



Midlothian Council  
Children, Young People and Partnerships Directorate  
**Statutory School Consultation**  
**THIS IS A PROPOSAL DOCUMENT**

**This consultation is on the following proposal:**

Proposal to close Mount Esk Nursery School and re-designate the early learning and childcare (ELC) setting to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class.

Subject to the outcome of this consultation exercise, Midlothian Council proposes that:

- Mount Esk Nursery School will close from August 2026;
- Hawthornden Primary School Nursery class will be established from August 2026;
- Mount Esk Nursery School will be closed and re-designated to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class.
- The re-designation of Mount Esk Nursery School to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery class will take effect from August 2026;
- The new Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class will be under the leadership of the Hawthornden Primary School headteacher.

The following schools are **directly** affected by the proposal:

- Mount Esk Nursery School
- Hawthornden Primary School

In accordance with the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*, Midlothian Council wants to hear your views on the proposal to close Mount Esk Nursery School and re-designate it to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class.

Within this consultation paper you will find information about the proposal, the reasons behind it, its likely impact and how you can tell us what you think about it. A short questionnaire is included within the proposal.

Midlothian Council hopes that as many of you as possible will complete the questionnaire and would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to share your views as they are extremely important to us.

*We would like to be as open as possible with the results of this consultation so please note that your response will be anonymised and made public at the end of the consultation*

*period. You may wish to ensure that you do not give any identifying details in your response. If you don't wish your response to be made public, you can specify this in the questionnaire and within any written response.*

## **Distribution**

A copy of this document is available on the Midlothian Council website:

<https://midlothiancouncil.citizenspace.com/education/mount-esk-nursery-school-consultation>

A summary of the proposals will be provided to:

- The Parent Councils of the affected schools;
- The parents/carers of the children at the affected schools;
- Parents/carers of children expected to attend an affected school within 2 years of the date of publication of this Proposal document;
- The pupils, deemed to be of suitable age and maturity to be able to communicate a view on the proposal, at the affected schools;
- The teaching and ancillary staff at the affected schools;
- The trade unions and professional association representatives of the above staff;
- Midlothian Councillors;
- Community Council of Bonnyrigg and District,
- Community Planning Partnership;
- Relevant users of the affected schools;
- Constituency MP and MSP;
- Education Scotland.

A copy of this document is also available from:

- Mount Esk Nursery School, Dalhousie Gardens, Bonnyrigg, EH19 2LT
- Hawthornden Primary School, Polton Avenue Road, Bonnyrigg, EH19 2NZ
- Lasswade Library, 19 Eskdale Drive, Bonnyrigg, EH19 2LA
- Fairfield House, 8 Lothian Road, Dalkeith, EH22 3AA

This document can be made available in alternative formats or in translated form for readers whose first language is not English. If you would like this document in another language or format, or if you require the services of an interpreter, please call 0131 270 7500 or email: [enquiries@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@midlothian.gov.uk)

To be taken into consideration, responses to the consultation must be received by **Sunday 21 December 2025**. These can be made electronically through the online consultation questionnaire at <https://midlothiancouncil.citizenspace.com/education/mount-esk-nursery-school-consultation> or emailed to [EducationConsultation@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:EducationConsultation@midlothian.gov.uk).

## **Written responses can be returned to:**

Mount Esk Nursery School Consultation, Freepost SCO 622, Midlothian Council, Dalkeith EH22 3AA

**The affected consultees are:**

- The children attending Mount Esk Nursery School.
- The pupils attending Hawthornden Primary School.
- The Parent Council of Hawthornden Primary School.
- The Parental Group of Mount Esk Nursery School
- The parents / carers of pupils and children expected to attend Mount Esk Nursery School and Hawthornden Primary School within two years of the date of publication of the proposal paper.
- The staff employed by the Council and based at Mount Esk Nursery School and Hawthornden Primary School.
- The Trade Union and Professional Associations Representatives of the above staff.
- The Community Councils of Bonnyrigg and District.
- Community Planning Partnership.
- Other users of Mount Esk Nursery School

**Consultation with Children and Young People**

Children in the directly affected schools/setting will be consulted on this proposal in accordance with the Children's Commissioner Guidance and further information will be provided to parents/carers via their child's school/setting.

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## **Section A: Summary of Process for this Proposal Document**

### **Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010**

1. The Council has a number of statutory duties relating to the provision of education in its area including the statutory consultation that must be undertaken when proposing a permanent change to any of their schools, including Nursery Schools, such as closure, relocation or change of catchment area. The *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* principle purpose is:

*“to provide strong, accountable statutory consultation practices and procedures that local authorities must apply to their handling of all proposals for school closures and other major changes to schools.”*

2. This Proposal Document has been prepared in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, having regard to the statutory guidance published by the Scottish Government on 14 May 2015 and the complementary guidance published by Education Scotland (revised July 2023), which are available for reference at the following websites:

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010:  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2010/2/contents>

Statutory Guidance (14 May 2015):  
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/05/4615>

Education Consultation Guidance for Local Authorities (revised July 2023)  
<https://education.gov.scot/media/rh0jzhvo/external-schools-consultation-education-scotland-guide-for-local-authorities-july-2023.pdf>

3. The process for consultation, summarised in this section, details how the Council is undertaking this consultation.

### **Consideration by Council**

4. The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 places a legislative duty on the Council to ensure the adequate and efficient provision of school education in their area. This duty applies in respect of both the current school population and anticipated pattern of demand. In addition, Councils have a statutory duty to secure best value in terms of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.
5. This Proposal Document has been issued to seek views on the proposals in this paper and report back to Midlothian Council on the outcome of the consultation in order that the Council can make a decision on any proposed changes.

### **Proposal Document issued to consultees and published on Midlothian's website**

6. An information leaflet setting out details about the proposal and consultation meetings will be issued to the consultees listed on page 3. Advice on where the complete Proposal Document can be obtained will be included and published on

<https://midlothiancouncil.citizenspace.com/education/mount-esk-nursery-school-consultation>

7. If requested, copies of the Proposal Document will also be made available in alternative formats or translated for readers whose first language is not English.
8. A “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQs) document will be prepared which will also be available on <https://midlothiancouncil.citizenspace.com/education/mount-esk-nursery-school-consultation>

#### **Publication of advertisement**

9. An announcement will be made on the Council’s website and social media platforms.

#### **Length of Consultation Period**

10. The consultation period will commence on **10 November 2025** and will last until **21 December 2025** being a period of 6 weeks, which also includes the minimum 30 school days.

#### **Format of Public Meetings**

11. A Public meeting will be held on, **Wednesday 19 November 2025** the details of which are set out below in paragraph 23.

#### **Involvement of Education Scotland**

12. When the Proposal Document is published, a copy will be sent to Education Scotland by Midlothian Council. Education Scotland will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council from any person during the consultation period, or if Education Scotland agree, a summary of them. Additionally, Education Scotland will receive a summary of any oral representations made to the Council at the public meetings and drop-in sessions that will be held and, as available, a copy of any other relevant documentation.
13. Education Scotland require three weeks within which to prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal after the Council has sent them all the representations and documents as mentioned above. The three-week period will not start until after the consultation period has ended. In preparing their report, Education Scotland may visit the affected schools and make such reasonable enquiries of such people there as they consider appropriate.

#### **Preparation of the Consultation Report**

14. The Council will review the proposal having regard to the Education Scotland report, written representations that it has received, and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting, drop in sessions and consultation activities with key stakeholders. It will then prepare a Final Consultation Report. The report will be published in electronic and printed formats and will be advertised in the local newspaper. It will be available on the Council website, from the affected schools and by request from Council Headquarters, Fairfield House, Dalkeith. Anyone who has made written representations during the consultation period will also be informed about the report. The Consultation Report will include a record of the total number of

written representations made at the public meetings and drop-in sessions, the Council's response to the Education Scotland report as well as any written or oral representations it has received, together with the Education Scotland report and other relevant information. It will also set out the actions the Council has taken to address any alleged inaccuracies and omissions notified to it. The Consultation Report will also contain a statement explaining how it complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the Education Scotland Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received. The Consultation Report will be published and be available for further consideration for a period of 3 weeks.

### **Decision**

15. The Consultation Report, together with any other documentation, will be considered after the end of the 3-week period by the Council who will come to a final decision on this matter.

### **Scottish Ministers Call-in**

16. At the end of the consultation process, Section 15 of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* enables ministers to call-in a decision to implement the proposed closure of Mount Esk Nursery School.
17. Beginning on the day the final decision is taken, the Council has a period of six working days to notify Scottish Ministers of the decision. Scottish Ministers then have a period of up to eight weeks from and including the date of the Council's decision to decide if they will call-in the proposal. The Council must publish the fact that the Scottish Ministers have been notified and that representations can be made to the Scottish Ministers within the first three weeks of the eight week period. The Scottish Ministers will take into account any relevant representations made to them by any person within the first three weeks. The Council may not proceed with the implementation of the proposal during the call-in period.
18. If the Scottish Ministers decide to call-in a closure proposal, it is then referred to the Convener of the School Closure Review Panels who has a period of seven days after a call-in notice is issued, to constitute a School Closure Review Panel. The Panel may decide to refuse consent to the proposal, refuse consent and remit it to the education authority for a fresh decision or grant consent to the proposal, either subject to conditions, or unconditionally. The Panel must notify the education authority of its decision within eight weeks from when the Panel was constituted or within sixteen weeks if the Panel has issued a notice to the education authority that a decision has been delayed. The Council may not proceed with the implementation of the proposal until the outcome of the call-in has been notified to the Council.
19. Appendix 1 sets out the timeline for both the Consultation and Scottish Ministers Call-in periods.

### **Note on Corrections**

20. If any inaccuracy or omission is discovered in this Proposal Document either by the Council or any person, the Council will determine if relevant information has been omitted or there has been an inaccuracy. It may then take appropriate action which may include the issue of a correction or the reissuing of a Proposal Paper or the revision of the timescale for the consultation period if appropriate. In that event,

relevant consultees and Education Scotland will be advised. The person, or persons who have raised concerns will receive an individual response to their submission.

### **Public Meeting and Drop-In Session**

21. A formal in person public meeting and virtual public drop-in sessions will be held to discuss the proposal. The public meeting, which will be convened by Midlothian Council, will be addressed by the Chief Education Officer, Children, Young People and Partnerships Directorate and other senior officers of the Council, and chaired by an independent person.
22. The public meeting will be an opportunity to:
  - Hear more about the proposal
  - Ask questions about the proposal
  - Have your views minuted so that they can be taken into account as part of the consultation process
23. The public meeting will be held in person at **Lasswade High School in The Assembly Hall** on **19 November 2025** at **6:30pm**.
24. Virtual drop-in sessions will be held on **11th & 20th November 2025** there will be 20-minute time slots available from **2pm to 4pm** and **5pm to 7pm** please contact [EducationConsultation@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:EducationConsultation@midlothian.gov.uk) to book a time.
25. A minute will be taken at the public meeting of comments, questions and officer responses. A summary of the points raised and responded to will be added to the FAQs published on the Council website. The minute will be forwarded to Education Scotland along with all other submissions and comments that are received by the Council during the consultation process as explained above.

## **Section B: Proposal for Consultation Introduction**

### **Introduction**

1. The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 places a legislative duty on the Council to make adequate and efficient provision of school education across its area. This duty applies in respect of both the current school population and anticipated pattern of demand.
2. Section 3D of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 (as inserted by Section 2 of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016) introduces a requirement on education authorities to carry out their duty to ensure the delivery of improvement in the quality of school education which is provided in the schools they manage, with a view to achieving the strategic priorities of the National Improvement Framework. It is, therefore, the duty of the education authority to ensure that the education it provides is directed to the development of the personality, talents and the mental and physical abilities of the children to their fullest potential.

3. In addition, Councils have a statutory duty to secure best value in terms of the *Local Government in Scotland Act 2003* by continuous improvement in performance of the local authority's functions, while maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost and having regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, equal opportunities and the achievement of sustainable development. To achieve best value and optimum efficiency, the organisation of the school estate is therefore kept under regular review, including the need for school provision and other factors, such as altering catchment areas.

### **Midlothian's Vision for Education**

4. The Council is ambitious for the future of Midlothian. By working together as a Community Planning Partnership, individuals and communities will be able to lead healthier, safer and greener and successful lives by 2030. No child or household need live in poverty. Midlothian will be a Great Green Place to Grow by achieving our net zero carbon ambitions and supporting local people to strengthen the skills they need for learning, life and work.
5. Our outcomes for the next 4 years are:
  - Individuals and communities have improved health and skills for learning, life and work
  - No child or household living in poverty
  - Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030
6. We continue to aspire to deliver a world-class education system through equity and excellence. Our vision is to provide the highest quality inclusive education, learning and employability service for all individuals and families in Midlothian. To realise this vision we will support the priorities set out in the Single Midlothian Plan, Getting it Right for Every Child and will:
  - give all our children the best possible start in life, providing an inclusive learning environment that builds resilience;
  - ensure that every young person has the opportunity to be a successful learner, confident individual, responsible citizen and an effective contributor who is healthy and happy, especially those who are care experienced;
  - work with our communities to promote high expectations which deliver the best educational outcomes for all learners; and
  - celebrate diversity, reduce inequalities and remove barriers to learning.

### **Background and context**

7. At a meeting of Midlothian Council on 16 November 2021, approval was granted for officers to undertake a statutory consultation on the proposal to incorporate Mount Esk Nursery School within Hawthornden Primary School and for a report on the outcome of the consultation exercises to be brought back to council for consideration and a decision.
8. Mount Esk Nursery School is a standalone early learning and childcare (ELC) setting located in Bonnyrigg, Midlothian. It has been registered with the Care Inspectorate since 2002 and is operated by Midlothian Council. The nursery is registered to

provide care for up to 64 children aged 3 to 5 years and operates a full-time model during school term time.

9. The nursery school is staffed appropriately as per the Care Inspectorate's regulation for child staff ratios in group based ELC settings. This is led and managed by a Head Teacher as well as having Senior Early Years Practitioners, Early Years Practitioners, and an administrative assistant. In addition, the school benefits from the support of two part-time cleaners and a caretaker.
10. The setting consists of a large playroom, a small sensory room, enclosed garden, toilets, nappy changing facilities, a small kitchen and two offices. There is a small woodland area behind the nursery which is accessed daily to offer a unique outdoor experience for the children attending.
11. The most recent inspection by the Care Inspectorate took place in June 2024. Mount Esk Nursery School achieved a combination of 'Excellent' and 'Very Good' ratings across key quality indicators, reflecting the high standard of care and education provided.
12. The Mount Esk Nursery School building in Bonnyrigg is shared with Mount Esk Family Learning Centre, operated by Midlothian Sure Start. This centre provides early learning and childcare for 2-year-olds.
13. Mount Esk has a well-established reputation for delivering high-quality early learning and childcare. It has consistently received positive evaluations in previous inspections and is recognised for its child-centred approach, inclusive practices, and strong parental engagement. These strengths contribute to a nurturing and stimulating environment where children are supported to thrive. It is expected that this high-quality service will continue under the leadership and management of Hawthornden PS Headteacher.

### **Meeting National Outcomes**

14. The National strategy recognises the importance of the learning estate in supporting outcomes that are necessary for a more successful Scotland. This vision is for: '*A learning estate which supports excellence and equity for all*'.
15. The National Learning Estate Strategy is aligned to the education policy aims set out in the *National Improvement Framework* (NIF) of achieving excellence and equity for all children and young people and closing the poverty related attainment gap.
16. The National strategy sets out ten guiding principles which are:
  - Learning environments should support and facilitate excellent joined up learning and teaching to meet the needs of all learners;
  - Learning environments should support the wellbeing of all learners, meet varying needs to support inclusion and support transitions for all learners;
  - The learning estate should be well-managed and maintained, making the best of existing resources, maximising occupancy and representing and delivering best value;

- The condition and suitability of learning environments should support and enhance their function;
- Learning environments should serve the wider community and where appropriate be integrated with the delivery of other public services in line with the place principle;
- Learning environments should be greener, more sustainable, allow safe and accessible routes for walking, cycling and wheeling and be digitally enabled;
- Outdoor learning and the use of outdoor learning environments should be maximised;
- Good consultation about learning environments, direct engagement with learners and communities about their needs and experiences, and an involvement in decision making processes should lead to better outcomes for all;
- Collaboration across the learning estate, and collaboration with partners in localities, should support maximising its full potential; and finally,
- Investment in Scotland's learning estate should contribute towards improving learning outcomes and support sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

### **The proposed closure of Mount Esk Nursery School and re-designation to Hawthornden Primary School**

17. Mount Esk Nursery School will close from August 2026;
18. Hawthornden Primary School Nursery class will be established from August 2026;
19. Mount Esk Nursery School will be closed and re-designated to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery class as part of Hawthornden Primary School;
20. The re-designation of Mount Esk Nursery School to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery class will take effect from August 2026;
21. The new Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class will be under the leadership of the Hawthornden Primary School Head Teacher.
22. The proposal to close Mount Esk Nursery School and re-designation to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class will directly affect the following schools and is considered in this Proposal Document:
  - Mount Esk Nursery School
  - Hawthornden Primary School
23. There are no schools indirectly affected by the proposal.
24. The factors which have been considered in the development of this Proposal Document are:

- The responsibilities associated with the National Improvement Framework and the new duties imposed on Education Authorities by the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 as amended by the 2016 Act.
- The agreed principles underpinning the development of an empowered school led system set out in the 'Education Bill Policy Ambition- Joint Agreement', June 2018  
<https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/06/8745/downloads>
- The duties placed on local authorities in relation to the adequate and efficient provision of school education in their area
- The duties placed on local authorities to secure best value in the delivery of services

25. If approved, implementation of the proposal will mean:

- Mount Esk Nursery School will close from August 2026;
- Hawthornden Primary School Nursery class will be established from August 2026;
- Mount Esk Nursery School will be closed and re-designated to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery class as part of Hawthornden Primary School;
- The re-designation of Mount Esk Nursery School to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery class will take effect from August 2026;
- The new Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class will be under the leadership of the Hawthornden Primary School Head Teacher.

## **Section C: Educational Benefits Statement**

### **Assessment of Likely Educational Benefits on Pupils**

- A. The Educational Benefits Statement for this proposal has been prepared having regard to the guidance and explanatory notes published by the Scottish Government in association with the schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and which are available for reference at the following websites respectively:

[www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/91982/0097130.doc](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/91982/0097130.doc)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2010/2/contents>

*'An education authority shall endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education which is provided in the schools managed by them; and they shall exercise their functions in relation to such provision with a view to raising standards of education.'*

- B. As required by the schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 this Educational Benefits Statement is written from the perspective of benefits, should the proposal be implemented. Additionally, the self-evaluation tool provided by Education Scotland is used to ensure compliance with the amended procedures now in place from the Act.

- C. An early learning and childcare (ELC) provision as a new stage at the Hawthornden campus, will result in a number of educational benefits. The delivery model will reflect the Local Authority's ongoing commitment to offer an 1140 hour flexible, high quality early learning and childcare provision and meet the criteria for the National Standard for Early Learning and Childcare Providers and the Quality Improvement Framework for the Early Learning and Childcare sectors.

### **Inclusion**

- D. The transition from a nursery school to a nursery class integrated with a primary school can provide more opportunities for social interaction and the development of social skills. Children will have the chance to form new friendships and engage in group activities.
- E. As the nursery transitions from a standalone nursery school to a nursery class under the leadership of the Headteacher of Hawthornden Primary School, children will benefit from being part of a wider school community. This change offers enhanced opportunities for social interaction and the development of social skills through shared experiences such as assemblies, whole-school events, and collaborative learning activities. Being part of a primary school setting also supports smoother transitions into early primary education, fostering a sense of belonging and continuity for children and families alike.
- F. Primary schools typically host various community events, such as assemblies, sports days, and cultural celebrations. Participation in these events can foster a sense of belonging and community, helping children feel more connected to their peers and the school environment.

### **Learning, teaching, achievement and attainment**

- G. The change from a standalone Nursery School to a Nursery Class marks a transition to a more integrated and supportive early years stage. Under the leadership of the Headteacher of Hawthornden Primary School, the nursery class will benefit from being part of a wider school community, with increased opportunities for collaboration on planning progressive early years learning experiences for children. This alignment supports national guidance including *Realising the Ambition: Being Me*, *Curriculum for Excellence*, and *Space to Grow*, ensuring that children experience high-quality early learning within a nurturing and inclusive setting. Being part of the primary school also enables children to participate in whole-school activities such as assemblies and celebrations, helping to build confidence, social skills, and a strong sense of belonging. Staff will also benefit from collaboration with teachers to plan progressive learning activities laying strong foundations for future learning.
- H. The proposal for Mount Esk to be redesignated to Hawthornden nursery class and being part of Hawthornden Primary School will allow children to experience smoother transitions from nursery to primary education which is a key aspect of ensuring continuity in learning and development. Whilst Midlothian Council does not have catchment areas for nursery classes the experience of joining P1-P7 children for learning activities and experiences will support and prepare children for their primary school years.

- I. The Curriculum for Excellence aims to provide a coherent and inclusive curriculum from early years through to secondary education. The proposed new Hawthornden nursery class will be part of this framework, ensuring that children receive a broad and balanced education that prepares them for future learning stages.
- J. A consistent educational environment helps maintain continuity in teaching methods and learning experiences. The curriculum focuses on developing four key capacities in children: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors. The integrated approach at Hawthornden Primary School can support these capacities through a well-rounded educational experience.
- K. With the transition to Hawthornden Nursery Class, children will benefit from enhanced access to a broad range of modern digital resources that foster independent learning and creativity. This enriched environment supports the development of essential skills for learning, life, and work from the earliest stages. Led by the Headteacher of Hawthornden Primary School, the nursery class will be part of a well-connected and supportive school community, ensuring high-quality early learning experiences aligned with national guidance and offers the opportunity for further sharing of resources and shared learning experiences for all the children.

### **Health and well-being**

- L. Experience from previous transitions to nursery classes within primary schools has shown that being part of a wider school community, led by a primary school Headteacher, can have a positive impact on children's health and wellbeing. A more flexible and integrated learning environment supports stronger relationships, smoother transitions, and greater opportunities for collaboration across different stages. Children benefit from access to shared spaces, involvement in whole-school activities, and a consistent ethos of care and support. This approach is in line with national guidance and highlights the importance of nurturing environments that inspire and motivate learners from the earliest years.
- M. Under the leadership of the Hawthornden Primary School Headteacher, the nursery class will be part of a wider learning community that shares a consistent ethos of care, respect, and inclusion. This alignment supports a whole-school approach to wellbeing, ensuring that children experience continuity in values, expectations, and support as they progress through the early level. It also strengthens professional collaboration across stages, enhancing the quality and consistency of care and learning.

### **Collaboration and partnership working**

- N. The proximity of the early years provision to Hawthornden Primary School will help support smooth transitions into primary education, enabling a continuous and coherent learning journey across the early level. Children will have opportunities to become familiar with the primary school environment from an early stage, which can ease their transition and build confidence. A consistent educational setting also promotes continuity in teaching approaches and learning experiences, contributing to a stable and supportive start to school life.

- O. Professional collegiate collaboration for staff will be enhanced as the new arrangement will encourage collaboration and co-operation across the early years and the Primary School. This will enable a shared understanding and safeguarding of the range of children's needs and the opportunity to provide the best outcomes for our children.
- P. Should the proposal go ahead, a commitment will be undertaken to ensure that there is no disruption to their early learning and childcare.

### **Local Community**

- Q. The newly established Hawthornden Nursery Class will initially remain in the same location as the current setting. The Learning Estate Strategy sets out future plans to create a new learning environment for the nursery class based within the grounds of Hawthornden PS.
- R. Being part of a primary school community can enhance early learning experiences for children and opportunities for parental involvement, community engagement, fostering a supportive and collaborative environment for children's education.
- S. Parents/carers of early years children can participate in wider school activities, volunteer, engage with other families and create a supportive network for their children. Important relationships between parents and nursery staff will be maintained and enhanced if the proposal is successful.

## **Section D: Consideration of Alternative Options and Other Implications**

- 1. The alternative to the closure and redesignation of Mount Esk Nursery School is for the setting to continue as a standalone which does not align with the Council's vision and values for Education and Early Learning & Childcare.

### **Transition Arrangements**

- 2. Subject to the conclusion of the Scottish Ministers eight-week call-in period or the notification of the outcome of a call-in, as appropriate, if approved, the closure and re-designation of Mount Esk Nursery School as a stand-alone nursery school to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery will take effect from August 2026.
- 3. Children currently attending Mount Esk Nursery School will not be significantly affected by the closure and re-designation as Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class as the proposal involves the technical closure of the current nursery school. This means that the nursery will no longer operate as a separate entity but will instead become integrated into Hawthornden Primary School's community of learning.
- 4. Parents and carers of eligible pre-school children would continue to apply for early learning and childcare provision at the re-designated Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class.

5. Subject to the outcome and the decision taken by elected members on the proposal to close Mount Esk Nursery School is that the management structure of Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class will be formalised under the leadership of the Head Teacher at Hawthornden Primary School.
6. There are no catchment areas for Early Learning and Childcare in Midlothian.

### **Staffing Implications**

7. If this proposal is implemented the staff in Mount Esk Nursery School would transfer to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class from August 2026. The transfer of staff would be managed in accordance with existing agreed Council policies and procedures.
8. The proposed new management structure will allow children to continue to have access to high quality early learning and childcare and through a shared approach to curriculum delivery, peer learning opportunities and improved use of the nursery room and resources. enhance staff capacity for taking forward school improvement from early years through to P7.
9. The proposed Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class will be managed by the school leadership team at Hawthornden Primary School. The school leadership team entitlement will be enhanced to take this into consideration. The opportunity to have one staff team, working together towards a shared vision, will improve the educational experience for children.
10. The new Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class would be staffed according to local and national policies and agreements in place at the time, which are designed to ensure that all duties and responsibilities of the early years setting are carried out. The staffing levels will principally be determined by the number of children adhering to Care inspectorate guidelines around Safer Staffing.
11. Consultation will be undertaken with staff in affected schools, Trade Unions and professional associations where appropriate on an implementation plan. If this proposal is implemented, the Council does not envisage any adverse effects from the proposal in respect of staffing. Should issues arise however, these will be mitigated through the Council's Education Leadership Team support structure.

### **Financial Implications**

12. The financial implications of closing Mount Esk Nursery School can be found in Appendix 2.

### **Integrated Impact Assessment**

13. The Council as a public authority has a duty under the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011, and the Fairer Scotland Duty (Part one of the Equality Act) to have due regard to their provisions when making strategic financial decisions. This is done through assessing the potential impact of the decision on equality through an Equality Impact Assessment. The Council will undertake the process of

assessment during the consultation process in respect of this proposal to ensure that due regard is given to such matters in the decision-making process.

14. The result of the Integrated Impact Assessment will be included in the final Consultation Report document.

### **Equal Opportunities**

15. Having regard to the proposed closure of Mount Esk Nursery School, it is not believed that this will have a negative impact on any equality target groups.
16. The Council must also consider its duty in respect of socio-economic impact and as part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers and children and will address comments about equality during this consultation.
17. Under *the Equality Act 2010*, education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage. The proposed closure of Mount Esk Nursery School will comply with accessibility requirements and therefore would positively promote equal opportunities for any child who has a disability.

### **Section E: Conclusion**

1. It is proposed that Mount Esk Nursery School would close from August 2026.
2. Hawthornden Primary School Nursery class will be established from August 2026 under the leadership of the Hawthornden Primary School Head Teacher.
3. Overall, there are no environmental impacts as a result of this proposal.
4. Overall, there are educational arguments in favour of this proposal.

## Appendix 1: Mount Esk Nursery School Consultation Timeline

	Date Beginning	Date Ending	Duration
Statutory Consultation Period Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public meetings</li> <li>Drop in sessions</li> <li>Engagement with staff, pupils and parent councils</li> </ul>	10/11/2025	21/12/2025	6 Weeks
Education Scotland Engagement Period	07/01/2026	28/01/2026	3 Weeks
Publication of Consultation Report	02/02/2026		
Further Consideration after publication of report	02/02/2026	23/02/2026	3 Weeks
Consideration of Consultation Report by Midlothian Council	24/02/2026	24/02/2026	1 day
Scottish Minister's call in	24/02/2026	21/04/2026	8 Weeks
School Closure Review Panel	21/04/2026	16/06/2026	8 Weeks
School Closure Panel Extended	16/06/2026	11/08/2026	8 Weeks

## Appendix 2: Financial Implications

<b>Table 1: Current revenue costs for school proposed for closure.</b>			
<b>Mount Esk NS (8205)</b>	<b>Costs for full financial year (projected annual costs)</b>	<b>Additional financial impact</b>	<b>Annual recurring savings (column 2 minus column 3)</b>
<b>School costs:</b>			
Teaching Staff	100,874		
Support Staff	428,455		
Teaching Staff Training	125		
Support Staff Training	975		
<b>Building costs:</b>			
NDR	16,683		
Water Charges	3,385		
Energy Costs	18,876		
Cleaning (contract or inhouse)	15,583		
Building Repairs and Maintenance	1,406		
Other – Refuse Collection	2,535		
<b>School operational costs:</b>			
Learning Materials	2,777		
Catering Staff (contract or inhouse)	19,868		
Janitorial	7,068		
Other School Operational Costs (e.g. licences)	335		
<b>Transport costs:</b>			
Home to School Transport	0		
<b>Total Costs for School</b>	<b>618,945</b>		
<b>Unit Cost per Place per Year of 56 places</b>	<b>11,053</b>		

<b>Table 2: Capital Life Cycle Costs</b>	
	<b>Average Annual Cost</b>
Capital Life Cycle Costs	0

<b>Table 3: Annual Property costs to be incurred until disposal</b>	
NDR	
Water Charges	
Energy Costs	
Cleaning	
Repair and Maintenance	
<b>Total Annual Cost until Disposal</b>	

<b>Table 4: Impact on Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE) Allocation</b>	
<p>The Primary Indicator determining the GAE allocation for ELC is based on the number of ELC pupils with the Secondary indicators based on weighted deprivation numbers and centres in areas of high SIMD and the percentage of pupils in rural settings. The pupils from Mount Esk NS are designated to attend a setting within the same geographic location and as such would not affect these indicators.</p>	

### Appendix 3: MOUNT ESK NURSERY SCHOOL CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

I wish my response to be considered as confidential with access restricted to Elected Members and Council Officers of Midlothian Council. ☐

#### Proposal to close Mount Esk Nursery School.

Further detailed information about the proposal, which you are encouraged to read to help inform your response, can be found at <https://midlothiancouncil.citizenspace.com/education/mount-esk-nursery-school-consultation>

Please note the closing date for submission of completed questionnaires is **21 December 2025**.

You can return this electronically to [EducationConsultation@midlothian.gov.uk](mailto:EducationConsultation@midlothian.gov.uk) or by post to Mount Esk Nursery School Consultation, Freepost SCO 622, Midlothian Council, Dalkeith EH22 3AA

#### About You

1. Are you responding to this questionnaire as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

Individual ☐

Organisation (please give details below) ☐

2. Which category best describes you?

	Mount Esk Nursery School	Hawthornden Primary School	Other
Parent/carer of current child(ren)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent/carer of future child(ren)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member of staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member of the community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please give details)

3. If you are a parent/carer, please indicate which stage of education your child/ children currently attend (please tick all that apply)

Not yet in education	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pre-school education	<input type="checkbox"/>
P1-P3	<input type="checkbox"/>
P4-P7	<input type="checkbox"/>
S1-S6	<input type="checkbox"/>
No longer in school education	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to close Mount Esk Nursery School?

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
No opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to establish Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class?

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
No opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to re-designate Mount Esk Nursery School to Hawthornden Primary School Nursery Class as part of Hawthornden Primary School?

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
No opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to place Mount Esk Nursery School under the Leadership of the Hawthornden Primary School Head Teacher?

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>

No opinion



8. Please use this box if you wish to give a reason(s) for your view or if you wish to make any further comment on the proposal (if you need to continue on a separate sheet, please attach.)

Thank you for completing this Consultation Questionnaire.