

The Wallace High School

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Dear Parent

We realise just how difficult a time the last three months have been for P7 pupils and their families and we are very sorry for the distress and confusion that have been caused by the recent postponement of the AQE test, and by its subsequent cancellation. We understand that the announcement will have caused a range of emotions, from relief that a decision had been made to anxiety about the ongoing uncertainty over this year's transfer. Many of you have been in touch with us about your concerns as you try to work out how best to proceed in what is a new and confusing landscape.

From September, both Friends' and Wallace have been working with a number of other grammar schools on contingency criteria. At a very early stage, we considered the possibility of using data generated and held in primary schools in the admissions process in the event that the test was not able to run normally. In light of recent developments, we spent some time re-examining this option, but once again, we have come to the conclusion that this is unviable, as the nature and extent of the data varies so much between schools. This means that, when we submitted our final versions of our Admissions Criteria to the Education Authority on 22 January, they contained only non-academic criteria. We understand that this will be disappointing to many of you; however, we continue to believe that academic considerations should play an important role in this year's transfer.

Friends' and Wallace have been consulting with a number of primary school principals in the Lisburn area, and will continue to work closely with them on how we can assist you when the transfer window opens in March. We are very grateful to them for their support and advice, and our common goal is that pupils who have worked so hard and have had to cope with so much over the last twelve months are able to transfer to the school where they are most likely to flourish.

We recognise that these are not choices for schools to make: they are for you and your children. However, we would ask you to consider carefully the advice given to you by your child's primary school and to allow this, alongside the information published by post-primary schools, to inform your thinking.

We are fortunate to have so many excellent schools across all sectors in this area, all of which offer opportunities for young people to develop and learn. We would suggest that, in your deliberations, you give full consideration to a number of schools, and not just what might initially have been your first preference.

We do not offer a perfect solution to the current difficulties, but we believe that if we work together and stand by our common commitment to our P7 children, we can ensure that as many pupils as possible are able to transfer to the school they would have been most likely to go to had the test gone ahead.

Although Open Days will not be able to take place as normal this year, we will make sure that, over the next two months, we provide as much information as possible to help you in your decisions. If you have any specific queries, please do get in touch, and we will be more than happy to help.

Yours sincerely



Deborah O'Hare
Principal
The Wallace High School



Stephen Moore
Principal
Friends' School Lisburn