SCOTTISH COUNCIL of INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS (SCIS)

PRESS STATEMENT : 18 July 2007

OSCR PILOT REVIEWS RESULTS ANNOUNCED

Independent schools and parents will be pleased to hear the announcement by OSCR that the first independent school to be reviewed under revised Scottish charities legislation has been found to meet the charities test.

The Director of SCIS, Judith Sischy, says:

> ***"We are pleased that the High School of Dundee has passed the charity test and we congratulate the school on the outcome.***
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> ***We remain confident that independent schools across the sector will also be able to demonstrate their case to the Regulator. Like the High School of Dundee, many independent schools are built on a charitable foundation and are keenly aware of their charitable roots. They have a deep and active commitment to public benefit. They welcome pupils from a wide spectrum of families and are widely respected for the high standard of education they provide. Independent schools are a credit to Scotland - they make a significant contribution to the education, economy and social fabric of the country."***
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> ***In terms of the charities legislation, the schools have to demonstrate that they exist for a charitable purpose, namely the advancement of education, and that they provide benefit. OSCR has to determine whether the fees charged constitute an unduly restrictive condition – the schools aim to keep their fees as low as possible, whilst maintaining standards, and are as generous as their funds will allow in extending bursaries to those who cannot afford the full fee. The schools appreciate their responsibilities as charities and should be well prepared to meet the charity test."***

Continued …./

Notes:

The position with independent schools is that:

- They are deeply committed to the advancement of education
- Schools have a long tradition of charitable giving and of service to the community
- It is legitimate for a charity to charge fees, provided that the level of fees can be justified
- No school, or individual in a school, makes a personal gain or profit; any surplus that is made is for the sole benefit of the school
- Education in the independent sector is accessible to pupils from a broad spectrum of the public from diverse social, economic and cultural backgrounds who value the education provided, such as families who choose to make sacrifices, parents who are both working, single parents.
- The teaching expertise is widely shared (e.g. through student teacher placements, probationers, markers, writers etc) and the facilities are widely shared with the local community, voluntary groups and national organisations
- Widened access is provided in terms of bursaries and financial assistance and many schools are working towards increasing the funding support available
- The independent sector educates over 31,000 pupils, which saves the public purse an estimated £155 million a year. Add to this the funds distributed in scholarships and bursaries (estimated £12.5 million a year) and the independent sector saves the country over 35 times as much as it receives in financial benefits (estimated at £4.5 million a year).
- The sector educates over 31,000 children (equivalent in size to the 8th largest education authority out of 32) from diverse communities across Scotland

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