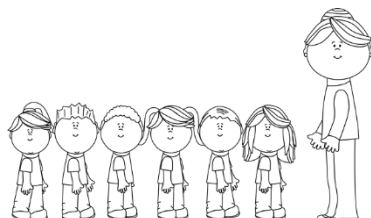


There's a school



near our church.



I'm a teacher and I'm passionate about teaching, working with children and young people. However the older I get, the more I realise that what is equally important is the school community.

None of us do our best in isolation. God made us to be in relationship and relationships come in all shapes and sizes.

In any local church family, there will be a mixture of ages and family types; ranging from babies to toddlers, to children to young people and older. Single parents, two parent families, step – families; all ages, sizes and types.

The church family is likely to have children attending the local school; in fact in Scotland, there are almost 689,000 pupils attending primary, secondary or special schools¹.

Your local school may be a one-teacher school: **yes**, we do have one-teacher schools on mainland Scotland! Your local school may be a small, medium or large primary school or secondary school. Your local school may be a special school which children and young people with additional support needs (ASN) attend.

What can my church do?



There are many, different ways to support your local school community. As a teacher, I can pray for my school. Many teachers, like myself, don't teach in the local school or the school near their church. Knowing that the local church is supportive and prays is important to me as a teacher.

I moved to a new house, after ten years in a small town where I knew everyone, had lots of support and felt supported as teacher by friends, family and church family. One of the first things I did when we moved was to contact



and **yes**, my local school was being prayed for. I got the contact details of the local prayer partner who was a local mum and we met to pray for our local school. You don't have to meet with anyone else to pray for your local school; in fact, my prayer partner moved and I continued on my own.

¹ <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/dspupcensus/dspupcensus17>

An option for whole church support is to support the annual **Back to School with God Sunday**. The website provides plenty of suggestions and ideas for churches and groups to use. <https://www.prayforschools.org/back-to-school-with-god/>

I can hear some of you saying “that’s all well and good but what about practical support?”

Well, one local church to me blesses the school staff at Christmas by gifting cakes to the nearby secondary school as a token of appreciation for all that the school staff do over the school year.

As a teacher, something sticky and sweet



at interval goes down a treat!

Other practical options

A church where I grew up (I grew up in a small village) partners with other local churches, (of all denominations) to help support a local school worker. SU Scotland <https://www.suscotland.org.uk/> can provide details of how to support a local schools worker. Other organisations have local schools/children and young people’s workers. One suggestion could be to have a special collection on **Back to School with God Sunday**. You could ask the local schools/children’s worker to come and talk to your congregation.

Getting involved and supporting

You may not know any children who attend the local school. You may never have been inside the local school. However there are ways to get involved. There are likely to be fund-raising activities at the school, e.g. the summer fayre; you could go along, purchase something and be involved in a small way. Depending on the school, there may be volunteering options; the best way to find out is to contact the school (also see below).

As a teacher and a Christian, children, young people, families and community are incredibly important to me. When out with another teacher friend (and husbands) for a meal, the two husbands said “ School’s out, can you two talk about something else?!” We did manage!

To finish off, there’s a fantastic resource dedicated to supporting local schools called **Serve Your Local School** which aims to help churches in Scotland see the potential to play a



part in their local school community and to make a real practical difference for the teachers, staff and pupils.

It’s an amazing resource; please do have a look and support your local school, in whatever way that you can. The website gives ideas on how to get started with simple, medium and grand ideas! <http://syls.org.uk/>

1 <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/dspupcensus/dspupcensus17>