

Minutes of Wallace Hall 2-18 Parent Council Meeting  
Monday 1 September 2025, 7pm  
Wallace Hall Academy Library

Present: Tina Fiske, Mr Blair, Miss Park, Tom Tyron, Mr Graham, Mrs Gray, Calvin Ruysen (Vice-chair), Theo Berman, Laura Keenan (Chair), Alice Stilgoe (Secretary), Maria Navarro de Sepúlveda, Sammy Austin, Jane Valentine (Treasurer), Emily McClennan, Linda Corrway

Item	Details	Action
1.	<b>Welcome and apologies</b> Apologies: Jillian Maxwell, Kara Millen, Alicia Hood, Stacie Murphy	
2.	<b>Approval of previous minutes</b> Previous minutes were approved by Calvin Ruysen and seconded by Maria Navarro de Sepúlveda	
3.	<b>Matters Arising</b> <b>Bus provision</b> Laura wrote an email to Gillian Brydson Executive Director Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing, Dumfries & Galloway Council. No response. <b>Treasurer's Report</b> Jane has queried refund of £160 cheque at length to no avail. Will return money into the account and update records. Financial returns submitted in July. Requested £43 from DGC for lottery and bank charges. <b>PVG</b> Alice said it was her understanding that PC members do not require a PVG as we are not performing a regulated role. However, she did point out that where there is opportunity for unsupervised contact, a PVG is required. Rather than the whole PC undergoing a check, suggested that PC members are only required to have a PVG if they choose to do anything which involves unsupervised contact. Or where there is any direct work with pupils, ensure that there are members of staff present. Barry commented that there was some of confusion around the PVG changes as they apply to Parent Councils. Feel confident that we are not breaching regulations. Important to ensure that members of staff are present at events and where there is direct work with pupils. <b>Projects Update</b> Departments were urged to spend funds before the summer holidays. Most of the funding has been spent, with the exception of the £500 from Durisdeer Hall Committee. Anticipate a full written update next week. No progress with orchard as community payback did not come back at date they specified. Alice to follow up on book fund raising initiative with Chapter books	c/o Alice

	<p><b>Computer Provision</b> Calvin wrote to John Thin, DGC, 3 times, about this topic but he has not has replied to any message.</p> <p><b>Aligned timetable</b> WHA delayed the introduction of the new aligned timetable as bus provision was not in place in June. At the start of the Autumn term WHA broadly in-line with new aligned timetable, but with some small adjustments that the school felt practical and working well. It was reported to DGC that the school was not following aligned timetable to the letter, and have been instructed to make further revisions to the timetable around the 15 minute contact period. Staff feel quite frustrated as concerns and questions about the aligned timetable were not addressed. There is no research to show benefit to children and no evidence that it will lead to improvements. Further, the WHA timetable in no way hinders other schools in the authority. The school feels that it is being pushed into doing things for sake of uniformity across the region that go against their practical experience of what works well at WHA.</p> <p>Calvin asked what can PC do to support the school and staff. Barry said that in the first instance they are going to trial and review the 15 minute and take findings from this. Part of this review will include Pupil Voice who are going to survey the pupil's point of view. Agreed to review the 15 minute period later in the year once evidence is gathered about how it is working.</p> <p>Discussion about involvement of Councillors. School is under obligation not to canvas Councillors directly, but PC can contact Councillors.</p>	Calvin to follow up
4.	<p><b>Headteacher's Report &amp; School Development Plan</b></p> <p><b>ELC</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ELC welcomed 13 new children and 4 new members of staff. Everyone settled in well and good start to term and getting used to routines.</li> <li>- ELC exploring theme of growing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Primary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Primary has welcome 20 new P1s and 15 new pupils across the school. Last year 24 pupils joined throughout the year. On average 33% of pupils join after the P1 intake.</li> <li>- School role is 163 pupils. That is 13 pupils above the cut-off point for 6 classes, which was mooted in June. Wallace Hall argued against losing a classroom as their experience over years informs them that pupils do join after official registration in Spring.</li> <li>- Classes working on rights of a child.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- P7 looking at leadership roles including house captains, eco committees etc. around which there is much excitement. Strength of our the P7 year is that there are many and varied opportunities for pupils to take on more responsibilities and develop leadership skills.</li> </ul> <p><b>Academy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Very pleased with another set of excellent SQA exam results. The hard work shown by pupils, teachers and support staff along with the encouragement and support from our parents and carers led to a wide range of achievements for our pupils. Congratulations to pupils and gratitude to staff who put in extra work for teaching and study days, not all of which they paid for.</li> <li>- Results outperform rest of authority.</li> <li>- Difficult to identify how WHA compares with national results. As an authority at large, D&amp;G comes in 31 out of 32 authorities in one table, and 25 out of 32 in a different set of metrics.</li> <li>- Results were broadly in line with predictions, largely because of the tracking procedure developed by Dr Fulton. This is now being shared across the authority.</li> <li>- Welcome new S1s. First years settling in well.</li> <li>- Pupil Voice looking at school improvement plan; how this can be shared with students, how to include pupils' views and how best to present to pupils.</li> </ul>	
5.	<p><b>Treasurer's Report</b></p> <p><b>Primary</b> – Balance of £290</p> <p><b>Academy</b> – Balance of £305</p> <p>Commitment of £120 for ringfences for this year.</p> <p>Jane has submitted claim of £43 to DGC for lottery licence and bank charges. Have not had a reply so will chase.</p> <p>Jillian has a Halloween disco planned and things in the pipeline for Christmas.</p>	Jane to chase DGC for claim
6.	<p><b>Parent Council childcare question</b></p> <p>Laura said that some parents had expressed interest in joining the PC but did not have childcare in place and queried if it might be possible to bring children to the meetings and set up activities for them in an adjacent room. Agreed that it was important to accommodate this and keen to find a solution.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Calvin draft letter to DGC</b></p> <p>Background to the letter. Evolved out of recent PC open conversation about frustrations staff have been feeling and PC being quite surprised about some of the needs of the pupils not being met.</p> <p>Approach to DGC is in the spirit of an open dialogue with the local authority, rather than combative. Letter is to outline that there we are aware of the challenges, fully supportive of the school and seeking to find solutions and responses together, PC, DGC and WH.</p>	

	<p>Could ask many types of question. Bigger catch is to start a dialogue, to allow us to have a frank conversation</p> <p>What as a PC should we be supporting school with? What is our total ambition here?</p> <p>If receive a faint response from DGC, do we have the willingness to push further?</p> <p>Is there a definitive list of statutory services?</p> <p>Calvin to hand deliver letter to Gillian Brydson, Executive Director, Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing, Dawn Roberts, Chief Executive, DGC and Cllr Stephen Thompson, Leader of DGC.</p>	C/o Calvin
8.	<p><b>School transport</b></p> <p>There have been significant problems with buses on the A76 corridor, for school transport as well as out-with school hours. Various routes have been tried, but as from 29 August, the following buses will be running:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• two 246 buses will leave from The Whitesands, and almost all pupils will be travelling on these buses.</li> <li>• One 236 bus will operate as usual to collect pupils along the 236 route.</li> </ul> <p>Barry has an online meeting with Gillian Brydson and John Thin on Tuesday 2 September.</p>	Barry to email PC with outcome of meeting
9.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p><b>Burns supper</b></p> <p>Emily volunteered to organise a Burns Supper, as both a fundraiser and community building event. Thank you to Emily for her work on this. Please liaise with Emily if you would like to offer support. Barry to email Emily with some details.</p> <p><b>Bus waiting times</b></p> <p>Laura said that with longer waiting times for buses, up to 50 minutes for some buses, can PC help the school to keep children safe.</p> <p>Acknowledged this was a problem and potential safety issue, but will come back to that in due course once further information is known about long term bus provision.</p> <p><b>School Uniform</b></p> <p>Alice raised issue of school uniform policy not being strictly enforced, particularly regards length of skirts. It can be difficult for parents to encourage children to adhere to uniform guidance at home when it seems there is a light touch at school.</p>	<p>c/o Emily</p> <p>Barry to email Emily</p>

	<p>Emily endorsed Alice, not just in regard how uniform carries reputation of the school, but also in regard to comfort of pupils and wasted learning time as many girls often spend quite a lot of time pulling their skirts down.</p> <p>Emily made a few suggestions such as skorts, skirt and leggings (rather than tights) and skirt no longer shorter than where your fingertips reach your thigh. Alice suggested uniform guidance states knee length or below, rather than just above the knee, and have a photo of an example of a knee-length as well as below the knee (midi skirt).</p>	
10.	<p><b>DONM Monday 6 October 2025, AGM, Wallace Hall Library 7pm</b></p> <p>Monday 17 November 2025, online 7pm  Monday 12 January 2026, online 7pm  Monday 2 March 2026, online 7pm  Monday 27 April 2026, Wallace Hall Library 7pm  Monday 15 June 2026, Buccleuch &amp; Queensberry Arms Hotel, Thornhill 5pm</p>	