



ELLON ACADEMY UP-DATE FOR PARENTS/CARERS

To: All Parents and Carers
From: Pauline Buchan, Rector
Subject: School Information Up-date
Date: 24th April 2020

Quote of the Week beginning 20.4.20:



Message from the Rector:

Learning and working from home:

As many of you will know, working from home is very different and very difficult, but I never thought I'd be leading a school from my dining room table. The staff at Ellon Academy know how challenging it must be for our parents and carers to balance their own work, social isolation, childcare and possible caring for relatives, friends and neighbours at this time. In fact, many of our staff are parent too and know the reality of this situation.

We want to thank you for your support in home learning and we are pleased to say that a high percentage of our learners are engaged in the work and materials posted on our various on-line platforms. Our staff are working exceptionally hard to consider relevant work and tasks to keep pupils learning and engagement going, bearing in mind that the well-being of our young people is the most important aspect in all of this. Therefore, we continue to ask our pupils to pace themselves appropriately and to avoid putting too much pressure on themselves. As parents and carers, you can encourage them to do what they can and keep in touch with their teachers, who will happily support their learning. Attached to the newsletter and on our school website (Parent and Pupil Zones), we have included a summary of each Faculty and the learning platforms you can access for each subject. Please be aware, that like some of you, some of the teaching staff are also experiencing ICT and connectivity issues, so this was identified from the start of the school closures and Principal Teachers of each Faculty are overseeing the work of these teachers and personally posting work and resources to support all of our learners,

Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA Up-date):

As you will be aware, due to the Coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak the 2020 national exam diet cannot go ahead. The examining body, the SQA, has developed an alternative certification model for 2020. The SQA published guidance in early April on this. The *SQA Certification – Guidance for learners, parents and carers* can be found here:

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/93777.html>

Essentially, estimated grades will form the core element of certification for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses. Teachers will review all the evidence that is available to them to assess whether your child has met the course aims. Teachers have a strong understanding of your child's performance and know how they compare to other learners in each department, and in previous years.

Teachers will take account of any available work that your child has completed throughout the course. Using their professional judgement, and their knowledge of your child's work and their progress so far, they will make an estimate of the grade and band your child would have achieved under normal circumstances. Estimate grades will be based on your child's demonstrated and inferred attainment of the required skills, knowledge and understanding for each course at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher.

The SQA will then have the information they need to adjust estimates where necessary, and to ensure consistency — both across the country and in comparison, with previous years.

The SQA website has a Frequently Asked Questions section here: <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/93797.html>

National 2, National 3 and National 4 qualifications are made up of units (including an Added Value Unit at National 4) which are internally assessed as pass or fail by the school, and externally quality assured by SQA. Ellon Academy will continue to send the SQA your child's unit results based on either existing evidence from assessments that have already been completed, and/or by using their professional judgement of your child's work from through the year.

The SQA is working to ensure that learners expecting their results for National Courses and awards, National Certificates, National Progression Awards and Skills for Work courses, will receive their results no later than Tuesday 4 August.

The SQA strongly recommends that your child signs up to MySQA to receive their results by text and/or email. If your child has received their results through MySQA previously, they will continue to do so, but they are recommended to review their profile to make sure their contact details are up to date. Your child can register for MySQA from here: <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/41324.2548.html>

Annual Progress Reports due in May/June 2020:

Due to the public health restrictions and access issues to the school's Tracking, Monitoring and Reporting system by teachers, it is not possible to prepare, print and send home S1 and S3 final reports and S2 tracking reports. Teachers will, of course, continue to offer feedback to pupils on their progress with their online learning, where applicable and possible.

New Timetable/Moving Learning Forward:

Despite changed circumstances, we continue to plan as normal for a new timetable. We hope to begin on 2nd June, as planned, whether physically back in school or via a "virtual" new timetable. We are aware that for pupils in S4 and S5, now that exams have been cancelled, their attention naturally has shifted to their new courses. With this in mind, many faculties have already started providing materials for pupils to consolidate skills or develop their thinking as preparation for their new courses. For example, an S4 pupil currently studying a Humanities subject at National 5 level and intending to continue to Higher can find suggestions of tasks to engage with that will help get them ready for Higher. Our teachers in other faculties are aiming to provide similar support for S4 and S5 pupils this term.

Summary:

Please continue to access the Parent and Pupil Zones on our school website for information and up-dates, which are listed chronologically, newest posts first:

<http://ellonacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/parent-zone/>

We hope that our Ellon Academy families will continue to keep safe and well and that together, we can ensure that our pupils will be able to thrive in these challenging times, and that we will be back to school as soon as the Scottish Government deems it safe to open our doors again.

Thank you for your continued support,

Wishing you all well,

Pauline Buchan

Pauline Buchan, Rector