



Wallace Hall Academy, Primary and ELC
 "Together we grow, learn and achieve"

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Head Teacher: Barry Graham

7th September 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I would like to welcome everybody back after the summer holidays and hope that you were able to enjoy some of the good weather. We are all hoping for an end to the Covid restrictions but the virus is still with us and we need to be vigilant. I am hoping that this will be a much more normal year, but given our experiences over the past 18 months, we can never be certain of that. Our approach has been to plan for the worst but hope for the best and we will continue to do this.

A special welcome to our new S1 pupils and I hope they have enjoyed their first couple of weeks at Wallace Hall Academy. We look forward to working with you and your family over the coming years.

How we communicate

This year again we have taken the generic information out of this letter and the other termly letters and transferred the information into a booklet which you can keep for the year. We hope that this will be an easy reference guide for you and that you will find it useful. The termly letters from now on will only refer to subjects relevant to that term. The major change to all of this will of course be the references to Covid-19.

Staffing

After 30 years at Wallace Hall Academy, Mr Nick Riley retired at the end of last term and Miss Louise Girvan has joined us as our new Music teacher. Mr Adam Torbett has left and Mr Lewis Gray was appointed to teach History/Modern Studies in our Social Subjects faculty. Mr Robert Watt has replaced Miss Poying Ho in our Maths department and Mr Alex Evans has joined our Physics Team following Mr Sean Dawson's departure. Mrs Emma Clarke will be teaching Drama at Wallace Hall Academy 1-day per week, Miss Kayleigh Simmers joins our PE Department for 3-days each week and Mrs Lauren Currie will be teaching 2-days a week in our Modern Languages department starting after the October holidays. Mr Euan Laverty is currently our Acting PT Additional Support for Learning following Mrs Aileen Marchant's appointment to our Restart and Recovery post, Mrs Melissa McGhie joins us as our new SDS Careers Adviser and Mrs Alice Bainbridge, our Office Manager, is taking up a new post as a Project Co-ordinator at The Bridge.

I would like to take this chance to thank all of our staff who have moved on and wish them well for the future as well extending a warm welcome to our new members of staff.

SQA Results

For the second year running, as a result of Covid-19, pupils were not given the opportunity to sit their examinations in the normal way. Teachers were asked to provide Estimate Grades based on pupil performance in assessments. As Head Teacher of Wallace Hall Academy, I was incredibly proud of the way pupils worked so hard to do their best in the assessments and of the hard work and professionalism shown by both teaching staff and support staff from within the school in supporting pupils through the process. I am also thankful to you, the parents and carers, who supported both the individual pupils and the school through the process and I am delighted with our pupils' SQA results. I have detailed these in the tables below for your information.

S4 - Type of Qualification	2021 S4 Results for WHA	2021 S4 Results for D&G
2 or more National 5s	81%	75%
4 or more National 5s	67%	56%
6 or more National 5s	44%	33%

S5 - Type of Qualification	2021 S5 Results for WHA	2021 S5 Results for D&G
1 or more Highers	78%	60%
3 or more Highers	54%	39%
5 or more Highers	29%	15%

S6 - Type of Qualification	2021 S6 Results for WHA	2021 S6 Results for D&G
1 or more Advanced Highers	29%	24%
2 or more Advanced Highers	16%	8%
5 or more Highers during S5 & S6	49%	34%

We are very pleased with the overall results and, as instructed by the Scottish Government and the SQA, are planning for a more traditional exam diet this session which will run from the end of April to early June 2022. However, to take account of the fact that things are still returning to normal the SQA have made a number of changes to individual courses for session 2021-22 and teachers are currently using this information to plan effective learning and teaching programs for all Senior Phase pupils.

Parent Council

Two Parent Council meetings are usually held each term and our first one of this academic session is being held on Monday 6th September with the AGM scheduled for Monday 4th October. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, meetings will continue to take place remotely until further notice. To register your attendance and request the link for the meetings please email wallacehallparentcouncil@gmail.com. Further information and additional dates will be circulated to parents as soon as this is available.

All parents/carers are welcome to participate in the meetings and more information including agendas and previous minutes can be found on the school website: www.wallacehall.co.uk. If you would like to contact the Chair or the Vice Chair of the Parent Council, please email them on: wallacehallparentcouncil@gmail.com.

S4-S6 Options

All pupil course options are now finalised. It is essential that every pupil attends all their classes and catches up on any work they may have missed due to course changes. To help in this process, staff will be doing a final check to ensure pupils are entered at the appropriate level following their examination results. It is now expected that all pupils will complete any course they have started and that they will not be requesting changes.

Annual Data Checks

The annual data check forms have been issued to pupils during their Health and Wellbeing classes. Please can you complete and return this form as soon as possible to the school office to allow any changes to be made to our database. It is important that details such as parental contact information and medical conditions are kept up to date. Also in the envelope is a local trip/sporting fixture permission form and for some a request for photo permissions and parental email if we do not already have these details.

University Open Days

Over the coming months some of our senior students will be applying to study courses at university. With many higher education establishments to choose from, we encourage our young people to explore their options by attending university open days. Many of these days will be organised on a virtual basis and pupils should join in with the institutions that they are interested in. You can find links to many of the Scottish university webpages from the Pupil Area on the Wallace Hall Academy website and within the Career and Future Planning Team which was created for senior pupils. These web pages display pertinent information on open days. Further information regarding universities and open days can be found on www.ucas.ac.uk and www.opendays.com.

School Photographer

The school photographer will be in Wallace Hall Primary on Wednesday 27th October and in Wallace Hall Academy on Thursday 28th October. Primary pupils will get the opportunity for individual and family photographs on the Wednesday. Secondary students will get the opportunity for individual and family photographs on the Thursday. However, pupils in the secondary who have younger siblings in the primary will have the chance to get a family photograph taken in the primary on Wednesday 27th October. If required, a catch-up session will be arranged for later in the term.

School Clubs and Extra Curricular Activities

School clubs and extra-curricular activities play a very important part in providing opportunities for achievement for our youngsters and we encourage pupils to take part in these. However, due to Covid-19 restrictions, the offer of clubs may be more limited than usual and we are awaiting further guidance from Education Scotland on what activities we are able to offer. Once we have these, we will inform our parents of all school clubs and extra-curricular activities taking place this academic session.

Wallace Hall Electives Programme

Every week S3 pupils take part in an Elective period with S5 and S6 pupils taking part in an Elective period every two weeks. This programme is designed to give our pupils some wider experiences outside their usual timetabled classes. Pupils find our Electives really rewarding and they develop a number of new transferrable skills that will benefit them in the future. This year our S3 Electives are: Activity Tourism, Duke of Edinburgh, Eco-Committee and Fitness, Performance and Development; our S5 Electives are: Food for the Future, LGBTQ+ Charter, Car/Bike Maintenance, Pupil Support, Barista and Eco-Committee; our S6 Electives are Charities Committee, Eco-Committee, Library Committee, Pupil Support, Social Committee, Yearbook Committee and Young Enterprise.

Health and Wellbeing Update August

All S1-6 pupils participate in Health and Wellbeing lessons on a weekly basis. These lessons are delivered by tutors or outside organisations and aim to support our young people in improving their overall health and wellbeing. Please find below a summary of the general topics that will have been covered by the end of this term.

Current Year	Term 1 (August- October)
S1	<u>Settling In</u> Getting to know each other and expectations, friendships, team building. Healthy lifestyles.
S2	<u>Mental Health</u> Self-esteem, body image, and eating disorders.
S3	<u>Online safety</u> Social media, sharing images and the law.
S4	<u>Equality and Diversity</u> Show Racism the Red Card.
S5	<u>Risky Behaviour</u> Consent, STIs, Contraception, Pornography.
S6	<u>Future Planning</u> Employability skills, researching courses, UCAS/College applications, interview skills and mock interviews.

HPV and other Vaccines

We are still receiving guidance on this year's vaccination programme which will include S3 teenage boosters, seasonal flu, S6 catch-ups and S1-S6 MMR. We will send information home when this programme has been confirmed.

The School Improvement Plan

Our School Improvement Plan (SIP) sets out our strategic priorities for the year ahead. I have attached an overview of our SIP for your information – please see Appendix A.

Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme

Our Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme is being offered as part of our Electives programme this year and we have had a very healthy uptake from our S3 pupils.

Due to Covid restrictions, pupils were unable to complete the expedition section of the award last year. However, we will organise for these pupils to undertake this requirement as soon as it is safe to do so.

If you are interested in helping with the DofE Award Scheme, please contact Mr McKenna at the school. Any help or assistance would be appreciated and we are especially keen to find individuals who are willing to support our expeditions. We will provide all the training required.

The School Calendar

Due to the constraints of Covid-19, we are unable to populate our school calendar (Appendix B) until further guidance is received from Scottish Government and Education Scotland. However, we will communicate dates for organised events/activities with you as soon as we are able to. Please keep an eye on our school website, www.wallacehall.co.uk, and our social media pages for further information.

School Trips

All school trips will adhere to government guidance with the level of risk monitored on an individual basis before the trip goes ahead. Information will be communicated to relevant parents/carers prior to any trip taking place. At present, we are advised that international trips should not take place until further guidance is received from the government.

Instrumental Music Instruction 2021-2022

Dumfries and Galloway Instrumental Service offer pupils from primary 5 onwards the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument. Tuition is delivered by music instructors in the following disciplines: strings, brass, woodwind, guitar and percussion. All lessons are delivered on a group basis online through Microsoft Teams or in person, dependant on timetabling. Secondary pupils have their lessons delivered on a rota basis during the school day to ensure they don't regularly miss any one subject. Lessons follow a structured course of study which is suited to the pupil's abilities as well as SQA, local authority and school requirements.

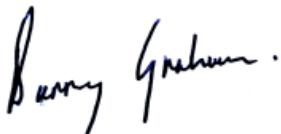
Lessons for the 21/22 academic year are funded by the Scottish Government. The IMS is able to loan orchestral instruments to pupils free of charge. Guitars and percussion instruments are not available for loan. However, they are normally available to use in school.

Applications are now open and can be accessed on the following link:

<https://dumgal.gov.uk/article/19027/Instrumental-Music-Tuition>

Pupils will receive a letter confirming if their application has been successful or if they have been placed on a waiting list.

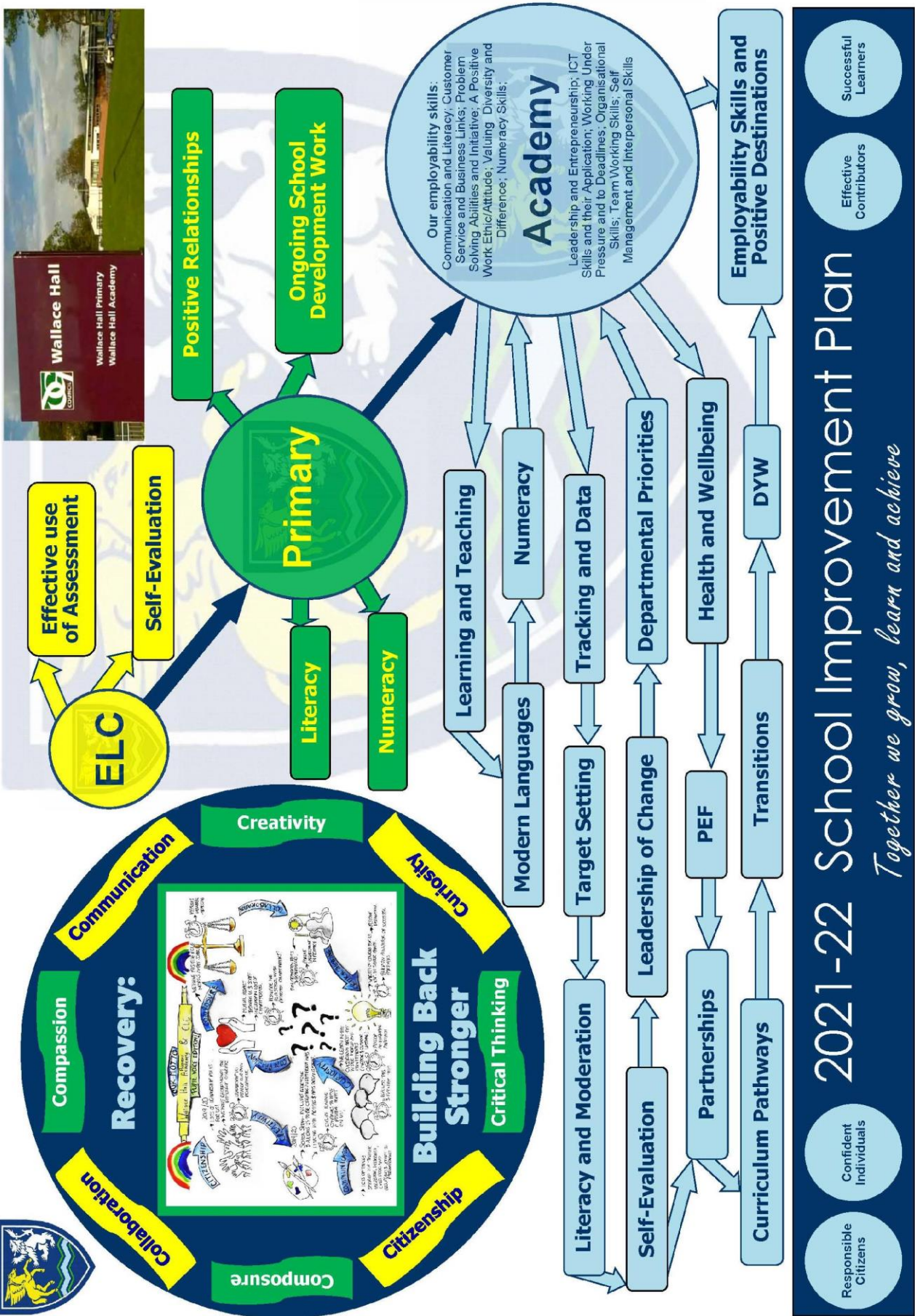
Yours sincerely



B Graham
Head Teacher

Appendix A

School Improvement Plan 2021 - 2022



2021-22 School Improvement Plan

Together we grow, learn and achieve



Appendix B

	Date	Event
Term 1	18/08/20	INSET day – staff only
	19/08/21	First day of term
	06/09/21	Parent Council Meeting via MS Teams – 7pm
	04/10/21	Parent Council Meeting via MS Teams – 7pm
	08/10/21	Last day of term

	Date	Event
Term 2	25/10/21	First Day of Term
	27/10/21	School photographer – ELC, Primary and Families
	28/10/21	School Photographer - Academy
	23/12/21	Last Day of Term

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, we have been unable to organise many of the events we would normally have entered in our calendar until we receive further guidance from Scottish Government and Education Scotland.

Please keep an eye on our school website and social media pages for any updates.

Dates are also subject to change and notification of any such amendments will be issued in due course.