

Company limited by guarantee,
registered in Scotland no 125368.
Scottish Charity No SC018033



Annual Report

www.scis.org.uk

2021

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Chairman's Statement

The Report of the Governing Board attached covers much of the detail in what SCIS has been involved in during the last 12 months. It is clear that despite a reduced workforce and working from home the workload has been ever increasing.

During the year the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry heard evidence relating to boarding schools. SCIS staff were present on every day the Inquiry sat. Since 2015 SCIS staff have been involved in preparing for the Inquiry, and attended over sixty live sessions of evidence. This has been a huge commitment.

Mention should also be made of the work undertaken in revamping our Professional Learning events and materials while face to face training is not yet attractive to prospective participants.

One piece of good news concerns our recent calculation of pupils attending independent schools in Scotland. For the first time for a number of years the numbers have increased.

The financial position of SCIS remains healthy. Our net deficit for the year before gains/losses on investments amounted to £10029 (2020 £49996). A surplus on investments of £30511 (2020 deficit £4291) increased our reserves from £359845 to £380327 at 31 December 2021.

Lastly I would like to thank the SCIS team for all their hard work during the year. Mention should also be made of the Directors who continue to give of their time so freely.

ALAN HARTLEY

Chairman



Director's Statement

For an organisation centred on the business of education, one should always be ready to identify the "lessons learned". It is far, far too soon - however - to draw conclusions from the last two years and to point to likely permanent changes. SCIS, like much of the world, has been in a permanent mode of crisis management since March 2020.

There will be much that is done differently in the months and years to come, not least because long-held assumptions and traditions have been put aside with a minimum of scrutiny. As ever, a sector that stands proudly, but very publicly, autonomous will find

its own balance between customs worth preserving and changes worth advancing.

In doing so, the sector has something to say, much to offer, but nothing to prove. The past months are a reminder that what matters most in education is the experience of learning itself - the interaction, the challenge, the growth and the discovery. For too long, assumptions have been made about independent schools based on where the pupils go next and what they do. It is the positive and present experience of young people in their school years that really matters. Now, more than ever.

JOHN EDWARD

Director

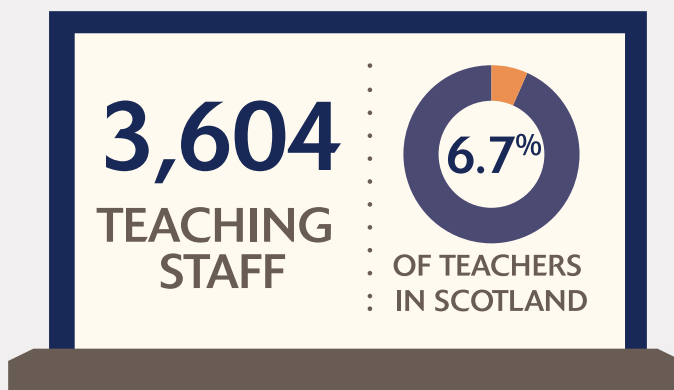
Objectives

- to provide a professional and bespoke service to member schools that is supportive, relevant and of high value.
- to represent, protect and promote the interests and identity of the independent school sector – including those of special schools.
- to enable the sector to make a worthwhile and recognised contribution to the development of education in Scotland, the UK and beyond.

THERE ARE
71
MEMBER SCHOOLS

OF WHICH THERE ARE
50 MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS
21 ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS SCHOOLS
18 BOARDING SCHOOLS

4
GIRLS ONLY SCHOOLS
4
BOYS ONLY SCHOOLS



8 PUPILS FOR EVERY TEACHER ON AVERAGE AT SCIS SCHOOLS

Service to schools:

- to support member schools in delivering a high quality, values-based education for all pupils
- to provide up-to-date guidance and advice to schools on key political, educational, pastoral, special and additional support needs, legal and financial issues
- to make information accessible to parents and young people, the media, political and community figures and the general public
- to support Governors, Heads, Bursars, teaching and support staff through the SCIS CPD programme
- to provide research to help schools with their education choices, forward planning and marketing strategies.

Promoting the Sector:

- to represent the sector at national, regional and community events concerned with the education, well-being and care of children and young people in Scotland
- to promote the sector to members of the Scottish and UK Government, the Scottish and UK Parliament, the media, national educational and other bodies, in order to foster a better and more informed understanding of the sector
- to highlight and support the particular educational and pastoral responsibilities of special schools
- to promote the sector to parents, challenge misconceptions, to encourage participation and widen access to the sector
- to secure, market and enhance the global reputation of the independent sector – including the promotion of Scotland's boarding schools.

Service to Education:

- to contribute to the development of education in its widest sense for children and young people in Scotland
- to promote excellence in academic and all-round achievement
- to support highly-qualified and well-resourced teaching and support staff
- to defend the independence, autonomy and founding principles of individual institutions
- to engage constructively with employers, further and higher education to ensure the widest choice of positive learner destinations
- to demonstrate the sector's breadth and excellence in curricular and qualification development to support quality improvement with proportionate, informed and responsive inspections.

Our Year

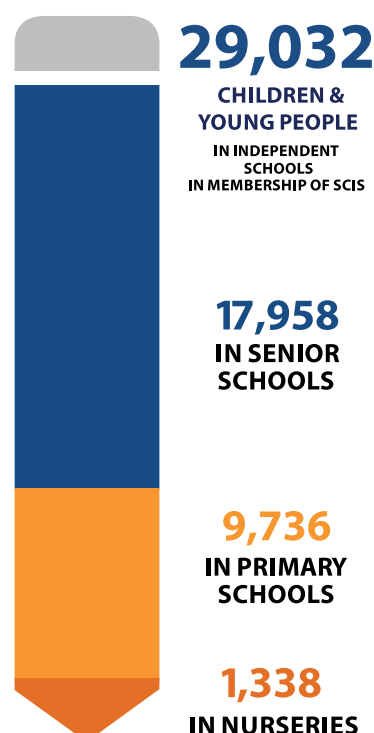
Achievements and Performance

SCIS school statistics

SCIS provides analysis of pupil numbers, staffing levels, examination results, leaver destinations and the financial assistance provided by independent schools – as well as ad hoc research work requested by the Governing Board of SCIS and individual schools. All research findings are published on the SCIS website. The historical and comparative data which SCIS provides helps schools demonstrate their value for money and evaluate their position in a wider context. Statistics are not provided to generate 'league tables' or for direct comparisons between member schools. In 2021:

- SCIS member schools remains approximately equivalent to the eighth largest local authority in pupil numbers.
- The independent school sector employs 3,600 in the teaching workforce in Scotland. There are approximately 3,300 part-time and full-time non-teaching staff including residential care, support and administrative staff.
- At least 88% of leavers entered further or higher education.

Pupil numbers



At the start of each new academic year SCIS conducts a census to gather data from member schools, which provides an overview of the sector. The analysis of this data is made available to member schools, the public and the press. Facts and statistics about pupil numbers and demographic projections can be downloaded from the SCIS [website](#).

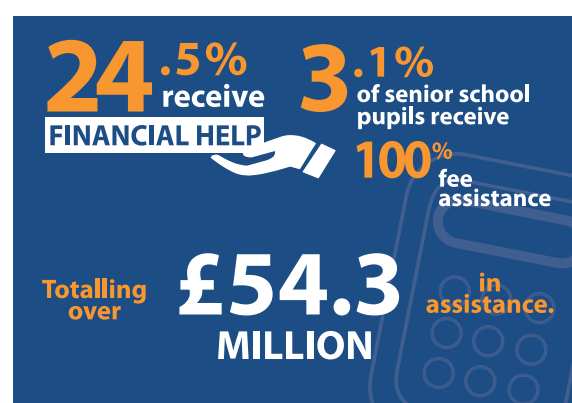
As at September 2021 there were 29,032 (2020: 28,724) pupils in SCIS schools. Of these, 1,338 (2020: 1,398) were children in nurseries, 9,736 (2020: 9,692) were in primary schools and 17,958 (2020: 17,634) were in secondary schools. Pupil numbers in the independent sector remained robust with a 1.1% rise since 2020, representing 4.1% of the Scottish school pupil population, despite Covid-19 challenges for families and for international pupils.



3.9%
OF PUPILS
IN SCOTLAND
ATTEND AN
INDEPENDENT
SCHOOL

Financial assistance

All mainstream member schools offer financial assistance, most commonly in the form of means-tested awards, granted on the basis of financial need. The level of financial assistance can vary considerably from a free place (where 100% of the fees are met by the school) to awards worth around 20% of the fees. All financial assistance, means-tested or otherwise, continues to grow each year – now in excess of £50 million per year. In 2020-21, approximately one quarter of all pupils received some form of financial help with their fees, although exact figures are not possible due to the disruption to the school year of Covid-19 and the refocussing of some funding towards hardship support.



Examination Results

Although the majority of senior pupils in the independent sector sit Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) examinations, a significant number are presented for GCSE, A Levels and the International Baccalaureate. The full table of SQA post-marking review results by school is usually published by SCIS each year on the SCIS website.¹ A substantial number of schools no longer contribute to an overall survey for the sector so SCIS no longer compiles or releases individual school data to the public, nor does it contribute to any externally compiled “league tables”.

In 2021 as in 2020 no examinations were held in the diet, due to Covid-19. As such, comparative certification data with previous years will be revisited when public examinations restart. Figures for independent schools in 2021 are produced below.

Comparable figures for Scotland in International Baccalaureate, A Level and GCSE results are not currently available although individual results for each participating school are available. In normal circumstances, each year the Independent Schools Council (ISC) releases A Level and International Baccalaureate results and Scottish independent schools are included in the data produced.²

2021	SCIS entries as a % of all entries	Entries SCIS schools	Entries all schools	A-C Pass Rate SCIS Schools	A-C Pass Rate all schools %
National 4	0.7%	806	104,378	93.3%	86.1%
National 5	6%	17,839	297,973	96.8%	85.8%
Highers	7.1%	13,843	194,661	97.2%	87.3%
Adv Highers	15.3%	4,108	26,795	97.3%	90.2%
Scottish Baccalaureate	8.6%	13	152	100%	91.4%

¹ <http://www.scis.org.uk/facts-and-figures/exam-results/>

² <http://www.isc.co.uk/research/exam-results/>

Services to Schools

COVID-19

The SCIS office remained closed throughout 2021 following government guidance and home-working continued. The AGM was cancelled and business concluded online, while the 2020-2021 session of PLD events and other meetings remained virtual. Finance and General Purposes Committee and Governing Board business was conducted online throughout 2021.

SCIS continued to work with the Scottish Government, the Registrar, Health Protection Scotland, NHS Scotland, Education Scotland, The Care Inspectorate, SQA, GTCS and others to ensure full awareness and handling of issues relating to reopening, infection control and teaching and learning issues around the 2021 examination diets. SCIS was remained on the Independent Schools Council Coronavirus Contingency Group from March to December 2020, as well as regular meetings of international school associations.

SCHOOLS

SCIS continued to be represented on infection control and public health meetings, primarily in Lothian, which have provided a range of checklists, template letters and background documentation for schools and for parents. The removal of local restrictions and the move beyond Level 0 of lockdown restrictions in the summer of 2021 allowed schools to plan, in the main, for full reopening. Representations were also made to the Scottish Government concerning the possible return of spectators to schools sports events held outside. Parents were aware that advice for club sports events, as well as music festivals, provided a clear contradiction with policy on parents at pitch side. The issue was raised at the Government's Advisory Sub-Group on Children and Education on 21 September.

Scottish Ministers approved in October the return of spectators to school sports events held outdoors. Other mitigations within schools, such as use of face coverings, were maintained beyond the half-term holiday. There

was no easing of restrictions on in-school assemblies, Christmas services, ceilidhs, Nativity plays etc.

SCIS worked with NHS services on the planned introduction of seasonal 'flu vaccinations for all secondary pupils and front-facing school staff in the autumn and winter of 2021, to prevent a combination of pressures on workforce and hospital numbers due to ongoing Covid measures. SCIS also worked with NHS Boards to ensure that any other vaccinations missed during the period of Covid restrictions were rescheduled – such as HPV and teenage boosters.

The Scottish Government has announced that full school inspections would re-commence in the academic year 2021-22.

EXAMINATIONS

SCIS is represented on the National Qualifications steering group, working group, and communications sub-group chaired by the SQA and Scottish Government. These prepared messages for pupils and families prior to the verification of results in 2021 awarded through the Alternative Certification Model. The groups will be drawing up a range of measures and continuities for the planned 2022 diet of national qualifications.

SCIS joined SQA centres in opposing strongly the intention to make no refund to centres of SQA examination fees for the second year running, unlike examination boards in England and Wales. In September 2021, the Scottish Government responded:

“Despite there being no full exam diet this year, there is still a significant amount of work involved in making sure learners receive the qualifications they deserve. Local authorities, colleges and independent schools have benefitted from charges for National Qualifications being fixed since 2012/13, despite increasing costs to deliver National Qualifications. This means that the charges raised by SQA provide a contribution towards the costs of delivering National Qualifications, but the charges do not cover the full costs.

The costs of awarding National Qualifications, even this year, are greater than the contribution made by local authorities, independent schools and colleges. SQA estimates that the costs of delivering national qualifications in 2021 was £41.7m, while income from local authorities, colleges and independent schools is expected to be £30.5m. The remaining cost is covered by SQA's grant in aid budget from the Scottish Government.

In addition, 2020 and 2021 late entry fees have been waived and there have been no charges for appeals. Given the entry fees and Local Authority levy for National Qualifications do not cover the full costs of delivery and continues to be supported by grant-in-aid from the Scottish Government there are no plans to reimburse National Qualifications payments from local authorities, colleges or independent schools."

In September, three contingencies were agreed by working groups for the 2022 diet, depending on the nature of public health requirements nearer the time. SQA published further guidance in October 2021 to support teachers and lecturers, based on last year's guidance on estimates and including information on determining provisional results should the exam diet be cancelled.

BOARDING

Specific issues relating to boarding and Covid-19 were raised with the Scottish Government and other regulatory bodies, in cooperation with the Boarding Schools Association. In the summer of 2021 the Scottish Government decided to support continued partial isolation for international boarders returning from 'Amber List' countries, a move opposed by schools, the Boarding Schools Association and SCIS due to the timing, lack of preparation, and absence of supporting clinical data. SCIS sought confirmation of Scottish Government intentions for international pupils (many of whom are fully vaccinated) returning after autumn half-term and Christmas holidays, given that the Amber

list of countries was subsequently discontinued by the UK Government. The Scottish Government followed the UK Government in terminating the use of the Red list of countries, meaning that all inward international travel would depend upon individual vaccination records.

SCIS also liaised with the Scottish Government to procure bulk supplies of PCR testing kits for boarding schools, in anticipation of any later rise in infection within Scotland.

COVID RECOVERY

The Scottish Government launched a consultation from August to November on Covid recovery. The Government was reviewing the impact of Covid on the Scottish statute book and wished to remove measures no longer needed in order to respond to the pandemic, whilst keeping those where there is "demonstrable benefit".

The consultation paper focused on reviewing the legislative powers that have supported the Government's response to Covid. A SCIS draft response commented on the proposals to extend indefinitely powers over school closures etc. provided for in current emergency legislation, and the need for financial support for independent institutions if closed by Government demand, as well as public health measures including vaccination. The SCIS response observed:

"Such a power would have a disproportionate effect on independently-funded and governed schools, as it is independent Boards of Governors (often Charity Trustees) who hold managing authority for such institutions. No such automatic power should be held by Government without a commensurate responsibility to ensure the financial viability of any such institution.

Any measures affecting independent schools should be proportionate to the risk in and/or associated with those schools and be subject to a financial and business continuity impact assessment in relation to the schools.

Where measures are deemed necessary which the impact assessments show may risk to the financial viability of independent schools, consideration should be given to direct financial support to the schools. Financial support should also be considered where additional resources are identified as being necessary to implement the measures in local authority and grant-aided schools.

As such, the power to close independent institutions should not be extended permanently beyond those specific areas allowed for in the Registration of Independent Schools. The Covid crisis has shown that it is possible to act quickly and effectively, working with schools, in times of national emergency without utilising wide and permanent powers. As and when necessary, such refreshed demands can be made of educational establishments.”

“Specific prior consideration should also be required of the circumstances of boarding school with large numbers of international pupils (often subject to varied travel, public health and vaccination measures), as well as different age-groups and campuses, such as all-through schools, those with nursery provision, or those limited to certain age groups (e.g. “preparatory” and “upper” schools). Sectoral contingency groups representing these differences could be established as part of any permanent response to Covid-19, which might also reflect those areas where shared facilities or expertise might be called upon at any early stage.”

In terms of wider Covid recovery, SCIS stated:

“the upcoming re-framing of Getting It Right for Every Child, including the Children and Young People Act, should be revisited to include genuine equity of access to all necessary health and related support provisions for all children and young people in Scotland.

Any decision – for whatever reason – to seek an alternative form of schooling or an alternative curriculum should not in any way be interpreted by

national and local services to mean that a young person has opted-out of taxpayer-funded services such as mental health support, educational psychology or other forms of therapy that may be required to sustain 'children's well-being and mental health' especially if the national commitment is to a 'person centred approach'. It is not possible to gauge the needs of any young person based upon the educational institution they attend – not least given the wide range of independent additional support needs provision across Scotland, as well as the widening access programme that is being extended annually by mainstream independent schools as part of their public benefit responsibilities. The person centred alleviation of public health crises, whether pandemic or endemic, should not be constrained by any differences of management or governance.”

NON-DOMESTIC RATES (SCOTLAND) ACT 2020

The Finance Secretary announced in Parliament on 16 February that the removal of NDR relief from independent schools would be postponed until 1 April 2022, following a request from SCIS to the Government on 25 January, due to ongoing Covid-19 restrictions.

LOBBYING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2016

SCIS updates a “Transparency” page on the SCIS website, with any formal meetings with the Scottish Government, Ministers, the Scottish Parliament or MSPs. (<http://www.scis.org.uk/about-scis/transparency/>).

SCOTTISH TEACHERS' PENSION SCHEME

SCIS sits on the Advisory Board of the STPS on behalf of the independent sector's scheme members. The scheme is an unfunded one, with no fund of assets, so current pension payments are made from current contributions from employers and employees.

In autumn of 2021, the possibility of phased withdrawal/mixed economy in the Teachers' Pension Scheme for England and Wales commenced. Current teachers will be able to continue participation in the TPS if their independent school employer decides to freeze participation in the TPS with new teachers being enrolled into an alternative pension scheme. In consultation with member schools, SCIS asked the Scottish pension scheme Advisory Board to consider an equivalent measure.

The STPS Advisory Board has also been briefed by HM Treasury on the possible cost implications of the remedy schemes being considered to meet the age discrimination claims upheld by the "McCloud/Sergeant" judgement.

The UK Government published a response to the 'Public Service Pensions: cost control consultation' in October 2021. The Scottish Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) members – including SCIS – wrote to the UK Government to "register their collective concern regarding the Government's plan to introduce an "economic check".

SAB members viewed the introduction of this check as an unnecessary and unhelpful addition, and shared the concerns expressed by many respondents to the consultation regarding this being a breach of the 25 year guarantee, that changes in the SCAPE discount rate would not impact members benefits, and that such an economic check (at this stage unspecified) would not be objective or transparent.

This is seen as Government interference and its introduction is not viewed as being of benefit to either the Scheme itself or to its members. In addition, the speed in application of this change, in time for the 2020 valuations, seems inappropriate given the post-pandemic economic uncertainties.

SCOTTISH CHILD ABUSE INQUIRY

The Inquiry began taking evidence on its Boarding Schools case study on 16 March. Lady Smith initially heard opening statements from the five existing schools called, as well as a representative of Keil School. Survivor statements and detailed sessions with current and former staff and governors were held with all schools. SCIS staff were present at every day of boarding school evidence, giving evidence in person as well as following up with solicitors to the Inquiry on specific questions or clarifications raised by the evidence heard.

All witness statements and transcripts of hearing are available on the Inquiry website (www.childabuseinquiry.scot).

The published case study from Lady Smith is expected in Spring 2022, prior to which bodies such as SCIS were expected to be called to respond to issues heard in evidence. In the summer of 2021, the Inquiry published its case study on Benedictine Order establishments, including evidence and conclusions concerning Fort Augustus Abbey and Carlekemp schools, both one-time SCIS member schools.

On 9 November the Scottish Government published an update on the progress of the redress scheme and Redress Scotland.

CHILD PROTECTION

SCIS worked to augment existing child protection training, the catalyst being the mandatory requirement (from October 2021) that all colleagues working in independent schools should have the appropriate level of child protection training during a 12 month period, that was introduced by The Registration of Independent Schools (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021 that came into force in October 2021.

RACE EQUALITY AND ANTI-RACISM

SCIS joined a working group with Scottish Government, Education Scotland and key third-sector bodies to discuss development and awareness of new approaches to racism and racist incidents in education.

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Given current evidence on gender based violence in schools across Scotland, and partially prompted by the 'Everyone's Invited' movement, SCIS liaised with the Scottish Government and joined the Gender Based Violence in Schools Working Group.

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

SCIS worked with the Scottish Government on the incorporation of children's rights into the curriculum, following the completion of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill. The Bill has yet to become law due to a challenge to the UK Supreme Court by the UK Government under the terms of The Scotland Act.

SCIS will also follow interpretation of Article 28.b of the Convention which also enshrines, "the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education". In addition, particularly as relates to additional support provision, State Parties must offer "financial assistance in case of need".

PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

The Scottish National Party and Scottish Green Party agreed a joint programme for government and cooperation agreement in September 2021. The cooperation agreement stated:

"While we have agreed to work together to take forward a programme of education reform, private fee-paying independent schools are excluded from this agreement."

GENERAL TEACHING COUNCIL FOR SCOTLAND

In October 2021, the GTCS published draft revised Registration Rules to simplify the registration framework,

ensure that the categories and status of registration reflect the current needs of the education system, and widen the means by which GTC Scotland enable and encourage registrants to continue to grow as professionals through a revised 'Additional Registration' framework.

In December SCIS prepared a consultation response that objected to various aspects on the basis of sectoral diversity and specialism, including:

- that the place of Preparatory Schools and schools offering alternative curricular was not accounted for in the model;
- the proposed removal of the ASN category;
- the proposed removal of the Provisional Conditional category;
- the ongoing lack of registration options for certain categories and subjects.

GOVERNING BOARDS

SCIS staff took part in several regular or strategy meetings online of individual school Governing Boards during 2021 and are always available to do so.

Professional learning

Sustaining and developing the ICE strategy was the priority for 2021; with the three pillars of keeping the sector **Informed**, **Collaborative** and **Engaged** continuing to be the key drivers throughout the year. Activity in this context was:

Key Driver 1 Informed

Ensuring the sector are **informed** about professional learning/educational developments

- Range of signposting, including creation of further wakelets, launch of a Good Practice Guide for Recruitment and Selection which was complemented by a suite of professional learning modules
- Targeted up-dates to groups of colleagues with a specific focus on SQA Co-ordinators, Child Protection Co-ordinators and Professional Learning Leads

Key Driver 2 Collaborative

Providing opportunities for the sector to work **collaboratively** with each other and share experiences and best practice

- Range of consultations including sector-wide relating to the requirements for GTCS Professional Update and the re-refreshed GIRFEC Guidance
- Series of on-line collaborations with the v-CoPs being instrumental in this regard

Key Driver 3 Engaged

Ensuring the sector has a voice and is hence **engaged** in the professional learning opportunities

- Empowering colleagues to facilitate sustained engagement eg launch of a dedicated Junior School/Prep Pathway led by the sector
- Configuring on-line provision to utilise break-out rooms to enhance connectivity across the sector

The activity of 3 national bodies informed the above direction of provision:

1. SQA -National Qualifications
2. Scottish Government - GIRFEC/Safeguarding
3. GTCS – Professional Up-date re-validation

1. SQA - NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

The cancellation of the SQA exam diet for 2021 prompted the implementation of the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) which ultimately relied on the submission of accurate provisional results based on demonstrated learner attainment being submitted by schools. A key ingredient of the reliability of the results was robust quality assurance procedures. To support the sector, a number of initiatives were developed, including:

- (i) Regular up-dates to SQA Co-ordinators and virtual sessions to feedback on SQA progress;
- (ii) Virtual subject sessions led by SQA appointees in the sector who agreed to share their expertise and provide advice/guidance;
- (iii) SCIS acting as a “Facilitation House” to link individuals, departments and schools together to embed external quality assurance procedures and support. This networking and support proved valuable to a number of schools and the practice was continued by many.

2. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT - GIRFEC/SAFEGUARDING

Throughout 2021, professional learning provision saw an increased focus on supporting the sector in the context of GIRFEC/Safeguarding. Two key factors were instrumental in shaping this:

1. A substantial body of literature in the form of published reports synthesising research into the impact of the pandemic on children and young people; and
2. Changes in the national landscape in particular: the amendment to the Regulations (June 2021); the launch of the revised National Guidance for Child Protection (September 2021); GIRFEC refresh; and a range of other national priorities/initiatives (including SCAI) with a key focus on supporting the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

Several key considerations informed the professional learning provision in this context, including:

Consideration One: The impact of the pandemic on children and young people

Local, national, and global evidence-based research all cited the wide-ranging impacts that the pandemic has had on children and young people. Whilst there are reports of positive outcomes, in the case of the negative impacts, a myriad of mental health issues (with heightened levels of anxiety being dominant) coupled with the prevalence of increased cases of risk-taking behaviours (including online) are widely reported. The following are some areas that were researched and developed to support the sector during 2021:

- Stress and Anxiety
- On-line Safety
- Risk Taking Behaviours
- Connecting the sector: Pastoral Care/Child Protection Leads and Deputies: v-CoP

Consideration Two: Changes in the national landscape

(i) Registration of Independent Schools (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021

In June 2021, the Scottish Statutory Instrument for the Registration of Independent Schools (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2021 was laid before Parliament. A requirement of this legislation was that schools must provide “a statement confirming that all persons employed by or in the school have undertaken appropriate child protection training within the previous 12 month period”.

A model which comprised of 4 strands was devised to support the sector in this context:

- Strand 1 - Dedicated Child Protection Training for CPCs/Deputy CPCs
- Strand 2 - Training for whole-school staff
- Strand 3 – Deeper-dive training for all colleagues in pastoral care teams
- Strand 4 – Good Governance: Training for Safeguarding Lead/s on Governing Boards and CPCs

(ii) National Guidance for Child Protection

The long-awaited National Guidance was launched in September 2021. During September we hosted an event attended by Scottish Government. In the interim we are liaising with Scottish Government and a key contributor to the national guidance to consider implications for the sector and re-calibrate to formulate the best way forward.

(iii) GIRFEC Re-fresh

Following a period of delay, the draft GIRFEC documentation/consultation was launched on 1 November. To complement the national event cited above, SCIS devised an engagement strategy to allow the submission to reflect the views of the sector.

(iv) Further national considerations

“Supporting transgender young people in schools: Guidance for Scottish Schools” was published by the Scottish Government in August 2021. In addition to signposting this guidance to schools, a dedicated wakelet was developed

Harmful Sexual Behaviour by children and young people

During 2020, the above Expert Report was published by Scottish Government. Throughout 2021, SCIS attended the Scottish Government led Harmful Sexual Behaviours Delivery Group. This engagement was the catalyst to working with an external partner to develop a bespoke programme for the sector –and SCIS complemented it with a dedicated wakelet.

3. **GTCS - PROFESSIONAL UPDATE RE-VALIDATION**

During 2021, the SCIS Guidance on the above was required to be re-validated. A full-scale re-write was required: this was due to a combination of factors including addressing the recommendations from the previous validation, incorporating the national model for professional learning and revised GTCS Guidance on Professional Review and Development/revised Professional Standards.

In a bid to realise sector-wide ownership of the revised Guidelines, a collaborative approach was adopted giving the sector agency by involving them in the process. In the period prior to the Panel meeting in May, the engagement strategy comprised:

- Creation of a short life working group (SLWG) to provide on-going support and advice;
- Dedicated Professional Learning events with GTCS input; and
- On-going consultation and information sharing.

Following a successful Panel meeting in May, the Guidance was re-validated unconditionally and provided schools with a framework to move forward with their individual re-validations between September-December 2021. During this period, SCIS provided monthly drop-in sessions to support schools, coupled with this individual engagement took place to provide constructive feedback on draft submissions.

During 2021 the professional learning provision was wholly on-line, delivered via a combination of Zoom and MS Teams. Strategies have been deployed to assist in making sessions interactive e.g. break-out rooms, polls, Mentimeter, etc. However, there has been increasing thought for the return of face-to-face professional learning and this is under careful review and consideration for 2022.

To find out what the SCIS professional learning programme has to offer visit

<https://www.scis.org.uk/professional-learning/>

or follow us on Twitter @sciscpd

Promoting the Sector

COMMUNICATION

SCIS supports member schools by celebrating the choice, diversity and excellence of an independent education in Scotland. The challenge is to raise awareness and understanding of the benefits of an independent education, alongside creating trust in the sector.

Marketing Vision: 'To promote choice, diversity and excellence in independent education.'

The objectives for the 2021 marketing plan were to:

- change perceptions of independent education amongst the wider public;
- raise awareness of the benefits of an independent education;
- bring new parents (and staff) into independent education in Scotland;
- strengthen the SCIS brand and profile.

Month to month activity has included:

- Managing social media channels with a focus on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn;
- Producing and promoting regular blog content on the SCIS website. In 2021 30 blogs on topics ranging from 'Sustainable Schools' to 'Why Scotland is the perfect place to raise a family' were published;
- Pitching and drafting regular thought leadership opinion pieces

WEBSITE AND SOCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

There were over 95,000 visitors to the SCIS website in 2021 a 5% increase from the 2020 figures.

Top performing pages were:

- Vacancies (+5%)
- Professional Learning Events (+49%)
- SCIS Blogs (+25%)
- Coronavirus Guidance for schools (-57%)
- Find a School (+10%)



Number of Followers

592

3,089

501

% increase

+20%

+6%

+29%

SCOTLAND'S BOARDING SCHOOLS

On Saturday 22 May 2021 14 senior Scottish boarding schools hosted a free, drop-in virtual information event for prospective families (scotlandsboardingschools.vfairs.com/). As well as a wealth of information and opportunity to browse a number of schools, visitors had the chance to meet with representatives of each school including Heads and admissions personnel.

- 89 families signed up for the event;
- 454 total booth visits;
- 68,000 reached via targeted Instagram advertising;
- 151,900 reached via target Facebook advertising;
- 33% increase in SBS website traffic.

Boarding schools normally compete with each other to attract students, so this was a unique event working together to promote the beauty and benefits of Scotland.

E-BULLETIN

The bulletin is available to all school staff and governors. Schools are encouraged to share the bulletin with all members of staff. Individuals may subscribe at <http://www.scis.org.uk/about-scis/>.

ENQUIRIES

The team at SCIS are always available to offer support and professional advice to SCIS member schools and in 2021 took a significant number of enquiries from schools seeking advice and guidance on topics ranging from Covid-19 guidance to accessibility.

Prospective and current parents also made contact looking for information and support on a number of issues.

41%

OF BOARDING PUPILS ARE FROM **80** DIFFERENT COUNTRIES



2692 BOARDERS



90.6% DAY SCHOOL

9.4% BOARDING

Service to Education

COLLABORATION WITH KEY BODIES

Throughout 2021, SCIS has represented the views and concerns of the independent sector on a wide range of bodies, through consultations and at events organised by national bodies for schools, education authorities, care agencies and others – in addition to a substantial range of Covid-19 planning and coordination groups:

Scottish Government:

- Education Leaders Forum
- Curriculum and Assessment Board
- Strategic Board for Teacher Education
- Young Carer Working Group
- GIRFEC Stakeholder Group
- PREVENT Duty sub-group
- Gender based violence working group
- Racism and racist incidents in schools working group
- Education Reform Practitioner and Stakeholder Advisory Group

General Teaching Council Scotland:

- Council
- Education Committee

Education Scotland:

- Inclusion, Wellbeing & Equalities national network
- Knowledge Into Action Strategic Stakeholder Group
- Safeguarding in Education Network
- Stakeholder network

Independent Schools Council (ISC):

- Executives' Group
- Strategy Group
- ISC Communications Working Group Meeting
- Diversity working group
- Coronavirus contingency group
- Safeguarding working group
- BSA/SCIS boarding forum
- ISBA regional briefing
- HMC Scottish Division

NHS:

- LICOG Schools subgroup for Scottish Immunisation Programme in Lothian
- Greater Glasgow & Clyde data sharing working group
- Lothian independent school nurses network group, infection control group, education providers group

Scottish Teachers' Pension Scheme:

- Scheme Advisory Board

Scottish Parliament:

- Cross Party Group on Children & Young People
- Cross Party Group on Sport
- Cross Party Group on Learning Disability

Scottish Qualifications Authority:

- Advisory Council
- SQA/SCIS/SLS joint forum
- Qualifications contingency group
- NQ 2021 and 2022 groups

City of Edinburgh Council Child Protection Committee

Scottish Professional Learning Network

The Future

SCIS OPERATIONS, STAFF AND SCHOOL MEMBERSHIP

The Governing Board records its continued appreciation and thanks for the work undertaken by all the staff of SCIS throughout 2021, considering the considerable additional workload and personal impact of Covid-19 measures.

The Annual General Meeting, in April 2021, was cancelled due to public health restrictions.

The Proprietors of Balnacraig School announced its closure at the end of 2021. Following approval by the Governing Board, provisional membership of SCIS was agreed with Olivewood Primary School in Glasgow.

SCIS membership remains open to independent schools registered with the Scottish Government which have had satisfactory inspection reports from Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate.

OUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The over-riding priority for SCIS is to support schools and their communities in the recovery from the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

SCIS will follow the debate on the reform of the SQA and Education Scotland, ensuring that the discrete needs of the independent sector are catered for. The introduction of Non-Domestic Rates at 100% for mainstream independent schools will be closely monitored, along with changes to Disclosure Scotland, to GIRFEC and to the National Guidance for Child Protection.

SCIS will work closely with schools and regulators as the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry publishes the findings of the case study into boarding schools in 2022.

The wider context of Scottish and UK politics following EU withdrawal remains uncertain and may yet have a substantial impact on the operating climate, especially once the implications of Covid-19 reduce.

The current lease of the SCIS office is on a rolling basis, and office and staff requirements will be closely monitored as “hybrid” working continues after the eventual end of Covid-19 restrictions.

SCIS Governing Board

2021

Chairman

Alan Hartley

Board Members

Matthew Bartlett	Head, St Aloysius College, Glasgow.
Mark Becher	Headmaster, The Compass School, Haddington.
Guy Cartwright	Bursar, The Edinburgh Academy, Edinburgh.
Nathan Davies	Head of Junior School, Albyn School, Aberdeen.
Paul Fairclough	Head of Senior School, George Heriot's School, Edinburgh.
John Gilmour	Headmaster, Craigclowan Prep School, Perth.
Simon Johnson	Headmaster, Wellington School, Ayr.
Elaine Logan	Governor, Cargilfield Prep School, Edinburgh.
Jacqui Mcinnes	Accountant, The Glasgow Academy, Glasgow.
Pamela Muir	Bursar, Gordonstoun, Elgin.
Simon Pengelley	Governor, High School of Glasgow & Loretto, Musselburgh.
George Salmond	Head of Junior School, George Watson's College, Edinburgh.
Melvyn Shanks	Principal, Belmont House School, Glasgow.
Anna Tomlinson	Head, St Margaret's School for Girls, Aberdeen.

Honorary Treasurer

Jeremy Harper* Bursar, St George's School for Girls, Edinburgh

**Until January 2022*

Our Staff

John Edward	Director
Alison Herbert	Deputy Director, External Relations
Margaret Lannon	Deputy Director, Education & Professional Learning
Alison Newlands	Assistant Director, Finance & Research
Kirsten Hamilton	Administrator, Education & Professional Learning



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