

Maxwelltown High School

School Handbook



August 2016

Dumfries and Galloway Education Services

Maxwelltown High School Handbook

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1. Letter from the Head of Education



Dear Parents,

Dumfries and Galloway Education Services is committed to delivering a high quality education for your child/ren. As part of Dumfries and Galloway Council's overall vision we aim to provide all children and young people with a good start in life and prepare them for adulthood and employment.

Education Services cannot deliver this alone for children and young people but work together with others and, as parents, you are one of our key partners. The research tells us that when parents are involved in their child's education the child will do better. The school handbook is one of the ways in which we inform parents, not just about how the school works, but also about how you can help us help your children to succeed in school and life.

It gives me pleasure as Head of Education to commend this handbook to you as an invaluable source of information about your school and Education Services.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Brydson

Head of Education

2. Welcome from Headteacher

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am delighted to welcome you into our school community. Our aim at Maxwelltown High School is to develop our young people as successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and ultimately, responsible citizens. Through their educational experiences with us, they will also be given the opportunity to develop the skills for learning, work and life which will result in them making the successful transition from school into university, college, training or employment.

At Maxwelltown High School not only are we committed to providing the very best educational experiences and opportunities but also advice and support as appropriate and when needed. As well as our staff being highly effective classroom teachers, they are compassionate and caring individuals who are always willing to help our youngsters in any way they can.

Parents, outside agencies and visitors are often in the school and they comment on the welcoming and friendly atmosphere in our school and the excellent relationships between our pupils and our staff. We work hard at maintaining a positive ethos and providing a caring, safe and productive environment for staff and pupils.

The best education for young people comes from an active three way partnership between school, young people and parents and carers. The Senior Leadership Team and Principal Teachers of Pupil Support are always happy to meet with parents and carers to discuss aspects of their child's schooling. Their views and suggestions are always welcome and valued.

In our quest to provide the most effective and successful education, we also work in partnership with our associated primary schools, members of the local community, our local business partners, other partners in learning and most importantly, our young people.

We will ensure the young people who attend Maxwelltown High School have a successful, engaging and enjoyable secondary education.

Yours sincerely,

Ms R Williams
Acting Headteacher
Maxwelltown High School

3. Education Services Aims

Our aim is to raise levels of attainment, achievement and participation in all our children and young people.

Our objectives:

- We will ensure that children and young people are at the centre of our plans.

This means planning by schools and support from Education Services will be focussed on delivering to all our children and young people the entitlements embedded in Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child.

- We will improve partnership working.

This means the emphasis on Cluster working, training on Getting it Right for Every Child themes, parental involvement, multi-agency working, partnership with Community Learning and Development (CLD); Professional Learning Communities and collaboration with Education Scotland, the Care Inspectorate and Further Education Colleges.

- We will encourage innovation, creativity, collaboration and a culture of sharing and learning in all staff.

This means a focus on transformational leadership, professional autonomy and local solutions and building capacity in all our staff.

- We will streamline our business processes.

This means empowering our schools and staff to find better ways of working, with an emphasis on professional autonomy, local solutions, developing leadership, capacity building, effective Continuing Professional Development and implementing Getting it Right for Every Child processes.

4. School Vision and Aims

Maxwelltown High School has a clear school vision statement and three main aims.

The vision statement and aims have been agreed by staff, learners and parents.

Maxwelltown High School Vision Statement:

Maxwelltown High School will provide a wide range of learning experiences which will allow ALL of our young people the opportunity to develop their skills for learning, life and work to enable them ALL to make the transition from school to a positive and sustainable destination.

We will work together effectively with other partners in learning for the benefit of our young people and will develop and promote Maxwelltown High School as a Community School for the benefit of the school and wider community.

Maxwelltown High School will aim to:

- Meet the needs of all learners
- Work effectively with partners in learning
- Make a positive contribution to the wider community

Our core School Values are:

- Fairness
- Honesty
- Respect
- Responsibility

5. School Ethos

Maxwelltown High School is a school of ambition and it is a school of high standards in terms of attendance, behaviour, work ethic, uniform, participation, achievement and participation.

Staff, learners and visitors to the school find the school to be welcoming, friendly and inclusive. They comment on the calm, industrious atmosphere in the school and the good relationships between staff and pupils.

All staff and learners are aware of the expectations of staff and of learners and we endeavour to be fair and consistent across the school in fulfilling these expectations and addressing any issues of concern.

In order to promote consistency and create a positive and productive learning environment in our classrooms around the school, all staff and learners are clear about the expectations of behaviour. Staff and learners are also clear about what their responsibilities are in terms of learning and teaching.

In every classroom in our school there are three posters displayed relating to behaviour and learning.

The three posters are:

1. Our Behaviour Plan

Whole School Approach to Promoting Positive Behaviour in order to:

- Ensure all members of the school community can work, learn and be successful in a safe environment without interruption.
- Help learners to understand that they need to take responsibility for their own behaviour and it's effect on others.
- Offer learners the opportunity to engage in an education which will benefit their life chances.

All members of the school community are expected to behave in a way that reflects our four agreed school values:

HONESTY, FAIRNESS, RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY

Agreed expectations of all:

- Arrive on time fully prepared for learning
- Treat everyone with respect
- Listen to the person who is meant to be talking
- Follow the instructions from all staff straight away
- Take care of all resources including equipment, materials and facilities

Success will be recognised by:

- Use of praise and encouragement
- Merits awarded through the rewards system
- Recognition of achievements at Celebration of Achievement events
- Communication between home and school
- Recognition through positive behaviour rewards

Responses to learners who do not meet expectations of behaviour may include:

Verbal Warning	Referral to Senior Management	Removed from Classroom
Detention	Referral to Principal Teacher	Reflection Exercise
	Moved Seat	

Two learning posters contain the following information:

2. Learning is most effective when:

- Learning intentions are shared and revisited to maintain the focus and purpose of the lesson
- Content of lesson is put in context and made relevant to life and work
- There is a range of experiences and outcomes to meet different learners' needs
- Learners are actively engaged in the lesson
- There is effective use of questioning
- There is reference to prior learning and next steps

3. As a learner I have responsibility for knowing:

- What I am learning
- Why I am learning this
- What my targets are for improvement
- How to get help with my learning

What people have recently said about Maxwelltown High School:

When asked what the good things were about the school, third year learners said the school was **“welcoming, supportive and people felt included.”**

Another learner said what she appreciated was that **“pupils are listened to. Staff give them time.”**

A member of one of our partner agencies recently said **“this is this most nurturing school I have been in. Pupils are listened to and cared for and supported as individuals.”**

After a recent residential trip the feedback from the activity centre was **“of the 40 schools we have worked with this year, Maxwelltown High School stood out because of the pupils' behaviour, politeness and willingness to help without being asked.”**

The minister for learning during a visit in June 2012 said **“I very much enjoyed my visit and it was extremely beneficial to learn more about the innovative approaches Maxwelltown High School is taking to the implementation of A Curriculum for Excellence. I was particularly impressed with the enthusiasm shown by staff.”**

We continue to maintain the positive and productive ethos and learning environment in Maxwelltown High School.

We will also continue to recognise and celebrate the achievements of our learners, staff and school. We do this on an ongoing basis in a number of ways. At the end of each term the whole school including all staff and learners gather for an End of Term Celebration of Achievement during which the achievements in school and in the wider community are celebrated.

Staff, learners, parents and members of the wider community have the opportunity to nominate members of our School Community for recognition and achievements.

6. School Information

6.1 Contact details

MAXWELLTOWN HIGH SCHOOL
LOCHSIDE ROAD
DUMFRIES
DG2 0EL

Tel: 01387 722000

Fax: 01387 721544

E-mail address: gw08officemaxwelltow@ea.dumgal.sch.uk

Website Address: www.maxwelltownhighschool.org

6.2 Headteacher details

Acting Headteacher: Ms R Williams

Tel: 01387 722000

E-mail address: gw08smithmaureen5@ea.dumgal.sch.uk

6.3 Roll of School

Number of Pupils by Gender and Class for the session 2016-2017

S1				S3			
Class	Boys	Girls	Total	Class	Boys	Girls	Total
1R1	14	10	24	3R1	6	11	17
1R2	10	9	19	3R2	9	13	22
1R3	11	10	21	3R3	10	9	19
Total	35	29	64	Total	25	33	58

S2				S4			
Class	Boys	Girls	Total	Class	Boys	Girls	Total
2R1	6	15	21	4R1	11	5	16
2R2	13	7	20	4R2	11	5	16
2R3	6	9	15	4R3	14	6	20
Total	25	31	56	Total	36	16	52

S5				S6			
Class	Boys	Girls	Total	Class	Boys	Girls	Total
5R1	11	9	19	6R1	9	10	19
5R2	9	8	17	Total	9	10	19
Total	21	17	36				

6.4 School Staff

Acting Headteacher	Ms R Williams
Depute Headteacher, Curriculum	Ms J
Depute Headteacher, Pupil Support	Mrs J Taylor

Mathematics/Numeracy

Mrs K Millar	Principal Teacher (Curriculum)
Mr J Gillan	Mathematics
Mr J Scott	Mathematics

Computing/Business Administration/Craft and Design/ICT

Mr O'Toole	Principal Teacher (Curriculum)
Mr A Campbell	Business Education
Mr R Haig	Technical Education (probationer)
Mr M O'Hara	Technical Education

English, Whole School Literacy, Modern Languages, Drama

Ms N Davies	Principal Teacher (Curriculum)
Mrs J Taylor	English
Mrs J Houston	English
Mrs M Gibson	English
Ms P Taylor	English
Mrs S Dames	Drama
Mrs J Muir	French

Art, Home Economics, Physical Education, Music and Whole School Health Promotion

Mr M Derby	Art-Principal Teacher (Curriculum)
Mr D Warner	Art
Mrs J Carruth	Home Economics
Mrs N Reynolds	Home Economics
Ms L Shankland	Music
Mr P Cook	Physical Education
Mr J Hannay	Physical Education
Ms C McQuade	Physical Education
Ms E Gibson	Physical Education

Geography, History, Modern Studies, PECS, Sciences and Whole School Citizenship

Mr A Stores	Modern Studies-Principal Teacher (Curriculum)
Miss K Syme	Modern Studies (probationer)
Miss J Clark	Geography, Social Subjects
Mr R Fritchley-Simpson	PECS
Mrs F McColl	Biology
Dr L Field	Biology/Rural Skills
Mr T Newall	Chemistry
Ms R Williams	Physics
Mr M Wilson	Physics
Mr R Kennedy	Physics (probationer)

Principal Teachers Pupil Support

Mrs Telford	Additional Support Needs
Mr Hannay	Surnames A – G
Ms McQuade	Surnames H – Me
Mrs Reynolds	Surnames Mi – Z
Miss K Braid	Barriers to Learning

Learning Support / Barriers to Learning

Mrs Telford	Principal Teacher of Pupil Support
Miss K Braid	Principal Teacher of Pupil Support

Mrs Ferla	Support for Learning Teacher
Mr Mahon	Support for Learning Teacher
Mr P Webley	Support for Learning Teacher
S Priestley/S Coates	Support for Learning Teacher

Mrs J Burgess	Additional Support for Learning Assistant
Mrs K Dalrymple	Additional Support for Learning Assistant
Mrs K Gemmell	Additional Support for Learning Assistant
Mrs S Grierson	Additional Support for Learning Assistant
Mrs H Hyde	Additional Support for Learning Assistant
Mrs S Kempself	Additional Support for Learning Assistant
Ms N Kerr	Additional Support for Learning Assistant
Ms S McLaren	Additional Support for Learning Assistant
Mrs E North	Additional Support for Learning Assistant
Mrs J Griffin	Additional Support for Learning Assistant
Ms L Walls	Additional Support for Learning Assistant

Mrs S Livermore	School Support Manager
Mrs P Hodgson	Admin Assistant
Mrs S Johnstone	Clerical Assistant
Mr K Alexander	Janitor
Mr M Murdoch	Janitor
Mr I Gray	School Technician
Mr J Grieve	School Technician
Mr G McEwan	ICT Network Administrator
Mrs C Johnston	Library Assistant
Mrs Fiona Donowho	Catering Manageress

6.5 Terms/Holidays

School term and holiday dates are set by the Council following consultation with teachers. Dates for up to 3 years in advance are published once agreed. The Council also aims to publicise any changes to the scheduled dates or unexpected closures as soon as possible.

Current Term Dates

The term dates for the academic year 2016/2017 are as follows:

Term	Dates of Attendance		
1	Staff Return	Wednesday	17 August 2016
	Pupils Return	Thursday	18 August 2016
	Schools Close	Friday	14 October 2016
	Autumn Holiday	Monday Friday	17 October 2016 – 28 October 2016
2	Schools Re-open	Monday	31 October 2016
	Schools Close	Wednesday	21 December 2016
	Christmas Holiday	Thursday Wednesday	22 December 2016 – 4 January 2017
3	Schools Re-Open	Thursday	5 January 2017
	Mid-Term Holiday	Monday	13 February 2017
	Teachers (INSET)	Tuesday Wednesday	14 February 2017 15 February 2017
	Schools Close	Friday	31 March 2017
	Spring Holiday	Monday Monday	3 April 2017 – 17 April 2017
4	Schools Re-Open	Tuesday	18 April 2017
	May Day Holiday	Monday	1 May 2017
	Teachers (INSET)	Thursday Friday	1 June 2017 2 June 2017
	Schools Close	Friday	30 June 2017
	Summer Holiday	Monday	3 July 2017
	Teachers (INSET)	Thursday Friday	17 August 2017 18 August 2017
	Pupils Return	Monday	21 August 2017

You can also download copies of the current or future term and holiday dates from the Dumfries and Galloway council website.

7. Contact Us:

As a parent of a Maxwelltown High School you are welcome to contact the school at any time to:

- Pass on information
- Ask for information or advice
- Raise issues of concern
- Make a complaint

When contacting the school, your call will be received by a member of our office staff. The office staff will then pass on your message or connect you with the most appropriate member of staff to respond to your call.

Education Services operate within the complaints handling procedures for Dumfries and Galloway Council. Information can be found at:

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=9246>

Education Services aims for enquiries, concerns and complaints to be dealt with at as local a level as possible, where possible at individual school level. Individual schools are supported to ensure that matters of complaint are recorded, acknowledged and responded to within normal complaints handling timescales, normally response within 10 working days. Normally issues arising at a school level should be brought to the attention of the class teacher or senior school staff, such as the Headteacher or Depute Headteachers as appropriate. Further support and advice can be provided to individual complainants or teaching staff through contacting either the complaints handler within Education Services or to the Councils Corporate Complaints Unit.

Note: The School's procedures for raising issues of concern and making a complaint are on the Maxwelltown High School Offices website

www.maxwelltownhighschool.co.uk

8. How the School Works

8.1 The structure of the school day is set out below.

The school day starts for all learners at 8.50am and finishes at 3.15pm.

	Start Time	End Time
Warning bell	8:50	
Registration	8:52	9:00
1	9:00	9:45
2	9:45	10:30
Break	10:30	10:50
3	10:50	11:35
4	11:35	12:20
5	12:20	13:05
Lunch	13:05	13:45
6	13:45	14:30
7	14:30	15:15

All learners will be required to attend morning registration at 8.50am. If for any reason a learner is late, they are required to report directly to the school office to be registered by the office staff.

8.2 School Uniform

All Dumfries and Galloway schools must have a dress code which encourages learners to dress in a way appropriate to attendance at school. This code must not lead to direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, gender or disability.

Clothing which is unacceptable in school under any circumstances would include items which:

- Could potentially encourage factions (e.g. football colours)
- Could cause offence (e.g. political or religious references)
- Could cause health and safety difficulties such as loose fitting clothing or dangling earrings
- Are of flammable materials which may cause danger in some classes
- Could cause damage to floors
- Carry advertising especially tobacco or alcohol
- Could be used to inflict damage to others

Parents in receipt of a grant for footwear or clothing from the authority will be encouraged to purchase items which are in accordance with the school dress code. Guidance is available on clothing grants from Pupil/Parent Support Unit on:

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2235>

MAXWELLTOWN HIGH SCHOOL UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS

Trousers and Skirts

Conventional black trousers

Plain black skirts

Pullovers, Cardigans and Sweatshirts

Plain black V-neck jumper, plain black cardigan or black school sweatshirt with the school emblem

School Ties

Ties are part of the Maxwelltown High School uniform and are to be worn every day.

Conventional Shirts and Polo Shirts

Learners should wear a plain white conventional school shirt or a polo shirt plain white with or without the school emblem.

Footwear

Please encourage your child to wear dark coloured shoes to school.

NOTE: Sweatshirts, polo shirts, pullovers and ties are all available to order from Tesco.

Jackets and Coats

The following are **NOT ACCEPTABLE** as substitutes for coats and jackets and should not be worn to school:

- Brightly coloured, logoed fleeces
- Hooded tops of any colour other than black
- Denim jackets
- Patterned sweaters
- Designer zip tops

While it would not normally be the policy of the authority to exclude a learner from school solely on the basis of his/her dress, persistent refusal to respond to a reasonable dress code could be deemed to be a challenge to the headteacher's authority and thus be detrimental to the wellbeing of the whole school community. In such circumstances, a headteacher could justify the use of the school disciplinary procedures.

8.3 School Meals

At Maxwelltown High School, learners can buy snacks from the dining hall during morning break and meals from the dining hall at lunchtime. Learners can purchase their food with cash or by using their Young Scot Card. Alternatively, learners can bring their own packed lunch to school. Learners who bring a packed lunch can eat their lunch in the dining hall or the crush area just outside the dining hall.

Free school meals are available to support families who live and attend a school in Dumfries and Galloway and who are in receipt of qualifying benefits. All Primary 1 pupils currently receive free school meals. Any questions about Free School Meals can be directed to the Pupil/Parent Support Unit (See Section 16) or

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2233>

For the past 8 years Dumfries and Galloway Council's school meal service has taken steps to improve the nutritional quality of school meals.

This has been influenced by the introduction of both "Hungry for Success" and "The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007" which:

- Places health promotion at the heart of school activities
- Ensures that food and drink served in schools meets nutritional requirements
- Ensures local authorities promote the uptake and benefits of school meals and, in particular, free school meals

This has resulted in a service which provides and promotes healthy food choices with a restriction of certain foods high in fat, salt and sugar.

Dumfries and Galloway Councils current uptake of school meals is at a six year high, we would like to thank you for your continued support in encouraging your child to have a school lunch.

For more information call 030 33 33 3000 and ask for DGFirst, Facilities Management (catering).

8.4 School Transport

Who is entitled to school transport?

- Pupils who live 2 miles away from their catchment school if they are under 8 years old
- Pupils who live 3 miles away from their catchment school if they are 8 years and over
- Roman Catholic children attending the denominational school for their address and live the above statutory distances from that school.

How do I find out if my child will receive school transport?

When school transport is required for a learner, the school will contact the Parent/Pupil Support Unit. If your child is eligible, details of the transport arrangements will be communicated to you in time for the new academic year. You can check whether your child is entitled to school transport using 'Find My Nearest' on the Council's website

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=6293>

Any alterations to transport arrangements that occur during the school year will be communicated prior to any changes being made. If school bus passes are required these are issued at school.

There is a Policy on School Transport and a Guide for Parents, and also Guidance for transport of children and young people with Additional Support Needs. These are available from your school or on the Council's website or from the Pupil/Parent Support Unit (see Section 16)

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1487>

School Transport – see also [School Transport Policy and Transporting Children with Additional Support Needs- Guidelines](#)

9. Curriculum

9.1 Curriculum for Excellence

Curriculum for Excellence is bringing learning to life in the way education is delivered for all 3-18 year olds – in nursery, primary, secondary, at college, workplace or community learning. It takes a fresh approach to what, how and where young people learn. It aims to raise standards, improve knowledge and develop skills, closing the gap between the lowest and highest performers. Ultimately it aims to nurture young people as successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

How will Curriculum for Excellence Work?

- Learners will experience a broad, deep, general education to S3, with options in the senior phase to specialise, go on to further study, improve skills and get work experience.
- The 'learner journey' will be joined up from 3-18 to avoid gaps and overlaps in learning and to make the most of achievements outside school.
- Learners will work at a pace that suits, with enough challenge and support to stretch them.
- Lessons will be more engaging, inspiring and relevant to everyday life.
- Teachers will make connections between subjects, helping children make sense of the world.

- Children will learn *how* to learn and how to use their learning, not just memorise information to pass tests. This will help them adapt in an uncertain future with the ability to think for themselves, make sound judgements, challenge, enquire and find solutions.
- There's more focus on knowledge *and* skills – including vital skills: literacy and numeracy, which underpin all learning and are critical in life.
- There are changes to assessment and how progress is reported to give learners, parents and employers better information on potential and achievement.
- There are new qualifications from 2013 and more flexibility in how young people take qualifications

Note: The above information is based upon National Guidance issued by Education Scotland.

9.2 Curriculum Information

Learners in S1 – S3 at Maxwelltown High School will experience a **Broad General Education**.

Learners in S4- S6 at Maxwelltown High School will experience the **Senior Phase Curriculum**. This phase of their secondary education is when they will be involved in most if not all of their SQA examinations linked with their chosen subjects and career pathways.

9.3 The Broad General Education

Every child and young person is entitled to expect their education to provide them with:

- A curriculum which is coherent from 3 to 18
- A broad general education, including well planned experiences and outcomes across all the curriculum areas from early years through to S3
- A senior phase of education after S3 which provides opportunities to obtain qualifications as well as to continue to develop the four capacities
- Opportunities to develop skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work (including career planning skills) with a continuous focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing
- Personal support to enable them to gain as much as possible from the opportunities which *curriculum for excellence* can provide
- Support in moving into positive and sustained destinations beyond school.

It is the responsibility of schools and their partners to bring the experiences and outcomes together and apply these entitlements to produce programmes for learning across a broad curriculum, covering science, languages, mathematics, social studies (including Scottish history), expressive arts, health and wellbeing, religious and moral education and technology.

Throughout this broad curriculum it is expected there will be an emphasis on Scottish contexts, Scottish cultures and Scotland's history and place in the world. This planning should demonstrate the **principles for curriculum design**: challenge and enjoyment; breadth; progression; depth; personalisation and choice; coherence; relevance.

Learning should be made available in a range of ways including interdisciplinary learning and a range of opportunities which ensure a broad approach, enabling, for example, a coherent understanding of environmental issues.

The curriculum framework sets out what a child or young person should be able to do and the experiences that contribute to their learning, rather than detailed definitions of content or prescribed hours of study.

The intention must be to avoid driving young people through the levels as fast as possible. This arrangement of experiences and outcomes is intended to give teachers and other staff the flexibility and scope to follow issues through and to provide personalised and varying programmes of learning so that the young person is secure at a level before moving on.

The experiences and outcomes can be packaged in different ways appropriate to the individual child or young person. For example, some young people might learn about modern language outcomes as part of learning about hospitality or business, or outcomes related to mathematics in the context of learning about geography, or outcomes related to geography in the context of learning about science. Planning should be done in a way that enables all pupils to capitalise on the specialist expertise of subject teachers. In all cases from 3 to 18 the focus should be on good quality learning and teaching.

Assessment will be an integral part of learning and teaching, helping to provide an emerging picture of a young person's learning and achievements as he or she develops across the four capacities. Up to the end of S3, assessment by teachers will be the main means of assessing each young person's achievements. Assessment should be planned and used in ways which reflect the principles for curriculum design.

At the end of S3, a young person's progress within the outcomes should be recorded by their teachers. Teachers will be expected to assess the level and extent of achievement by reference to the young person's learning across curriculum areas, wherever the learning has taken place.

This will be the opportunity to bring together the teachers' judgements and the young person's own record of their achievements and skills by drawing on a range of evidence. Young people will have been learning how to evaluate and present their skills through personal learning planning from early years.

9.4 Senior Phase Curriculum

As young people move into S4, they will continue to develop the four capacities to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. To do so, they must continue to have opportunities that reinforce their broader learning and achievements through a range of experiences including enhancing skills for life and skills for work, an active and healthy lifestyle and an appreciation of Scotland and its place in the world.

There will be opportunities to maintain and enhance their literacy and numeracy skills. They will also start building their lifelong portfolio of qualifications.

The qualifications young people aim for should be flexible and designed to offer pathways to the next stage, whether in further or higher education, employment or training. They should be able to be taken at school, college or other settings and they should provide credit for young people's attainment.

9.5 The Curriculum at Maxwelltown High School

How do we develop a curriculum that meets the needs of all our learners?

The curriculum for Maxwelltown High School fulfils the following criteria:

- The 7 principles of curriculum design (detailed in next section).
- Development of our young people as confident individuals, effective contributors, responsible citizens and successful learners.
- Allows development of the skills for life, learning and work.
- Improves learners access to cultural and sporting activities.
- Improves health and wellbeing.
- Exposes all learners to a diverse range of subjects and activities in S1-S3.
- Maintains interest and enjoyment, challenge and pace by ensuring that learners have progression through the curriculum, and that they experience different educational experiences from year to year.
- Acknowledges the different needs of individuals and the fact that paths through school may vary from learner to learner.
- Provides a range of certificated courses at a range of SCQF levels for all learners in the Senior Phase.
- Allows opportunities for learners to work with outside agencies that offer them support.
- Ensures there are opportunities for learners to experience and engage with the world of work, higher and further education.

How does the curriculum meet learners' needs?

The model addresses the following 7 principles of curriculum design:

Coherence– smooth, well paced transitions through the experiences and outcomes, from early to the end of level 3. Our new curriculum model ensures that learners develop the skills in each of the eight curriculum areas throughout S1, S2 and S3. It also ensures that all pupils are provided with a coherent curriculum from S1 to S6.

Breadth – 'A broad general education will include all of the experiences and outcomes across all curriculum areas up to and including the third level.' Pupils study every subject in S1 and S2, allowing teachers to develop understanding at levels 3 and 4. Option choices are offered in a structured way within the curriculum areas. This enables learners in S3 to become secure at level 3 and begin to move into level 4.

Depth – Learners should experience deep learning that encompasses higher order thinking skills. Learners should have the opportunity to explore subject areas in depth – sometimes this means taking a block of time to give learners the opportunity to fully engage with a subject area. The structure for expressive arts and technologies in S2 addresses the issue of depth for subjects that have less contact time. All subjects are working to ensure that deep learning, including higher order thinking skills, takes place during lessons.

Progression – Learners move through and between levels in a planned way. There are opportunities for individuals to move through level 3 and into level 4 where appropriate.

Relevance – Lessons are relevant to the learner and provide real life examples that pupils understand and engage with.

Challenge and enjoyment – The school day consists of lessons that not only challenge the learners in their learning, but also give learners a sense of enjoyment. Some parts of the school week are structured to allow learners to perceive school as an enjoyable experience. The electives in S1 allow learners to choose options that are interesting to them.

Personalisation and choice – Learners have the opportunity for personalisation and choice within lessons. In S1 and S2 they also experience personalisation and choice in their chosen electives. As they get older, the level of choice they are able to have increases, as does the ability to personalise their curriculum.

By changing the structure of our school day to incorporate 7 periods of 45 minutes, more time is freed up for the delivery of electives in S1 and S2. This enhances personalisation and choice and should improve overall enjoyment of school. The School of Rugby, PARTY, Young Apprentice, Kenya Project, Arts Performance and profiling and other initiatives take place in this elective time, reducing the impact of these on subject areas. It creates a space for creative and innovative work to be undertaken by learners and staff.

Other issues regarding meeting learners' needs have also been addressed including:

- Retaining morning registration means that all learners are seen first thing in the morning where issues such as readiness for the school day, absence notes and punctuality can be addressed.
- Five periods per week are dedicated to health and wellbeing in S2-S6. Time allocated to health and wellbeing includes Physical Education, Philosophy, Ethics and Citizenship Education Studies and Personal and Social Development.

9.6 Making Subject Choices

Learners will be given the opportunity to make choices regarding activities, subjects and course level at different times during their S1-S6 education. This allows them to personalise their programme of study to meet their individual learning needs and choose a curriculum which will allow them the opportunity to follow their chosen career.

When a learner is required to make a choice, they will be supported in the decision making process by subject teachers, Pupil Support teachers and members of the senior management team. As parents you will also be involved in the process where appropriate, as will careers officers associated with the school.

10. The Wider Community

10.1 Extra Curricular Activities

Throughout the year there are a range of activities offered to our learners during lunchtimes and after school. The programme of extra-curricular activities changes throughout the year depending on the demand, the weather and the availability of staff and facilities. There will be updated information about extra-curricular activities available on the website. Letters and leaflets will also be used as a way of communicating “what’s on.”

Activities available during lunchtimes and after school are very varied and are organised by school staff and outside agencies.

Extra –Curricular Activities include:

Football, Badminton, Hockey, Netball, Craft Club, Debating Society, Chess Club, Wind band, Choir, Supported Study, Cycling, Rugby and Homework Club.

10.2 Whole School Activities

Sport Hub

Maxwelltown High School was the first school in Dumfries and Galloway to develop a Sport Hub on campus. The Sport Hub offers a wide range of activities to our young people and members of the wider community. Updated information about the programme is on the school website. For further information, please contact Sue Brodie, the Sport Hub Development Officer. Her contact number is: 07921038686.

The School Library

The school library is also open during lunchtimes and after school on specific days. Learners can use this facility to access information, study support, computers or can simply be used as a quiet place to read or complete homework.

10.3 Whole School Projects

Maxwelltown High School: School of Rugby

We are delighted that Maxwelltown High School is recognised as a School of Rugby. We were the first school in Dumfries and Galloway to become a School of Rugby and we are now in the third year of working in partnership with the Scottish Rugby Union. The evidence gathered already shows that this programme is having a really positive impact on the young people who are involved.

This partnership between the school and the Scottish Rugby Union has created an environment which makes a significant contribution to the delivery of A Curriculum for Excellence.

How it is organised?

- A number of learners in first and second year are identified as learners who will engage in and benefit from the School of Rugby activities.
- The group of around 40 young people are involved in rugby sessions during the school week as part of their elective time in S1 and S2.
- Those involved are also involved in rugby coaching sessions and games after school.
- The sessions are organised and delivered by SRU Development Officers, qualified coaches and our PE staff.

There is no cost to the participants in the sessions.
Rugby clothing and equipment will be provided for those participating.

The School of Rugby:

- Provides learning experiences inside and outside the classroom.
- Allows learners to experience rugby.
- Helps improve physical fitness and wellbeing.
- Contributes to greater educational attainment.

I already stated, we are delighted to be working in partnership with the Scottish Rugby Union for the benefit of our learners.

Cycling at Maxwelltown High School

Maxwelltown High School is one of only 7 secondary schools in Scotland who have been awarded the Sustrans School Gold Cycling Award. Cycling is promoted in school as a way of travelling to school but also as a leisure time activity or competitive sport.

Cycling is now one of the options which our learners can opt into during their elective time as part of their school timetable. Mr Gray one of our support staff is now fully trained to deliver Cycle Training to our learners in school and in the wider community.

Behind this enthusiasm for cycling is a core group of our staff. All share the same aspiration to promote physical activity and independence. Having observed increasing reliance on, and rising cost of public transport, cycling offers a fantastic opportunity for learners to explore their locale.

Since starting to promote cycling, the school have installed new cycle racks and introduced cycle training to the curriculum. Support has come from the local Go-Ride club 'Stepping Stanes' with delivery of maintenance sessions to learners and staff.

Gaining access to suitable bikes and maintenance has been addressed through access to pool bikes made possible through grant funding. There is also a desire to get more staff and volunteers trained to deliver training.

The next step is to establish the bicycle user group within the school to gain greater representation from pupils and build upon existing activity including the Big Pedal school challenge.

Having already formed strong partnerships, and with support from the highest levels, Maxwelltown High School is an excellent example to other schools looking to change existing attitudes towards cycling.

Global School Partnership with Onjiko School

In August 2010 Maxwelltown High School were given the opportunity to participate in a Global School's Partnership with a school in Kisumu in Kenya.

Our Headteacher Ms Smith visited Onjiko School in Kisumu in May 2011 to start the process of developing links with Onjiko School with a view to building a long term sustainable partnership between the two schools.

The main purpose of Maxwelltown High School and Onjiko's involvement in this partnership is to develop our young people's knowledge, understanding and experience of global citizenship. The partnership will also give staff from Maxwelltown High School and Onjiko School opportunities to learn from each other in order to enhance learning and teaching for the benefit of pupils in Dumfries and Onjiko.

10.3 School Trips

Through the school year learners will have the opportunity, where appropriate, to participate in a school trip. The school trip may be for part or all of the school day. The trip may be organised to support learning relating to a particular subject or course. Alternatively, it may be organised as part of our Activity Week or to give pupils experience of particular events.

10.4 Pupil Council (Currently under review with a view to establishing a Learners Leadership Group)

Maxwelltown High School has an established Pupil Council which aims to represent all pupils within the school. There is a President and Vice President who have the responsibilities of selecting council members, setting agendas, chairing meetings and speaking on behalf of the council to the staff. The Pupil President also has the duties of speaking to parents at the Transition evenings and addressing pupils at assemblies. They are also responsible for sharing their work with the rest of the pupil body. There are regular meetings between the Headteacher and the Pupil Council President. The President is elected after they have been nominated by their peers and there has been a week of intensive campaigning which includes speeches at assemblies as well as poster and leaflet drops. Each year group has two representatives to speak on the behalf of their relative year group and the pupil body as a whole.

The Pupil Council have been proactive in raising money for the school and other causes. They have set up a system of recognition for pupils who are achieving culminating in the Pupils Choice for 'Pupil of the Year'. This is a very popular exercise where pupils nominate their peers for the award. The Pupil Council this year will be focussing on raising awareness of issues to do with 'hunger' on a local and international front.

11. Home/ School Partnership

11.1 School Community Council

By law schools have a duty to promote parents' involvement in children's education. We are very keen that parents feel able to be involved in their child's education and learning, that they are active participants in the life of the school and they feel able to express their views on school education generally.

Every parent who has a child at our school is a member of the Parent Forum. The parent council is a group of parents who have chosen to represent the parent forum. As a member of the Parent Forum, each parent can expect to:-

- Receive information about the school and its activities;
- Hear about what partnership with parents means in our school;
- Be invited to be involved in ways and times that suit you;
- Identify issues you want the parent council to work on with the school;
- Be asked your opinion by the parent council on issues relating to the school and education it provides;
- Work in partnership with staff; and
- Enjoy taking part in school life in whatever way possible

The types of things the School Community council may get involved in include:

- Supporting the work of the school;
- Gathering and representing parents' views to the Headteacher, Education Authority and Education Scotland;
- Promoting contact between the school, parents, pupils and the local community;
- Fundraising and organising events;
- Reporting to the parent forum; and
- Being involved in the appointment of senior promoted staff.

Maxwelltown High School Community Council

There are lots of ways in which schools, parents, families and the community can work together to give children and young people the best possible education and as such schools are most effective when they develop positive relationships with parents and the community they serve. The (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 gives parents the right to receive information about their children's education and to be represented and have their views expressed through the Community Council.

Maxwelltown High School Community Council welcomes the involvement of parents and/or carers and invites you to come along to the meetings in order to have a voice in your children's future. At present the School Community Council meet once or twice per term and is made up of parents, learners, local councillors community representatives and teachers.

The types of things the School Community Council get involved in include:

- Supporting the work of the school
- Gathering and representing parents' views to the Headteacher, Education Authority and Education Scotland
- Promoting contact between the school, parents, learners, providers of nursery education and the local community
- Fundraising
- Organising events
- Being involved in the appointment of senior staff

School Community Council meetings are public and as a parent you are welcome to attend the meetings. Council meeting dates and information regarding agenda and minutes will be available on the school website.

Parents who take on a supportive role in their child's learning make a difference in improving achievement and behaviour. The active involvement of parents in the life of the school can help promote a learning community in which parents can engage positively with school staff and their peers.

If you would like to become involved with Maxwelltown High School Community Council please contact the following:

Ms R Williams, Acting Headteacher, 01387 722000

11.2 Communicating with Home

Effective and ongoing communication between the school and the home is essential in order to develop a partnership between school staff and parents. Throughout your child's secondary education we hope there will be an ongoing working relationship involving you, your child and the school. Working together will give your child the best chance of progressing in their education and moving on to employment, training or further education when he/she leaves secondary school.

The school communicates with parents/carers in a number of different ways including:

- Text messages
- Groupcall
- Newsletters
- Pupil Reports
- Information Evenings
- Focus Groups
- School Events e.g. Pantomime, School Show, Coffee Mornings

If a parent arrives at school without previously making an appointment to see a member of staff, we will do our best to see you, identify the issue and agree the next steps.

As a parent you are welcome and encouraged to contact the school at any time to raise an issue, pass on information or seek advice about any aspect of your child's educational provision or personal support.

11.3 Attendance

It is your responsibility as parents to ensure that your child/children attend school regularly. For the safety of all children it is important for you to telephone the school office prior to/at the beginning of any absence.

Absences are recorded in class registers and frequent or irregular absences not supported by a reasonable excuse, will be notified to parents and the matter may be referred to the Attendance Officer.

If possible please try to make dental/medical appointments outwith school hours. However, if this is not possible, please inform us in writing or by telephone of the appointment and arrange to collect your child from class.

Unexplained Absences/Lateness

In light of the tragic case in West Lothian in 2005 we have been advised to put procedures in place to ensure the safety of all the children in our care. In order that our procedures work efficiently and effectively we require your cooperation in the following matters:

Parents are asked to ensure that:

- The school is informed if the family is running late.
- Any legitimate absence is notified to the school by telephone before 9am on the first day of the absence without fail, and that further calls, before 9am, are made on every subsequent day of the absence.
- Contact telephone numbers, whether for home, for parents at work or for other emergency contacts, are kept up to date and are genuinely numbers where a response will be received. This is particularly important with mobile phone numbers.
- The school is kept informed of the absence and the likely return date.
- Any planned absences are officially notified to the school, in writing, in advance.
- School would be informed before 1.30pm if a child was not returning to school after lunch as a result of becoming unwell over that period.
- Latecomers report to the school office on arrival at school.
- On return to school the pupil brings an absence note from the parent to explain their absence.

Staff will ensure that absences are checked every day and follow up the whereabouts of any child for whom we have no explanation.

11.4 Homework

Maxwelltown High School Homework

At Maxwelltown High School, we believe that homework is important for the following reasons:

Homework helps young people to:

- Learn how to organise and manage their time
- Take more responsibility for their own learning
- Practise and build on what they have learned at school
- Develop confidence to deal with frustrations, overcome difficulties and solve problems
- Learn and work independently in the future.

Homework helps teachers to check learners understanding of classwork and keep track of their progress. It lets parents find out what young people are doing at school and get involved in their learning.

The role of learners at Maxwelltown High School:

- Keep a note of what is required in the homework diary and when it is due
- Plan ahead
- Make the time to do homework
- Look for help when stuck or frustrated
- Hand in completed homework on time
- Make sure homework diaries are filled in correctly and signed each week.

The role of parents:

- Encourage your child
- Know what the school and teachers expect of children
- Know what the school and teachers expect of you
- Talk with your child about what they are learning
- Listen to worries and complaints and get in touch with the school if you have concerns
- Be patient.

The role of teachers:

- Set homework which is interesting and at the right level
- Clearly explain the purpose of the homework to learners
- Set realistic deadlines
- Check on homework and give feedback
- Give recognition for effort and work well done
- Use the monitoring and tracking system to highlight issues with homework.

The role of the school:

- Let parents know what is expected of their child
- Let parents know what the school expects from them
- Let parents know who to contact if they are concerned
- Issue homework diaries to pupils and check they are used properly
- Let learners know what is expected of them
- Inform parents if there are issues with homework
- Ensure learners and parents understand the importance of homework.

How can parents help with homework?

Visit the Parentzone website: www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk

Showing an interest in homework and talking to your child really helps them to learn. With support and encouragement, children find it easier to get into the homework habit, take more responsibility and learn how to organise and manage their time.

Homework is learning that children do for themselves, perhaps with the support of parents or other family members such as grandparents or older brothers/sisters.

Homework can be a source of tension and argument in the home for a number of reasons. Even if you do not know much about the subject, you can offer support in different ways:

- Show an interest in what they are doing and encourage them to talk about it
- Ask them to explain the things you don't know about
- Listen to what they are saying
- Give praise by acknowledging their successes
- Try not to compare them negatively to others – either older or younger brothers and sisters or other children in their class - this will discourage rather than motivate
- If they need support, encourage them to think about how they can find answers for themselves, this will help them more than doing the work for them

Children might have their own preferences about where and when they work. Here are some questions you can discuss with your child to help you both find their best way of working.

Where do they feel most comfortable? In the bedroom, at a desk, on the floor, on a beanbag?

Where are they least likely to be disturbed? In the bedroom, in the kitchen, in the living room?

Can they work better on their own or do they like company? Is it helpful to work together with friends who have the same homework? Can they work in the same place as an older or younger brother or sister and encourage each other?

When are they most likely to concentrate? Straight after school? After the evening meal? Before going to bed? Early in the morning?

Do they like to listen to music as they work?

Exams and Revision

In the Senior Phase, learners will be working towards SQA examinations. This can be a stressful time for all concerned. To help learners through the examination years, the following information should help. Remember, parents can contact the school at any time if they have concerns. Learners are encouraged to discuss any issues with their teacher.

- Regular attendance throughout the year will help to ensure that learners keep up with course work and homework. If they do fall behind, through illness perhaps, parents should speak to the school about any support which can help them catch up.
- Talking to your child to reassure and encourage them and taking an interest in what they are doing will help them get through what can be a stressful time and will help them to do their best.
- Encourage your child to start revision in good time to avoid cramming and panic.
- Help your child to plan a realistic timetable of study for each subject. A weekly revision planner is available on the Student Life BBC website.
- Talk to your child and help them decide on a fixed area at home where they can study with the least distractions. Make sure that the materials and equipment they need e.g. pens, pencils, paper, notebooks and past papers are at hand in this study area. (Past papers are available from the SQA website).
- Ensure that snacks and water are close by to prevent any unnecessary distractions and make sure the study area is warm and well lit.
- Speak to the rest of the family, particularly younger members, about respecting this study area and as far as possible trying to avoid interrupting.
- If it is difficult to study at home perhaps your child could make use of the local library or ask your school if they can help.
- Encourage your child to get their notes in order for each subject before starting. Having notes organised into topic areas for each subject may be helpful.
- Check the dates of each exam and keep a record of them somewhere you can see them easily. Your child's school will give your child an exam timetable with the subjects being presented at your school. You can access the full exam timetable on the SQA website. Your child can also use the SQA Personal Timetable Builder facility to create their own timetable. The mobile timetable builder is now available for most Java-based mobile phones along with those using Google Android and IOS (iPhone). Remember: sometimes an exam is on a public holiday. The exam will definitely take place on that day and there will be no opportunity to sit it on another day.

Tips to encourage studying:

- Exam times can be stressful so encourage your child to take breaks. Hour long revision sessions with short regular breaks of 10 minutes are effective.
- They may prefer to complete each task and then build in a break rather than stick to definite time slots. It's the quality of work that is important.
- Young people often focus best earlier in the day or early evening so encouraging them to study at these times may be beneficial.
- Your child might find it useful for you to read through revision notes with them. Asking them about what they have learned in their revision may be useful.

Keeping well:

- Encourage your child to get plenty of sleep. This is particularly important the night before an exam as it will help them perform better.
- Encourage your child to eat well. On the morning of an exam encourage them to have a breakfast, or lunch if the exam is in the afternoon.
- Help your child to avoid any unnecessary anxiety or panic by making sure they are in plenty of time for each exam and have everything they need for it e.g. pens, pencils.

More information on homework including Departmental Homework Statements can be found on the school website.

11.5 How is my child doing?

It is important that all of our learners and their parents are aware of the progress being made in learning across the curriculum and also the ways in which the next steps in learning can be achieved.

Teachers and learners will have regular discussions during class time about where the learner is in their learning and the action points required to ensure learning continues at the pace appropriate to the individual.

Parents will also receive regular individual progress reports about their child's learning. Both parents and pupils have the opportunity to respond to these reports. Parents are also encouraged to get in touch with the school if they have any issues of concern about their child's progress or if they know of any issues which may affect their child's learning for a short time or indeed over a longer period of time.

The school will encourage parents/carers to be:

- Actively involved in supporting their children's learning.
- Fully involved where children and young people need additional support that is detailed in individualised educational programmes (IEPs) and coordinated support plans (CSPs).

The school will endeavour to:

- Provide regular information for parents about their children's strengths, progress and achievements.
- Inform parents about any gaps in their children's progress and ways that they can help.

The school will encourage the learners to:

- Engage actively in learning.
- Demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities through a wide range of evidence including specific assessment tasks, activities, test and examinations.
- Shape and review their learning by reflection, setting learning goals and next steps including through personal learning planning.
- Review their own learning through self-assessment.
- Collaborate in peer assessment.
- Contribute to moderation activities.

Describing progress and achievements

Reporting on the development and learning of children and young people will take account of their achievements in different contexts and settings, including across curriculum areas, the life and ethos of the school and learning outwith the school, including in the wider community.

Learners should be encouraged and supported to be involved in deciding what evidence may be drawn upon and how to gather this irrespective of where learning takes place. Staff will work with learners to summarise the evidence for reporting to parents and others while helping the young person to maintain ownership of his or her learning.

Parents will get information about their children's progress in achieving the Curriculum for Excellence levels in key areas of learning, such as literacy and numeracy, as well as performance across the curriculum. To help parents support their children's learning, it is important that teachers share full and open accounts of each learners' progress.

At particular points especially at transition points, teachers will work with children and young people to sum up achievements through profiles. These will include summary statements of progress within and through the curriculum levels, as well as progress towards qualifications in the senior phase.

Teachers should report to parents on their child's progress in terms of levels as well as using brief qualitative comments in planned learning across the curriculum areas and in different contexts. Reporting should note particular strengths, areas for development and achievements in challenging aspects and in the application of learning.

11.6 Learner Profiles

A profile is a snapshot of a child's or young person's best achievements at a given point in time. Profiles are primarily aimed at learners and their parents and draw together a range of information about a child or young person's learning. It is one of the ways in which a learner's achievements can be recognised.

Nationally it has been agreed that profiles will be produced at the P7 and S3 stage. The end of S3 represents an important milestone in every young person's education. By the end of S3 all young people will have completed the Broad General Phase of Curriculum for Excellence. Young people should have produced their own profile, supported by staff, which gives a reliable and full account of their progress.

11.7 Helping the School

Parents are always welcome at Maxwelltown High School. We want parents to be involved in their own individual child's learning and/or in the life and work of the school as a whole.

As a parent there are many different ways you can become involved in the activities which are part of the school curriculum or the after school extra-curricular programme.

Examples of activities you could get involved in:

- Helping to supervise pupils on school trips including rugby/football matches
- Carrying out administrative tasks
- Assisting with the organisation of events such as school shows
- Contributing to parent information evenings
- Attending focus group sessions
- Helping to organise Sport Hub activities
- Being a member of the Sport Hub Management Group
- Attending the Parent Council Meetings
- Assisting with school publicity through local media
- Providing work experience opportunities for our pupils
- Helping with activities such as Rural Skills or Photography

These are just a few of the ways you could support the life and work of the school. If you wish to discuss the possibility of helping out with any of the tasks listed or indeed any other which you would like to be involved in, please do not hesitate to contact Ms Williams, Acting Headteacher who will be delighted to discuss this further.

11.8 Working as a Cluster to support your child

Maxwelltown High School works very closely with the cluster primary schools ultimately for the benefit of all of our young people.

The cluster vision and aims are:

Our Cluster Vision Statement

- We will work together as an inclusive team, sharing good practice and resources, developing and putting in place good strategies which will overcome barriers to our pupils' social, emotional, physical and intellectual learning.

Our Cluster Aims

- To actively engage as a multi-agency inclusive team with organised activities, training and support, addressing those issues which can impede or enhance the successful development and future achievement of all children.
- To actively engage as a multi-agency inclusive team to assist families to give children the very best foundation for future success.
- To work to ensure that all cluster members understand the role that different agencies and partner groups perform and the contribution each group can make to the achievement of the aims outlined above.

Supporting Transition

A Curriculum for Excellence sets out the aspiration for all children and young people to become successful learners; confident individuals; responsible citizens and effective contributors to society and to work. Effective transition arrangements should ensure the progressive development of all four capacities.

Through an effective transition process, staff and other partners in learning will be able to contribute to improvements in the quality of learning and teaching, widening achievement and raising attainment.

The desired impact of our cluster transition procedures are:

- To secure continuity of education throughout the 3-18 education provision
- To build on prior learning and experiences
- To promote and support cross sector working and develop strong positive cluster relationships
- To adopt a common understanding of good practice on the range of learning and teaching methodologies
- To share knowledge and understanding of our learners' learning experiences and standards of achievement and attainment as they progress from 3-18
- To identify vulnerable young people and provide them with appropriate support
- To ensure learner data is transferred efficiently and is made accessible to appropriate staff and is used effectively to inform teaching and learning
- To ensure parents/carers are fully informed of the transition process;
- To promote the development of learners' personal and social development.

Our transition activities include:

- Organising and evaluating learner transition activities
- Leading and managing a transition programme for all primary pupils
- Joint curriculum planning, delivery and assessment across sectors
- Achieving continuity in teaching and learning methods.
- Sharing of individual learner information and data at transition stages
- Organisation of enhanced transition meetings to meet the needs of pupils with additional support needs
- Achieving consistency in assessment and monitoring and tracking pupils' progress against prior attainment
- Joint development work during INSET days and twilight sessions
- Regular scheduled strategic meetings involving all Headteachers from the cluster schools
- Working groups set up for specific purpose: e.g. Health and Wellbeing Working Group
- Involvement of all staff where possible to build capacity through distributed leadership
- Ongoing development of our Cluster Calendar of Events on GLOW
- If you as a parent wish to see our Cluster Transition Policy Document, please request one from the school office.

11.9 Useful Information

For more information on parental involvement or to find out more about parents as partners in their child's learning, please contact the school or visit the Education Scotland website:

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone

12. Support for All

12.1 Pupil Support

In order to make the school less impersonal, learners are divided into groups and a member of the Pupil Support team has responsibility for the wellbeing of pupils in his or her group.

Your child will be allocated to one of these groups and you will be informed of the name of your child's Pupil Support teacher. The Pupil Support teacher will also be the child's named person. An identified named person is required to comply with Scottish Government legislation due to take effect from 31st August 2016.

The five members of the Pupil Support team are currently Mr Hannay, Ms McQuade, Mrs Reynolds, Mrs Telford and Mrs Braid.

If you have any issues relating to Pupil Support, you should in the first instance contact your child's Pupil Support teacher or Mrs Taylor, Depute Headteacher with responsibility for Whole School Pupil Support. You can also contact Ms Williams, Acting Headteacher with any issues of concern.

Your child's Pupil Support teacher will remain the same throughout their time at Maxwelltown High School. This allows the Pupil Support teacher, the learner and the parent to get to know each other well, build up an effective working relationship and ensure a consistent approach when dealing with pupil support issues.

Our Pupil Support teachers are caring and supportive and are happy to be approached by any learner, especially if they have a particular problem or concern. The Pupil Support teachers will also arrange appointments at a parent's request to discuss issues such as progress, behaviour, attendance or general wellbeing. The staff may also write and ask you to call in at school should this be necessary.

Parents are encouraged to notify the school about any past or present illness, state of health or accident which may have affected the child. Parents are also encouraged to share information with Pupil Support staff about other factors which may affect your child's learning or wellbeing. These factors may include bereavement, family illness or a change in family circumstances. This information will be treated sensitively and with confidentiality.

Your child will also have a register teacher who will meet with your child at 8.52am for 8 minutes every morning. Your child's register teacher is likely to remain the same from S1-S4. This arrangement again allows the register teacher to know their register class pupils well.

The register teacher and Pupil Support teacher work together to support your child particularly with regards to attendance, punctuality and preparedness for school.

12.2 Pupil Support by Wider School Community

Caring for and supporting your child during their time at Maxwelltown High School is one of the main responsibilities not only of the Pupil Support teachers but also of teachers, support staff, members of senior management and of the other pupils.

There are a number of ways in which your child will be supported during their time at Maxwelltown High School. One of the ways is through their Pupil Support teacher.

Other methods include:

- Mentoring
- Buddy System
- Pupil Mediation
- Partnerships with outside agencies

Mentoring

As an S1-S3 learner at Maxwelltown High School, your child will be involved in Mentoring. He/she will be allocated a member of staff who will mentor him/her during the first three years at secondary school.

Mentoring involves all S1-S3 pupils and all teaching staff. It was introduced in order to:

- Give learners the opportunity to get to know one member of staff well
- Monitor progress
- Set targets and motivate learners to meet targets
- Give pupils the opportunity to offer their opinion about their secondary school experience
- Identify career aspirations
- Identify interests and achievement outwith school
- Identify personal issues to be followed up by Pupil Support

Mentoring takes place throughout the year with the mentor meeting with the mentee once every school term. During the meeting discussions will take place about behaviour, progress, career aspirations and wider achievement outwith School. At the end of the meeting the mentor and mentee will agree development targets which, if met, will lead to further progress and improvement. A written report is produced following the meeting which is e-mailed to the Pupil Support teacher and copied to pupil and/or parent. Any personal and sensitive issues raised during the meeting will be highlighted for the Pupil Support teacher to action where appropriate.

If you would like any further information regarding Academic Mentoring please contact Mrs Taylor or your child's Pupil Support teacher.

Buddy System

Why do we have a Buddy System at Maxwelltown High School?

- To encourage our learners to have a more responsible attitude
- To build better social bonds across school years
- To help reduce truancy
- To encourage learners to take responsibility
- To reduce/eradicate bullying
- To try to ensure that all children are free from loneliness or isolation at playtimes and lunchtimes
- To encourage high levels of self-esteem and confidence in all our learners as valued members of our school family

What is the role of a Senior Buddy?

- Visiting P7 learners in their primary schools
- Helping on the induction days
- To be allocated a group of S1 learners so that when they arrive at Maxwelltown High School seniors can support and help learners settle in
- To be involved in the organisation of Buddy activities – whole day events/afternoons e.g. the Poppy Day and also support during break and lunchtimes

- To listen to any problems that your Buddy has and if necessary report them to a member of staff
- To become involved in extra-curricular activities by going along with the learner and helping them to build new friendships

Pupil Mediation

Maxwelltown High School is well known in our community as a safe, friendly and caring school. Instances of bullying, for example, are extremely rare and learners are encouraged to respect and generally get on with each other. Occasionally, however, children do fall out for one reason or another, this is only natural. This is where **mediation** comes in.

We have a group of well-trained senior learners in S4-S6 who make themselves available to any learners who may find themselves in a situation of 'conflict' with friends or peers such as name-calling, being excluded from a group of friends and any other **low-level** problems. The idea is that any learner may request a mediation session with another learner, in the presence of a pair of senior mediators, in order to resolve their differences and hopefully 'make up' before the situation can escalate.

Mediation is designed to intervene *where asked for* in situations that do not require the direct involvement of a member of staff. Mediators work closely with 'Staff Mediator Leaders' and Pupil Support teachers to ensure that all learners may enjoy their time at Maxwelltown High School and receive the level of support they need outside as well as inside the classroom.

Mediation not only helps those who need it but it also benefits those who **do the mediating** by fostering a sense of ownership, giving them real responsibility and skills in working with people, all of which are invaluable to them when they leave school and helps prepare them for life in the world of today. Peer Mediation can contribute to the development of children and young people as *successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors*.

Partnerships with outside agencies

At Maxwelltown High School all staff work extremely hard to ensure that all pupils receive the very best educational provision and support possible with the staffing, the resources and the skills and experience we have available. However, we recognise that there are times where individuals or groups of young people require the services of other partners in learning from outside agencies.

Some of the agencies we work with include:

- Opportunities for All Team
- Social Work
- Educational Psychologist
- Attendance Liaison Officer
- Youth Alive
- Dance Psychotherapist
- Church Minister
- School Nurse
- Youth Justice
- Aberlour Futures
- Home School Link Worker

When a young person requires support and provision from an outside agency, great consideration is given to which agency will provide the support, when that support should be offered and how it will be delivered. The young person, parent, school staff and personnel from the outside agencies will be involved in the planning of this support.

12.3 Additional Support for Learning

Dumfries and Galloway Council is committed to the wellbeing and educational development of all learners. The process of inclusion requires all involved in the business of learning and teaching to demonstrate commitment, innovation and flexibility in order to ensure that all children and young people have access to quality learning opportunities and experiences.

The Authority aims to meet the needs of all children with additional support needs through a range of provision from mainstream classes (with or without support) to part-time or full-time provision in a school with a learning centre or base.

This commitment to meeting the needs of all children is based upon the requirements of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 amended in 2009 and is translated into procedure and practice by Dumfries and Galloway Education Services' The Framework for Support 2006. This Framework is currently under review.

What is Additional Support for Learning (ASL)?

If your child needs extra help or support in addition to that which is usually provided in school they can be said to have 'Additional Support Needs'. Children may need additional support for short or long periods of time and for a variety of reasons.

The reasons can include:

- Social or emotional difficulties
- Problems at home
- Being particularly able
- A physical disability
- Moving home frequently
- Behavioural difficulties
- Bullying
- A sensory impairment
- Communication problems
- Being a young carer
- Being a young parent
- Having English as a second language
- A learning disability
- Autism
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

If you have any concerns about your child you should speak to a member of staff in the school in the first instance. There are a number of ways in which concerns can be followed up. This may involve the input of other educational professionals such as Specialist teachers (Additional Support for Learning Teacher, Educational Visitor, Sensory Impairment Specialists) and Educational Psychologists. It may also involve your child being referred onto staff in external agencies such as health staff (Speech and Language therapist, Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist etc.). As a parent you will be closely involved in the whole process and your views sought throughout. If, after discussion with all concerned, it is felt appropriate, your child will have an educational plan agreed which will identify how they are to be supported.

Your child's progress will be kept under review and any plans and support will be changed as necessary. As a parent you will be closely involved in any review process. There will be several opportunities for you to discuss your child's progress. This may be through informal discussion with the teacher or at Parents' Nights or it may also be through more formal, focussed meetings with all agencies involved. You should discuss and agree with the school how you would like to be involved.

Support for Learning in Maxwelltown High School

At Maxwelltown High School, we provide a high level of learning support for learners who require additional support to overcome barriers to learning. Some of the learners who attend our school require low level support in order to access the curriculum, participate in mainstream classes and progress in their learning. Some of our learners who attend our school have complex and on-going needs which require a greater level of additional support to ensure they progress with their learning and development.

Maxwelltown High School has a Learning Centre which has three well equipped classrooms and a sensory room which are used for learners when they are not in mainstream education.

The leadership and management of Support for Learning throughout the school, is the responsibility of Mrs Telford. In addition to there are experienced Support for Learning Teachers and Support for Learning Assistants who support learners with their learning in mainstream and in the Learning Centre.

If you would like further information about the provision of Learning Support at Maxwelltown High School, please contact Mrs Telford or Mrs Taylor, Depute Headteacher with responsibility for Pupil Support.

A wide range of strategies are used to support learners with their behaviour to ensure it is appropriate for learning and teaching in a mainstream school. Where learners do not respond to this support, members of the senior management and/or outside agencies will intervene either in a further attempt to modify behaviour or to access alternative educational provision for the learner.

If you have any concerns about your child you should speak to a member of staff in the school in the first instance. There are a number of ways in which concerns can be followed up. This may involve the input of other educational professionals such as Specialist teachers (Additional Support for Learning Teacher, Educational Visitor, and Sensory Impairment Specialists) and Educational Psychologists. It may also involve your child being referred onto staff in external agencies such as health staff (Speech and Language therapist, Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist etc.). As a parent you will be closely involved in the whole process and your views sought throughout. If, after discussion with all concerned, it is felt appropriate, your child will have an educational plan agreed which will identify how they are to be supported.

Your child's progress will be kept under review and any plans and support will be changed as necessary. As a parent you will be closely involved in any review process. There will be several opportunities for you to discuss your child's progress. This may be through informal discussion with the teacher or at Parents Nights or it may be through more formal, focussed meetings with all agencies involved. You should discuss and agree with the school how you would like to be involved.

At the moment a small number of children will require a more detailed planning process which co-ordinates the input of education and other agencies to fully support the child. This plan is called a Co-ordinated Support Plan. The Co-ordinated Support Plan process is managed by Education Officers with responsibility for Additional Support for Learning. Further information on all of the above is available from the school, on the Council website <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=10757>, or from the following sources:

- **Enquire**, the Scottish advice and information service for additional support for learning, a charitable body registered in Scotland under registration number SC003527 <http://enquire.org.uk/>
- **Scottish Independence Advocacy Alliance**, a charitable body registered in Scotland under registration number SC033576 <http://www.google.co.uk/search?hl=en&source=hp&q=Scottish%20Independent%20Advocacy%20alliance>; or
- **Scottish Child Law Centre**, a charitable body registered in Scotland under registration number SC012741 <http://www.sclc.org.uk/>

Parents may also access further support through mediation services provided by Common Ground Mediation <http://www.commongroundmediation.co.uk/> or advocacy support through People's Advocacy Support Service (P.A.S.S. Direct) or Parents Inclusion Network (PIN) <http://www.parentsinclusionnetwork.org.uk/>

12.4 Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) is an approach from The Scottish Government that sets out how schools and other services should work with children and their families. GIRFEC is all about ensuring that children get the help they need when they need it – the right help at the right time. For you and your child, GIRFEC means that:

- You are the expert on your child and what you think matters. Getting it right for every child means that the School will always seek to involve you, to listen to your opinions and take them seriously.
- From April 2013 your child will have a Named Person in the School. If you or your child need any advice or any support, the Named Person who is your child's Pupil Support teacher is your first point of contact and will make sure you get the help or advice that you need. Having a Named Person means that if there is anything that could affect your child's wellbeing, he or she will receive support as quickly as possible so that problems do not develop.
- If your child has complex needs and needs help from several different services, GIRFEC means that all these services must work together for you and your child. You should never have to keep telling your story to lots of different staff in the School or the Education Department or the NHS. Your child will have a single plan that everyone works to and everyone is clear about what they are doing. When your child leaves secondary school there will be a Transition Plan in place for them in good time.

For more information on *getting it right for every child* email

GIRFEC@dumgal.gov.uk

12.5 Child Protection

All children have the right to be protected from harm, abuse and neglect. Every adult in Scotland has a role in ensuring all our children and young people live safely and have the opportunity to reach their full potential. The vision for all children and young people in Dumfries and Galloway is that they should be: **safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, respected and responsible** and **included**. Schools, front-line education and child care services will play an important role in ensuring all children and young people are safe and well. Further information is contained within the Child Protection Policy for Schools, Pre-School and Child Care Services which is available from the school and the on the Council website.

12.6 Educational Psychology Service

Educational Psychologists aim to improve the life chances of all children and young people. Working in partnership with families and other services,

we use applied psychology and knowledge of child development to address inequalities, support vulnerability and enhance inclusion. We seek to ensure that young people realise their potential to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

We do this by:

- Working with others in a consultative way to help them make sense of difficulties and make informed choices and decisions
- Sharing knowledge about 'what works' and promoting evidence informed approaches to develop the policy and practice of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing in our educational establishments and communities
- Raising awareness of the crucial role of communication, relationships and nurture in children's lives
- Training and developing the skills of other professionals to improve children's attainment and achievement.
- Highlighting the interactive nature of assessment, teaching and learning,
- Designing and implementing interventions in partnership with others which support individuals and communities to develop resilience and ensure that children are safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included.
- Supporting effective transitions (early years into primary, primary to secondary and secondary to post school) to improve the life chances of young people.

The Psychological Service is based in offices in Newton Stewart, Dumfries and Annan, and each school has an identified Educational Psychologist. Further information about the service is available from the school.

12.7 Educational Maintenance Allowance

The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is a means tested weekly allowance payable in two week instalments in arrears during term time only. It is intended to encourage students to stay on at school in post-compulsory education. Applications are available from all Secondary Schools, the Pupil/Parent Support Unit, Woodbank, 30 Edinburgh Road, Dumfries, DG1 1NW and your Local Area Customer Services Centre.

For further information on the EMA programme please contact, Mrs J Dalgleish, Pupil/Parent Support Unit Tel: 01387 260493 or Ms Williams, Acting Headteacher at Maxwelltown High School.

13. Leaving School

13.1 Career Choices

It is vital that our young people receive good support and advice with regards to their career choices and pathways. At Maxwelltown High School learners are given the opportunity early in their secondary education to discuss their career aspirations with their class teachers, mentor and Pupil Support teacher.

As learners progress through the school, they will receive careers education and advice as part of their Personal and Social Education programme and also from their Pupil Support teachers who have a key role to play in supporting learners on their pathway to their chosen career. Pupil Support teachers have close links with various support services who can be called on should their help and advice be required.

Close links are maintained with the Careers Service and a Careers Officer is allocated to the school. The Careers Officer works closely with Pupil Support staff to address issues relating to careers education. The Careers Officer is available for advice and is responsible for arranging the entry of pupils to training, should they so wish, on leaving school. At Parents' Events from S2-S6 the Careers Officer will be in attendance to give additional help and advice to both learners and parents.

Leaving School Dates

Learners whose 16th birthday is on or between October 1st and February 28th may leave on the first day of the Christmas holidays.

Learners whose 16th birthday is on or between March 1st and September 30th May leave on May 31st.

13.2 16+ Learning Choices

16+ Learning Choices is a Scottish Government commitment to giving every young person an entitlement to learning at least until age 18. It is part of A Curriculum for Excellence.

The three key aspects are:

- The right **learning provision** must be in place - a range of options, including staying on at school, entering further or higher education, participating in the national training programmes, or taking part in personal and social development opportunities offered through community learning and development, must be available to each young person.
- The right **financial support** must be available to ensure that young people make choices based on the most appropriate learning for them, rather than on the amount of money offered.

- The right **information, advice and guidance** must be available to make sure that young people know what opportunities are on offer, how those fit with their own needs and ambitions, and how they will progress.
- Every young person leaving school at their earliest opportunity is entitled to further learning opportunities to help them develop skills for their future.

Activity Agreement Advisers work with those young people who need extra support to keep learning. These include young people who have not been attending school or are dealing with personal issues and difficulties. What we do is work with each person to find a learning opportunity that is positive, enjoyable, based on their needs and that they can take responsibility for. We have two Activity Agreement Advisers who work directly with young people on a one-to-one basis to find out more about each person and their issues and interests in order to get the best learning programme in place. When the young person is happy with the learning programme that has been identified they will be asked to sign an Activity Agreement where they agree to follow the programme of learning and activities.

13.3 Work Experience

Opportunities to participate in work experience will be given to learners if and when this is appropriate to meet their learning, development and/or career needs. The work experience opportunities for learners may be organised by school staff as part of the pupils programme of study, it may be organised through outside agencies or it may be organised by the learner themselves as part of their senior phase curriculum. Support and advice is given to any learners involved in work experience as part of their secondary school programme of study.

14 School Improvements

14.1 Improvement plan and priorities

In June each year, the school publishes a Standards & Quality Report providing all stakeholders with a comprehensive summary of the school's work and learners' achievements over the last year. The first part of this report provides an overview of the school's progress in addressing its key priorities, while the second part gives information about, for example, how well pupils are learning and achieving; how well the school is supporting children/young people to develop and learn. Also in June, we publish a School Improvement Plan which outlines the key priorities for the school during the year ahead, following due consultation with staff, learners and parents. The plan indicates the expected impact of priorities on learners' learning, as well as providing brief information about the key tasks to be taken forward.

Both the report and the plan are published on the school's website, www.maxwelltownhighschool.org, and are also available in hard copy, on request from the school office. Ms Williams, Acting Headteacher welcomes your views and comments regarding the content of the School Improvement Plan.

14.2 Achievements

Maxwelltown High School is a school of ambition and a school of high expectations. At the end of each school term, we recognise and celebrate the achievements of individual pupils and groups of pupils, members of staff and the school as a whole at our End of Term Celebration of Achievement. Not surprisingly at the end of each term we have much to celebrate and be proud of.

Our recent whole school achievements so far:

- First school in Dumfries and Galloway to develop a Sport Hub.
- First school in Dumfries and Galloway to become a School of Rugby.
- First secondary school in Dumfries and Galloway and one of only seven in Scotland to achieve the School of Cycling Award.
- Being recognised for our S1-S3 Broad General Education by the Minister for Learning who visited the school in June 2012.
- Receiving a very positive Cluster Review report from the Education Authority in May 2012
- Receiving the Nithsdale Community Award for Schools & Learning 2014

We will continue to put information about individual achievements, group achievements and whole school achievements on the website as they arise.

How you can be involved

As a parent, you will be aware of the achievements of your child out of school, at home or in the wider community. Please let Ms Williams, Acting Headteacher know of any achievements or successes your child is involved in out of school to allow the school to recognise and celebrate these achievements. Information can be emailed to Ms Williams, submitted in writing or by phone call. We look forward to hearing more about the achievements of our young people.

15. Health and Safety

15.1 Emergency Procedures

If your child feels ill during the school day and we feel that he/she would be better at home, we will telephone you or your emergency contact. Minor accidents, e.g. cuts, bruises, are dealt with by the school staff. Serious accidents are few, but should one occur your child will be immediately taken either to your doctor or to hospital, if necessary, and you or your emergency contact will be notified. We cannot stress enough the importance of supplying the school with the relevant information we require in such a situation, i.e. your own home and work telephone number and a telephone number of an emergency contact.

We will request such information at the beginning of each new school year. Please update this as necessary.

15.2 Severe Weather and School Closure Arrangements

Headteachers are authorised to make an emergency closure when the state of the weather or any other exceptional circumstance make it absolutely necessary in the best interests of the learners. In these circumstances parents will be communicated with in a variety of ways including text messages/ phone calls and emergency contact arrangements. All school closures will be notified on the Council Website.

15.3 Leaving School premises

When your child has reason to leave the school premises during the school day, they must sign out at the school office. All learners must seek permission to leave the school from their Pupil Support teacher or a member of the Senior Management Team. If having signed out and left the school premises they return to the school during the school day, the learner must sign in again at the school office.

15.4 Health Care

Education Services is committed to ensuring that all children are able to fully participate in the life of the school. Many children will require their health care needs to be met at sometime within the nursery/school environment, for most children this will be for short periods of time only but for some children this may require more long term planning and support. If your child has any health care needs please contact the school to discuss arrangements. Full details of the support available and your role as a parent and the role of your child are contained within [The Nursery and School Policy on Health Care Procedures Sept 2012](#) which is available from the school or on the Council website.

15.5 Employment of Pupils

If a school is notified by a learner that they intend to take up part-time employment and that this employment falls within the terms as set out in "Part-time Employment: A Young Person's Guidelines"; there are procedures for schools to follow. These procedures are detailed within [Part-Time Employment of Pupils – Procedures for Secondary Schools](#) which are available from the school or on the Council Website.

15.6 Data Protection

Your child's personal data will be held by the school. All personal data is held on our secure school management information system. We will ensure that the information we hold is accurate and up to date and each year you will be sent an Update Form detailing the information held by the school for you to check and update as required. Access to the school management information system is by individual user and is password protected. Furthermore, access to confidential data is restricted to staff in school as appropriate.

15.7 Images of Learners

The school does use photographs to provide a record of events and it is possible that photographs may appear in local papers or media. The authority has a policy on the use of images of learners. You will be asked to

read this when your child enrolls and to clarify your consent with regard to the publication of images of your child.

15.8 Use of the Internet

As part of the whole learning process we allow our children supervised access to the Internet and e-mail. The authority runs its own filter system to ensure that young people are not at risk from exposure to inappropriate material. This filtering system is regularly being upgraded. We have a policy for use of the Internet and a contract for responsible use, which we ask parents and young people to sign up to.

16. Other Useful Information

16.1 Pupil/Parent Support Unit

The Pupil /Parent Support Unit is there to help parents and pupils and can be contacted on the numbers shown below regarding any aspect of Free School Meals/Clothing Grants, Education Maintenance Allowance, School Transport, Home Education, Parent Council administration, school transfers and enrolment, school catchment areas, performance licences, insurance matters and financial support for those pupils entering higher education.

(01387) 260437

(01387) 260433

(01387) 260498

(01387) 260493