including the Presiding Officer and their local MSPs.

Voting S1 – S2

This activity encourages pupils to think about the importance of voting in a democratic society. Pupils are challenged to think about why people don't vote and if this matter is important. They also consider ways to persuade more people to vote.

Pupils learn about the voting system in the Scottish Parliament, including voting in the Chamber and how MSPs are elected. The session finishes with a vote on whether voting in elections should be compulsory.

Get Involved! S3 – S4

This session is geared towards the National 5 Modern Studies Course.

Pupils learn about what the Scottish Parliament does and how they can participate in the decisions made in Scotland. By exploring the Devolved/Reserved Powers and how MSPs represent them, pupils can better understand how their voice can be used and heard. For example, they learn about the power of petitions and the Public Petitions Committee.

Making Laws / Making difficult decisions S5 - S6

This session is more suited to pupils who are studying Higher Modern Studies.

Pupils role play the Scottish Parliament's legislative process through tackling a relevant issue. In groups, they will be challenged to consider proposed changes and find solutions. Using a mock Bill, the pupils will learn how amendments can be made and laws passed. The activity includes the use of interactive voting and decision making.

Where possible, pupils will have the opportunity to discuss a live Bill or contribute to a committee inquiry.

First Minister's Questions (FMQs) S3 - S6

Thursdays 11.00 – 13.15

This visit includes tickets to watch First Minister's Questions. Due to limited availability, schools may only book one FMQ session each year.

Priority will be given to pupils studying the Scottish Parliament for SQA Examinations. All schools can apply for FMQ Sessions that have not been filled within two weeks of bookings opening. These dates will be advertised on our website, newsletter and through our twitter feed [@EducationSP](#).

2a. Tour (All mornings & Monday/Friday pm)

Tours All stages

Follow in the footsteps of your local MSPs and discover more about the Scottish Parliament. Learn more about the building and how the Parliament functions. Visit the Garden Lobby, see the Arniston Stone and explore the Debating Chamber in detail.

On Mondays and Fridays there is the chance to visit a Committee Room. Our tours are suitable for all ages and last between 30 – 45 minutes. All our tours are easily accessible – please inform us in advance so we can make the necessary accessibility arrangements.

2b. Tickets for Chamber Session (Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday pm)

Tickets for Chamber session All (topic dependent)

Take place on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons.

Afternoon visits will include the opportunity to watch MSPs debating in the Chamber. Chamber sessions are available at the end of your education session and last 30 minutes. You have the option to leave early if you wish.

We are a working parliament, meaning business can change at the last minute. We will try our hardest to inform teachers of the business that day, but we cannot guarantee that the topic will be suitable for pupils. Details of future business can be found in the Business Bulletin, two weeks before your visit.

Please note, some content – especially Topical and Emergency questions and Ministerial Statements are not available in advance. Content may be sensitive and inappropriate for primary school groups. Our staff will raise the issue with you as part of our pre-visit checks. Experience has shown that many primary schools prefer morning sessions rather than risk the afternoon content proving inappropriate.

3. MSP Q&A (typically on Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday)

All our visits include learning about the MSPs who represent your school and, whenever possible, meeting local MSPs. MSP Question and Answer sessions work best when pupils arrive with pre-prepared questions. Our most popular questions are often:

- Why did you become an MSP?
- What qualifications do you need to be an MSP?
- What are you doing about XYZ local issue?

On Mondays and Fridays MSPs tend to be working in their constituencies and regions rather than at Parliament. It is less likely that you will meet MSPs on these visits.

As an alternative, we can supply contact details if you would like to invite MSPs to visit your school after your visit here.

When the Scottish Parliament Education Service visits your school

The Outreach Education Programme, Outreach@YourSchool, takes place in your school. One of our Education Officers will come to your school to deliver an interactive session or sessions.

Primary sessions are 90 minutes as standard – please discuss with the education officer if this will be unsuitable.

Secondary sessions are generally flexible, from 50 to 90 minutes. The Budget session requires 90 minutes.

Booking requests for outreach sessions should be made online. We aim to contact you within two working weeks of receipt of your form to agree a date for your session/s.

We recognise our [recess times](#) do not always overlap with school holidays and we are sometimes able to visit schools during our recess periods. Please call the team to discuss your dates in the first instance.

Activity – session content

Debate (Primary) P5 – P7

In this session, pupils learn about debates in the Scottish Parliament and what the procedures are. Through role-playing, pupils learn about the roles of MSPs and the Presiding Officer. Debates take place on topics such as the introduction of 20mph speed limits and banning energy drinks for under 16s. Pupils also participate in a mock election, including writing manifestos, electing leaders and voting.

Where possible, pupils will have the opportunity to debate a live Bill or contribute to committee consultations.

Budget Session S4 – S6

Policy, Decision making, Numeracy

This session aims to teach pupils how to balance a budget whilst being mindful of policies, financial implications and justification for their actions.

Diary of an MSP S4 – S6

Pupils arrange the diary for an MSP for a week. This activity is a realistic representation of what an MSP does to support constituents in and outside the Scottish Parliament. This session teaches pupils the skill of prioritising, the importance of work/life balance and accurate administration.

Debate S1-6

We have a selection of debates that would be suitable for different age ranges. In this session, pupils learn about debates in the Scottish Parliament and what the procedures are.

Debates may focus on recent parliamentary business such as the 20p Deposit Scheme, the Age of Criminal Responsibility, Organ Donation or Equal Protection from Assault (Children). We also try to use live Parliamentary business where possible so that the views of pupils can be fed into Parliamentary Committees.

The Work of Committees S3-6

Pupils look at how committees consider and evaluate evidence to support or oppose a bill. They choose the best evidence while considering bias, evidence, the reliability of a source use and statistical vs anecdotal evidence. There are a range of topics available, including real evidence from actual bills – we can discuss the best option for your class at time of booking.

Getting Involved / Voting ALL Secondary

Pupils learn about what the Scottish Parliament does and how they can participate in the decisions made in Scotland. By exploring the Devolved/Reserved Powers and how MSPs represent them, pupils can better understand how their voice can be used and heard. For example, they learn about the power of petitions and the Public Petitions Committee.

It also encourages pupils to think about the importance of voting in a democratic society. Pupils are challenged to think about why people don't vote and if this matter is important.

The session is interactive, using voting consoles to check understanding. Where possible, pupils will have the opportunity to study a live Bill or contribute to committee consultations.

This session can be adapted for larger groups, such as a year group or two classes together.

Follow-up your Outreach visit

You may choose to follow your education session with either or both of the following options.

MSPs@YourSchool

The Education Service can invite your school's constituency and regional MSPs to meet the pupils. The date and time will be agreed when you confirm your booking.

We will advise you which MSPs confirm they are able to attend.

Please note: MSPs@YourSchool sessions are subject to MSP availability. MSPs' diaries can change at short notice. Where an MSP session is cancelled due to availability, we will endeavour to make alternative arrangements for a different date.

Tour

You can also book a tour. Follow-up tours to Outreach Education sessions are booked through Visitor Services. Once your education session booking is confirmed, you can contact Visitor Services on **0131 348 5200** to check availability and book your tour/s. Education tours last 30 minutes and take place on Mondays and Fridays.

The team also develop new products throughout the year for piloting, as special events or in association with committee consultations. These are listed on our website www.parliament.scot/education and promoted on our twitter feed [@Education_SP](https://twitter.com/Education_SP)

Cancellation

What happens if we cancel a visit? If we cancel your visit due to unforeseen circumstances, we will re-book you on the next available suitable session. Alternatively, you may wish to book an Outreach Education session instead. We will reimburse any costs you incur due to late cancellation of transport.

What happens if you cancel a visit? We will endeavour to book you on another slot but cannot guarantee the session will be the same. i.e. it may not be possible to re-book a later FMQ session.