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## ELLON ACADEMY WEEKLY INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS

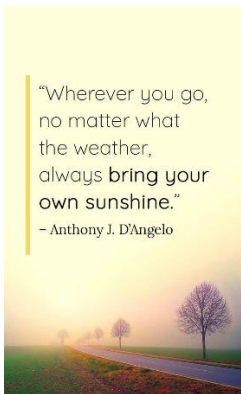


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To: All parents/carers  
From: Pauline Buchan, Rector  
Subject: Weekly Information Up-date  
Date: Friday 30th October 2020

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### Quote of the Week beginning 2.11.20:



Hoping that this newsletter finds everyone safe and well. We have had a good first week back at school after the October break and I am delighted to inform you that we raised £825.00 on the last day of term for 'Young Minds' and the Ellon Academy School Pupil Fund at our Dress Down Day on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October. What a fantastic effort from our Exec Team and the pupils on the Charities Committee. Thanks to all who donated so generously.



During the holidays, I was saddened to hear about the recent flooding in Ellon but heartened to see how this community pulled together to support those affected. Please get in touch with the school if there's anything we can do to support.

Here are the updates for this week:

#### **Virtual Assembly:**

Next week's Virtual Assembly will be shown on **Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November** and registration will be extended for 5 minutes to ensure that there is enough time to view and for the Register Teacher to read the daily bulletin notices to all learners.

#### **Children in Need – Friday 13<sup>th</sup> November:**

The next Dress Down Day will be on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> November in aid of Children in Need and following the theme of improving Mental Health and Wellbeing for young people. It will be in the form of 'Come as Yourself' where pupils can show their individual sense of style! We will do the money collections at the pupil and reception doors due to the success of this approach last time.

#### **Exam Results 2020:**

We were very pleased with the 2020 National 5 results. We have been able to maintain our 4-year run of increasing our targets based again on our annual prelim analysis and this year 64% of S4 pupils have achieved 5 or more National 5 passes. Our target was 60%

Higher results this year have also exceeded our attainment in 2019. Our target was 48% of S5 pupils achieving 3 or more Higher awards this year and we achieved 51%.

2020 results have seen the greatest number of S4/S5 and S6 achieving straight A grades with 27 pupils achieving this across all subject awards. A great achievement! I had the pleasure of calling their parents back in August to congratulate them.

#### **School Reports:**

Tracking reports are an interim check in where we look at target grades and working at grades, effort, behaviour and homework. Following these, learner conversations are held with pupils informally in class regarding feedback on progress and next steps. Full reports include all of the above and teacher comments too.

We made a whole school decision regarding the sharing of dates for school reports to be published. We have our internal deadlines, but if anomalies come up as part of our robust Quality Assurance procedures, we need to build in time for amendments, corrections and changes, to ensure that this document, which is the flagship communication document with parents/carers, is as accurate as can be. Setting a hard and fast date for release is therefore not preferred, so we can ensure that the reports are as full and accurate as possible.

**A reminder of the reporting calendar is included at the end of this newsletter.**

#### **School Nurses:**

We are delighted to announce that our School Nurses have now joined the world of Facebook.

Please like their page so you are kept up to date with lots of information and dates for immunisations etc.

<https://www.facebook.com/Aberdeenshire-School-Nurses-115580890312630/>

#### **Google Meet – Contingency for Lockdown Learning:**

We have now over 1000 permissions received from parents/carers, so thank you all for your response to our pleas for these consents. The parents/carers who have still to give consent are being contacted directly this week.

#### **Ellon Academy Staffing Up-date:**

Next week we will be interviewing for a new post for Ellon Academy. Using the government allocated funds we are hoping to appoint a new Principal Teacher of Digital Learning so we will have more news when we select the preferred candidate following interviews.

## **New Staff:**

- Teacher of Biology – Mrs K Bond will join us at the end of November
- Principal Teacher Pupil Development – Mr N Coe will join us at the end of November

## **Parent Council News:**

- **Next Parent Council Meeting**  
**It was agreed that the next Parent Council meeting will be on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> November at 7.00pm**
- The meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> November will be our AGM.
- Parent Council Meetings will continue to be online at present due to COVID19 restrictions.
- We plan to use Skype for Business again for the next meeting.
- All parents/carers have the option to attend our Parent Council meeting. You will be invited to register your interest in attending the next one approximately a week before the meeting.
- You should then receive a meeting invite. If you do not receive an invite by 3pm on the 9<sup>th</sup> November, please contact the Parent Council or the school to let us know so that we can make sure you receive the details in good time for the meeting.
- Parent Council committee members will again be monitoring the side bar where parents can submit questions which relate to items on the agenda during the meeting.
- There will be an opportunity for additional questions at the end too (through the sidebar).
- This is new to all of us so please be patient as we work out the best way to ensure as many parents/carers as possible can be involved.
- All parents/carers are again encouraged to contact members of the committee or the generic Parent Council email or to comment on Parent Council Facebook posts if there are specific questions or topics you wish to be raised. This can be done at any time.

## **Strategic Planning:**

This week, the Senior Leadership Team has been working on:

- Senior Leadership development opportunities for Associate Senior Leaders:
  - Mr R Gatehouse – PT Mathematics
  - Mrs K Leslie – PT Humanities
  - Mrs P Waugh – PT Guidance/Chair of the Guidance Team
- Implications of SQA announcements
- Timetable 20/21
- Plans for the staff in-service day on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November

## **Update on SQA Exams 2021**

In a statement to Parliament on Wednesday 7 October, Deputy First Minister John Swinney announced Higher and Advanced Higher exams will go ahead in 2021, while National 5 exams will be replaced by a system where grades are awarded based on coursework and teacher judgement.

Due to ongoing uncertainty caused by the pandemic, combined with the fact that pupils have already lost significant study time as a result of the lockdown last academic year, normal exam plans were simply not possible, according to Mr Swinney. Replacing the National 5 exams makes space in the timetable to push the Higher and Advanced Higher exams back until May, making up some of the lost learning time. These exams will now begin on 13 May, around two weeks later than usual, and will run until 4 June 2021.

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) will put in place a clear contingency plan, however, in case it proves impossible for Higher and Advanced Higher exams to go ahead due to public health advice. The Scottish Government has stated in those circumstances and only if necessary, the SQA will award Higher and Advanced

Higher grades based on teacher judgement, supported by SQA quality assurance, taking account of assessment evidence.

**SQA Up-date:**

SQA have published broad guidance from school but we are still awaiting specific subject advice. As soon as this is received, reviewed, and processed by SLT, PTs and Faculties, we will be able to set a whole school assessment and moderation of standards calendar. Last year, Ellon Academy had a robust and rigorous quality assurance programme in place regarding the submission of estimates of pupil awards. SQA will also verify standards this year. Furthermore, moderation will also take place out with schools via Subject Professional Support Groups. We will also be working with our Trio schools (Ellon, Meldrum and Turriff) regarding cross moderation and comparison of standards.

**January Assessment Block 2021**

Due to ongoing public health restrictions, Ellon Academy will not be able to run Prelim Exams in January in the traditional sense. Instead there will be a planned Assessment Block, which will run from **Monday 11 January to Wednesday 27 January**, where pupils will sit assessments in a double period of class time. The Assessment Block has been planned to avoid pupils sitting more than one assessment per day and to spread the assessments over the two-and-a half week period. There will be no requirement for Study Leave as a result, nor could the school justify pupils missing further learning and teaching time having missed all in class teaching during Terms 3 and 4 last session. More information about the January Assessment Block will follow in due course.

**Terracycle Update:**

This year Ellon Academy raised a further £72 and saved approximately 33,000 items of plastic packaging from going to landfill through the Terracycle programmes. A fantastic effort! Thank you, everyone, for your contributions. We are continuing to collect plastic packaging for crisps, nuts, popcorn, pretzels, biscuits, cakes, crackers, chocolate, and sweets as well as pens and plastic pencils. Collection points are located in the staffroom, main reception, the canteen and sunken social area. Check out [www.terracycle.com](http://www.terracycle.com) for details of other recycling programs in your area.



Thank you once again for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

*P Buchan*

Pauline Buchan, Rector  
30.10.20

Tracking, Monitoring and Reporting Calendar 20/21:

TMR 20/21	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5/6
<b>AUGUST</b>				-	-
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>				Tracking Report 1 QA Deadline 30-Sept	Tracking Report 1 QA Deadline 30-Sept
<b>OCTOBER</b>	S1 Tracking Report 1 H/E/B	S2 Tracking Report 1 H/E/B	S3 Tracking Report 1 H/E/B	Issue Reports	Issue Reports
<b>NOVEMBER</b>	Issue Reports  Parents Eve (Pastoral) <i>provisional</i>	Issue Reports	Issue Reports	Full Report  QA Deadline 27-Nov	Full Report  QA Deadline 27-Nov
<b>DECEMBER</b>	S1 Tracking Report 2	S2 Full Reports		Issue Reports	Issue Reports
<b>JANUARY</b>		Subject Choice Virtual Presentation	S3 Full Reports		
<b>TMR 20/21</b>	<b>S1</b>	<b>S2</b>	<b>S3</b>	<b>S4</b>	<b>S5/6</b>
<b>FEBRUARY</b>		Course Choice Deadline 18 February	Subject Choice Virtual Presentation	Tracking Report 2	Tracking Report 2

				Issue Reports	Issue Reports
<b>MARCH</b>		S2 Tracking Report 2		Parents Eve (Pastoral) <i>provisional</i> & Subject Choice Virtual Presentation	
					Course Choice Deadline 12 March
				Course Choice Deadline 12 March	
<b>APRIL</b>	S1 Parents Eve <i>Provisional</i>	Issue S2 Reports			
<b>MAY</b>	S1 Full Reports	S2 Parents Eve <i>Provisional</i>	S3 Tracking Report 2		
<b>JUNE</b>	Issue S1 Reports & S1 Profile		Issue S3 BGE Level Reports & S3 Profile		

This will be under review in the event of any relaxation of current restrictions.