

MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL – FORM TO BE USED TO LODGE A PETITION

Before completing this form you should read Midlothian Council’s “Procedures for Dealing with Petitions” which can be found on the Council’s website. Copies can also be obtained by telephoning Democratic Services on 0131 270 7500.

The completed form should be delivered:-

- by email to petitions@midlothian.gov.uk; or
- by mail or by hand to Democratic Services, Resources Directorate, Midlothian Council, Midlothian House, Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith, EH22 1DN.

If you require any further information or advice, please contact Democratic Services by telephoning 0131 270 7500.

Details of Principal Petitioner

Please enter the name of person raising the petition. Please include a contact address to which correspondence may be sent and a contact telephone number. Only the principal petitioner’s name and no other details will be made public.

Name:	Newtongrange Primary School Parent Council
Address:	% Ben Miller
	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]
Tel No:	[REDACTED]
e-mail:	[REDACTED]

Petition Statement

Please state clearly in the box below the purpose of your petition and what action you wish Midlothian Council to take.

(Important – Please note that petitions will be rejected and returned to the Principal Petitioner in cases where the wording contained within the Petition Statement box below differs from that on any accompanying petition signature sheets.)

This petition was launched on Change.org in late 2023 and gathered over 450 signatures from the community during the school year 2023/2024. The full petition with photos is available at: <https://www.change.org/p/upgrade-the-newtongrange-primary-school-playground>

Newtongrange Primary School Parent Council calls for equality with other Midlothian schools.

Our playground urgently needs an upgrade.

Our school is a great community with wonderful teachers and support staff, however, the facilities available do not match the staff's passion and dedication. ***Our children deserve a better place to play and learn in.***

In 2025 Newtongrange Primary School will be 100 years old and in that time the playground has deteriorated and no longer meets the standards and needs of a modern school.

The playground is essentially a hard tarmac surface and is not stimulating, engaging, fun or inclusive for the approximately 450 children and staff who use the playground every school day, and our popular After School Club who use it all year round.

The playground railings create a hazard for our children with rusty fragments and flaking paint. There is a large disparity between the Newtongrange playground and many other Midlothian Primary School playgrounds. While ours lacks basic facilities like shelter or play equipment many others feature engaging spaces and accessible play zones to enhance learning experiences. ***Newtongrange Primary School is the ONLY playground in a Midlothian school without any formal play structures.*** We believe all Midlothian school children should have equality in education facility provision and are asking for this to be rectified.

Overall, despite the best efforts of the school staff, the site looks very tired and neglected. Whilst Midlothian Council has recognised the need to refurbish the school as a whole, it makes no mention of the playground and no timescale has yet been offered for this.

The Parent Council would love to see some of the following improvements to bring our school up to the same standards as other local schools;

- We ask for the school railings to be repaired and repainted.
- We ask for some colourful or creative stencil decoration/ designs on the existing tarmac surface to allow the children to play imaginative games.
- We would like to see an astro-turf or softer rubber type surface installed in a small section to avoid injuries when the children are playing football on tarmac.
- We would like to see some larger engaging and inclusive play equipment installed, such as a Trim Trail, surface domes, play house, climbing wall, balance obstacles or similar. (A Trim Trail is a children's obstacle course consisting of different pieces of equipment that form a series of active and fun challenges.)
- We would like to see an outside classroom area created for outdoor learning opportunities.

Newtongrange Parent Council is calling for an urgent plan to transform the playground facilities and to improve safety, accessibility, outdoor learning and play opportunities.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the Petition

Before a petition is submitted, you may have already raised the issue in question with the relevant Council department or other agency and it would be helpful if you could briefly outline what measures if any you have taken. This could include, for example, details of any individuals or organisations approached. Please limit any information to no more than 4 sides of A4 paper.

The Parent Council has successfully launched a Crowdfunding page which has raised over £700 towards improvements to our playground but more significant investment by Midlothian Council is needed to make a real difference.

We thank Cllr Kelly Drummond for contributing some of her own Environment Funds in 2023 towards some new play items and benches, which have made an immediate positive improvement.

We also thank the Council for the recent work to resurface the tarmac and provide some ground stencils. However, serious investment in the provisions and surroundings by the Council is needed.

We have also engaged with Cllr Ellen Scott to discuss our concerns and a possible solution of bringing more of the park into use as part of the playground.

The suggestion mooted was to install a new small fence/barrier/railing at the park side of the playground. The fence would create a new border to encapsulate a small section of grass that is currently underutilised in the children's park near the entrance to the Newtongrange Primary School nursery. By adding this accessible section of the park, it would provide direct access from the playground to a softer grass surface for children to play on. It would also be an ideal area to install a trim track as there would be no concrete. Key to this solution is that by having a 'double fence' the area would remain accessible to the general public outwith the children's playtimes while still maintaining security for the school.



We have spoken to a representative of the Newtongrange Community Council and had a meeting to walk around the area. The meeting was positive and NCC stated they would have no objections to us exploring this as an option.

The School Premises Regulations provides the statutory requirements and best practice standards for councils to provide a variety of surfaces in the design of new and existing playgrounds. Design guidance highlights that external pupil space ratios should ideally include a mixture of hard, soft and covered / sheltered

areas. In addition to the type of surfaces we note that children should also have a minimum amount of space (m squared) per 100 pupils. We question whether Newtongrange Primary School meets these guidelines. We would ask the council to look at their responsibilities in terms of type of surface provision and space per pupil. We put forward that having safe and managed access to the park may help resolve both of these issues.

In conclusion, Newtongrange Primary School Parent Council submits this petition to upgrade the provisions in the playground at Newtongrange Primary School, along with a proposal for suggested solutions. We look forward to a response from Midlothian Council in due course.

Presenting your Petition

As the principal petitioner you will be invited to appear before the Council's Petitions Committee to speak in support of the petition and also to answer any questions which members of the Committee may wish to put to you and assist them in reaching their decision.

You may be accompanied by one supporter who may speak on your behalf.

Signature of Principal Petitioner

When satisfied that the petition meets all the criteria outlined in the Procedures for Dealing with Petitions, the Principal Petitioner should sign and date the form in the box below.

All other signatures gathered should be appended to the form.

(Important – Please remember that petitions will be rejected and returned to the Principal Petitioner in cases where the wording contained within the Petition Statement box above differs from that on any accompanying petition signature sheets.)

Signature Ben Miller Date 6th Feb 2025	
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(Please type your name if sending by e-mail)

Name in block capitals

BEN MILLER

(Please type your name if sending by e-mail)

Appended Information

Please ensure that the following items are appended to this form:-

- Other signatories to the petition (if any)
- Copies of relevant correspondence
- Any additional information for consideration

Submission

Please submit this form and attachments, by mail or in person, to:-

Democratic Services
Resources Directorate
Midlothian Council
Midlothian House
Buccleuch Street
Dalkeith
EH22 1DN

or by email to petitions@midlothian.gov.uk