

Ellon Academy Parent Council Minutes

3rd February 2021

Introduction

The Parent Council is aware of and as parents, also share the concerns being expressed by a number of parents/guardians around the educational development of the pupils at this very challenging time. The PC post holders receive a high number of queries direct and a number of comments and concerns are, rightly, raised on the FB page, however, there continues to be a very poor attendance at the virtual Parent Council meetings.

This last PC meeting, we had five parent/guardian's attendees, in addition to the PC post holders. We have never had more than eight additional parents/guardians in attendance at any of the virtual meetings (almost a year of) and it really has never been easier to attend a PC meeting, being virtual and able to attend from the comfort of your own home.

These meeting, which are attended by the Rector and normally also have two or three of the school's deputy head teachers also in attendance, are an excellent way to hear directly what is happening and to raise concerns, at a time in which it probably has never will be so important in the educational development of our pupils, due to the really challenging situation we continue to find ourselves in. As yet a virtual meeting has never run over 90 minutes in length and you are welcome to join and leave at any time, if required.

As a PC we are in weekly contact with the school, raising the various points and concerns that are raised, highlighting that a few of these we are being told are really concerning, the continual lack of attendees can potentially portray a different perspective.

We would encourage and welcome as many parents/guardians to attend and hear first-hand. what is happening and be able to raise points.

In the interim we will continue to work hard with the school in an effort to mitigate the challenges the pupils currently face until we have a full save return to school.

Meeting Minutes

All participants took part virtually due to current Government guidance on social distancing. Attendance was open to **all** parents or guardians who have children at the school. Parents were asked to contact in advance to note interest so that invitations could be sent through emails.

Attendees: N Topping (Chair), D McCulloch (Vice Chair), K Gray (Previous Chair), H Wilson (Acting Secretary), A Blanchard (Treasurer), P Buchan (Rector), T Booth (DHT), F McLachlan (DHT), G Cowie (DHT), N Coe (PT Pupil Development), M Sturton, G Burgess, S Middleton, L Gill, K Finlayson

Apologies: D Bain, D Astley

1. Minutes of the previous meeting

These were posted on the Parent Council Facebook Page and the School website and no alterations were suggested by attendees or received prior to the meeting.

2. Treasurer's Report

The complaint raised with the bank has been closed by them without any issues being resolved. D McCulloch has had a suitable conversation with the bank officials and the complaint has been reopened. The bank assures us that this will be resolved soon – it has been ongoing for more than three years and relates to changing over nominated signatories to the account.

3. Update on Pupil Wellbeing

F McLachlan (DHT) introduced our new PT Pupil Development, Mr N Coe who started with the school in December.

- The school considers wellbeing to be the most important aspect of supporting pupils through this difficult time.
- The school have identified three levels of provision for vulnerable pupils:
ONE
Internal Provision which involves pupils attending the school building during lockdown
TWO
Pupils on Continuation of Learning Pathways
THREE
Guidance/ House Team Support
These pupils (148 of them) receive a weekly check in from a member of staff – PT
Guidance, Support for Learning Staff, Youth workers or Pupil Support.
A tracking sheet is being used to record these.
F McLachlan has overview of all these pupils.
- Ellon Academy has now added a further level as the SLT want to ensure they support the wellbeing of all pupils – level 4.
- This involves every child being sent a short survey each Friday and asked to rate their own wellbeing- Great, Good, OK, Not so good, Awful
- The Scottish Government's SHANARRI Wheel is the basis of the survey with simplified pupil friendly text to make it accessible to them.
- The first week of this survey was last week and the school is happy to report 813 responses out of our 1174 pupils.
- The school plans to collect the data in a spreadsheet and have this as a whole school tracker of wellbeing and to analyse the data and identify hot spot of concerns and struggles.
- The school is celebrating that so many pupils are managing so well.
- The school has identified that some young men at the top end of the school may need particular support and there is a plan to organise virtual events/quiz/ speakers to support them.

If you can help the school by providing links to resources or groups which could help them, please contact F McLachlan (DHT) directly.

- The Hub for vulnerable and keyworker pupils in the school is being staffed by volunteers from the school staff.

Parent Questions

What is the structure / method of the Level3 check ins?

This varies and is something suitable and relevant for each family and the school contact person. It may be a phone call or an email. Some receive Facebook Messenger contacts from our Youth Workers if this is the best way to contact individuals.

Did every child receive a survey? We have received reports that some classes/ individuals did not receive one.

This has initially been shared through registration teachers and so some may not have received one in the first week. There are more than 40 registration teachers in the school and each will have their own challenges. The school is looking to increase engagement over time.

Parent Council noted that it is really positive that contact is being made – particularly with our senior children as parents are reporting that anxiety is high amongst these year groups.

What sort of questions are in the survey?

There is just one question to answer – based on the SHANARRI wheel – asking pupils to rate how they feel on a scale from great to awful.

Parents in attendance at the meeting suggested Aberdeen Football club as they are producing mental health resources at the moment and the Gavin Oattes fire up session from E-sgoil this week.

ACTIONS

- PC agreed to ask parents to encourage their pupils to complete the wellbeing survey this Friday (5th February) through the Parent Council Facebook page.
- N Coe to provide text to N Topping to explain the survey to parents for inclusion on the Facebook page and as an appendix to the Minutes (Appendix 1)

4. Rector's Update

Staffing

P Buchan reported that all staff and SLT are working very hard.

- S Smith is joining the school as a new Pupil Support Worker (PSW) – she starts on the 5th February.
- N Smart is joining the school as our new trainee Counsellor from 8th February. She will be available three days a week as the other two days will be study days.
- Two new PSWs have been recruited using the Scottish Government funding.
- Lucy Moir has started in her PT Digital Learning role.
- Mike McColm (PT Modern Languages) is retiring in April
- His position has already been advertised, received 4 applicants and 2 are to be interviewed. There may be a need to back fill a position if an internal candidate is successful.

UPDATE – Miss E. Mathers was successful today (11/02/2021).

- Dr Mike Cruickshank (PT Science) is retiring in the summer. This vacancy will be advertised closer to the time.
- The Maths vacancy has not yet been filled and it has been identified that there may be issues doing this as it is a temporary vacancy. Therefore, it is planned that Mrs Buchan will apply to Aberdeenshire Council to convert this into a permanent vacancy in order to hopefully fill it more quickly as this would be in the best interests of the pupils.
- Mrs Jackson is now remaining in post until a replacement is found.

School Finances

- Carry forward has now been confirmed at around £100,000.
- Faculty bids have been looked at and all needs and some items from wish lists are to be fulfilled including a saw sharpener, resources for the English department and contributions towards the refurbishment of the Home Economics department and replacement items.

Ellon Bags of Kindness

- J Murdoch from our library and S Warne (PT English) have been working hard to work on a project to use books donated to the school which are predominantly adult fiction and non-fiction.
- Pupils from the school have been helping to sort these into bags which will be donated to people within the community.
- Google forms will be available to nominate recipients.
- These will be subject to strict quarantine before collection or delivery.
- The local resilience group and churches will also be involved in the distribution of these.
- This stemmed from An idea from our young people.

Parent Questions

How will Pupils contact the school counsellor?

We expect that this will operate similar to Graham Wilson – through referrals from PT Guidance.

ACTIONS

- Parents to consider potential recipients for Ellon Bags of Kindness

5. First Minister's Update Regarding Partial Return to School

- S4-S6 are to return partially to complete in-school essential practical work critical for the SQA awards.
- A maximum of 5-8% of the school roll are allowed in the school building at any time.
- For Ellon Academy, this works out as 90-95 people
- There are requirements for social distancing of 2m between all staff and all pupils.
- The Ellon initial plan is currently sitting with the Principal Teachers and ideas are being shared.
- This needs to be finalised but every hour, the school is still receiving new information which makes this difficult.
- Government guidance on this is expected to be updated next week so Ellon Academy are forced to start to formulate these plans without the guidance in order to have these ready for the 22nd February as we have the half term break approaching before that date.

UPDATE – As of today (11/02/2021), no guidance has been received.

- Home testing kits are due to arrive in the school next week and the school will create a procedure for this. Each senior pupil and member of staff will be allowed two of these per week.
- Home testing is optional – no one is obliged to undertake this testing which is aimed to identify anyone who may have the virus but be asymptomatic.
- School transport will be available, but this is restricted to morning drop offs and afternoon pick ups as per the normal school day so this restricts the school further in timetabling essential work for pupils.
- The creation of the timetable is a worry as the rota and expected phased return will be difficult.
- The school will be absolutely restricted to having a maximum of 8% of the school roll in on any day.
- Teaching staff have not been spoken to yet as this is still at the very early stages of planning.
- It is only practical subjects which can be in for assessments – woodwork, metal work, possibly Graphic Communication etc.
- Looking at building up confidence during this time.
- The planning is being done on the basis of columns at the moment – so pupils with a practical subject in column A for example would potentially all be in on a certain day.
- The school is looking to be solution focussed in planning for the return.

Questions from Parents;

Will practical subjects include MFL for oral work for example?

- The oral parts of the exams in MFL have already been completed.

At the Education and Skills Committee today, John Swinney clarified that the pupils coming into school would be for learning, rather than assessment.

- The school is still waiting on SQA timelines, so staff will want to support pupils to catch up and be assessed if they are ready. The school have been told to concentrate on Learning and Teaching.

Can I specifically ask about maths? For Nat 5, I believe the pupils seem to have been doing revision since Christmas. Have they completed the curriculum?

- Some pupils would be at that stage, but not all of them.

6. SQA Update

- Provisional grades must be with the SQA by Friday 18th June 2021.
- This gives the school a date to work back from.
- The SQA subject specific guidance for Highers and Advanced Higher subjects is still being updated. Some of it is now available to support teachers.
- SQA and Education Scotland have specified that the focus must be on Learning and Teaching for all schools at the moment.
- Assessment of young people should come at a later date.
- Teachers have been told that they must be secure that there has been time for teaching and consolidation of learning before assessment can be considered.
- Verification of results by the SQA will be required but schools are still waiting to hear what this will look like.

- The Quality Assurance timeline is also still being waited on. This is the process by which both schools and local authorities check that they are happy that the results being submitted for each candidate are accurate and fair.
- Moderating and verification at Authority level needs to be done
- The in-school moderation and verification process includes class teachers, other teachers of the same subject, Principal Teachers and members of the Senior Leadership Team.
- This year, the SQA is looking to add confidence that predicted grades are accurate by producing additional resources for teachers around the topic of Understanding Standards. These resources will be published when ready.

Questions from Parents:

What is happening with the prelims/ assessment blocks? Will these still go ahead when the pupils all return or are these completely cancelled now?

- The instructions from the SQA and Education Scotland are that schools are to concentrate on learning and teaching. No assessment is to take place at the moment.

Will the school have sufficient evidence without the prelims/ assessment blocks?

- The SQA has requested 2-4 pieces of work to form the core of the predicted grades but other work can be included as supportive evidence e.g. class tests and homework.
- Teachers were gathering evidence between August and December.
- The school is awaiting final guidance on verification processes and the school can work back from here in terms of timescales for assessment blocks if/when pupils return to school.
- The evidence required varies from subject to subject. For example, for Modern Studies, question paper type questions should be completed under exam conditions and schools can get pupils to complete an assignment as additional evidence.
- Each subject will follow the SQA guidance on the subject-specific evidence required.
- Supplementary evidence can be provided to back up predicted grades.
- More information is available on the SQA website.

Some Parents are concerned that the full syllabus has not been taught in some subjects – some subjects are just doing revision – will they have time to complete the courses?

- Recognition of challenges facing remote learning and teaching– but a review was done by the SQA and some of the curriculum has been taken out of some subjects to acknowledge this.

Have there been additional parts of the curriculum taken out of the courses since the SQA advised of the initial reductions in course content in October/November?

- The information is all on the SQA website.
- Each subject is being notified separately and different changes have been made to different subjects.

7. Parent Survey

A PowerPoint summary of the results from the Parent Council survey is included at the end of these minutes (Appendix 2). Appendix 3 includes all the individual comments provided by parents in response to the open questions.

The survey results were shared with the Senior Leadership Team on Monday 1st February in advance of the Parent Council meeting so that they could consider the contents in advance of the Parent Council Meeting.

The Parent Council Survey was available for approximately 5 days and was accessible through the Parent Council Facebook page. It was a short survey asking for feedback on issues which had already been raised by individual parents.

N Topping thanked K Gray for her technical expertise in helping to put the survey together and collect the results.

N Topping then introduced the survey advising the attendees that this has been produced due to the high numbers of parents/carers who had been contacting the PC with comments and issues regarding the lack of, structure and equity of live learning.

Nick commented that Parent Council committee members were disappointed that the school had not felt able to assist with circulating the survey to all parents through the email system as requested as this resulted in fewer parents having the opportunity to complete the survey.

- There appears to be some confusion amongst parents regarding the live sessions or lessons which were advertised on the weekly update of learning shared by the school each Friday.
 - Many parents have highlighted their preference for more video and live lessons through the survey.
 - Inconsistencies were pointed out between the provision of resources / teaching in different subjects.
 - Parents mentioned their disappointment that some of the live sessions turned out to be simply an opportunity to type in questions and have these responded to in written format by teachers.
 - Some subject teachers offered these live sessions and others offered none.
 - Is there a set framework for what constitutes a live class?
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- P Buchan explained that the school is following the Education Scotland guidelines regarding live sessions and that these have been published in weekly newsletters (each Friday).
 - Teachers at Ellon Academy have a choice about live sessions – they have been assured that there is no expectation of providing video from their homes in real time.
 - P Buchan advised that Teacher Unions have been giving guidance/advice to their members that teachers do not have to undertake live teaching. This understandably can put the SLT in an awkward position.
 - P Buchan further explained that some pupils prefer recorded lessons.
 - Pupil feedback is being gathered by the school and Q&A sessions are being monitored.
 - P Buchan explained that the teachers have been reporting that uptake of pupils attending live sessions has been very poor and for a Higher History live session, no pupils joined this class.
 - She explained that some parents may not want their child attending a live session for a number of reasons.
 - Some pupils do not have access to the internet.
 - Some pupils don't want to join in the live classes.
 - Some pupils don't comment at all during these classes.
 - Many don't talk in the live classes.
 - Many don't ask questions.
 - There is a problem with pupil apathy
 - Some live classes have never exceeded 10 pupils
 - Some are at a stage where they don't want to appear on screen.
 - The flipside is that Teachers have noticed that pupils who don't usually show they are engaged in school are fully engaged with their online learning.
 - P Buchan suggested that pupils and parents need to take more responsibility for learning and attending the live sessions provided as teachers are disappointed when attendance is low or pupils fail to interact on screen.

N Topping interjected that there are always two sides to a coin and that the parents do mostly understand that the school, teachers and support staff are facing a difficult situation.

There are clearly challenges.

P Buchan noted that she, her SLT and the Principal teachers were all very disappointed that they had not had an opportunity to contribute to the Parent Council Survey. They would have liked a survey which dug deeper into all the aspects of remote learning. There have not been many queries from parents to the school about this and more in-depth feedback would have been more helpful.

P Buchan stated that she was really disappointed that the Parent Council had only managed to receive 122 responses. She had thought that given the number of people on the PC Facebook page, at least 700 or 800 parents would have responded if they felt strongly about the issues. In her view, this was a very poor response.

The school plans to do its own survey at some point in the future to gather in depth feedback from pupils. The school will be looking to do a whole school questionnaire.

A Parent Council Committee member explained that the reason for the Parent Council survey was the feedback which had been received over a very short period of time on the Parent Council Facebook page. And that the questions asked simply reflected the topics which had been brought forward by parents. The Parent Council was looking to identify if the experiences of the parents who had interacted with us were unique to a small number of parents or if they reflected a wider experience.

Primarily, the Parent Council were asking our parents if the reality of remote learning lived up to the rhetoric as they understood it. Many of the parents contacting the Parent Council have been confused by the statements being made at National level and the expectations being set up in the press and through talking to parents of pupils at other schools. These expectations are not being met by the reality in homes around Ellon. Parents clearly want to be partners in their children's learning and some are telling us that they have identified a need for more help in supporting their children. We do know that some schools have no live lessons.

Education Scotland publications seem to support schools

The Committee member went on to say that there was a really good mix of both positive reports from parents and frustration around what is not working so well. Many parents have been reporting that they are struggling with motivating their children and helping them to engage in their learning. The lockdown situation is hard for parents because they don't usually have to become so involved in this part of their child's learning because the teachers provide this by the interactions in the classrooms. Some pupils find receiving lists of tasks to do and materials to read particularly challenging – especially those with additional support needs. It was again noted that there are some examples of really positive experiences – Modern Studies have been doing an outstanding job of providing live lessons and interesting and varied tasks. However, pupil learning experiences vary significantly and some of the tasks being set are not attractive – they can be dry and boring and without access to teacher interaction, pupils are finding it very difficult to engage.

It was disappointing that the school was not able to circulate the Parent Council survey as this could have provided the parent council and the school with feedback from a higher number of parents. This meant that some of our parents had no option to contribute to the survey which was aimed at making the experience better – to provide deeper data.

Parent Comments / Questions (mostly noted from side bar discussion)

- One parent noted that they were shocked by how few pupils were taking part in live lessons.
- One parent noted that most parents will understand these difficulties faced by teachers but thought that there would be a balance of approaches. Kids are more likely to interact if for example, breakout rooms are used to allow small group learning. It was also noted that the pre-recorded lessons from one subject had been fantastic.
- Another parent pointed out that some of the “live “ sessions have been set by teachers as “if you have any questions, then join the stream/meet” – this may cause some pupils to opt out.
- Another parent noted that they had altered a music tuition google meet in order to attend a school google meet, only to find that the live session was simply a form of web chat.
- Another parent felt that the reason for getting such a low engagement level is because the pupils are not able to get used to them with there being so few. An example was given of an S1 pupil who has only had two live sessions offered since the new year. Some pupils are reporting no live lessons.
- Agree that Modern Studies have been fabulous with their interactive lessons – these have really lifted the spirits of my young person. They are excited for the next week session.
- Agree that more live lessons being offered would perhaps bring better engagement.
- A further parent agreed that Modern Studies have as a department been exceptionally good.
- A parent noted that English pre-recorded PowerPoints are fantastic for their child.
- Another parent noted that their child had received no humanities interactive sessions.
- Another parent noted that they have found the level of teacher responsiveness to pupil queries via Google Classroom to be fantastic- very quick, thorough and helpful.
- Parents flagged that some were experiencing connectivity issues during this meeting.
- A parent noted that typing questions into the Google Meet live sessions can be really hard for those with additional support needs.
 - The school responded that this is understood
- A parent noted that in Teams there is an attendance record, and it is easy to track engagement.
 - The school is using Google Meets rather than Teams and is unaware that Google offers this same facility.
- Has there been any monitoring of the engagement during online Q&A in the google classroom chats?
 - Anecdotally by teachers. The school is tracking engagement more generally through the non-submission of assignments.
- What internal staff CPD has been offered to staff to help with their confidence in ICT?
 - Teachers are offered drop-in sessions via Google Meet with PT Digital Learning on a weekly basis and CPD is in planning for the in-service days to share good practice.
- A teacher from another school was asked by P Buchan how many live classes she teaches in a week?
 - This teacher’s school is encouraging all pupils and staff to follow their usual timetable. This means that for higher pupils where there would usually be 5 hours of pupil contact in the week, 2 or 3 of these will now be google meets and the other 2 will be the teacher available during the lesson to answer questions but pupils are set tasks to do so that she can be live to answer questions as required. Following the timetable at this school has improved engagement since the last lockdown as pupils are not turning night into day. They have responded really well to the structure of the day.
- A parent noted that the PE department have been great with their live lessons – these have been good at drawing the young people out of their shells and speaking in front of one another.
- Another parent agreed that PE was highly rated by their child too.
- A parent noted that they were aware of some parents who were not aware of the Parent Council survey.
- Another parent pointed out that Facebook Reach on average is around 10-12% of a page audience, until people like and share and then their algorithm pushes it out more.
- Another parent stated that with the best will in the world, Facebook will not reach everyone, even those on the group and that it is likely that some of the members of the group will no

longer be parents of pupils at the school. We do our best to encourage parents to let us know when their children leave and we remove parents when we know this is their situation. There will also be cases where two parents from one family will both be linked to the page but only one may reply.

8. Six questions were raised with the school prior to the Parent Council Meeting. These are listed in appendix 3.

Questions/ Points raised by parents:

- Regarding the question about lack of pupil opportunities for pupil interactions to support their learning, it is important to note that not all children are on social media. Those who are under thirteen years of age should not be using social media. Since the check-in emails are from staff and not peers, this does not enable peer learning.
- Could Guidance do weekly meet and greets, a quiz or something like this?

9. Subject Choices

N Topping noted that the Parent Council have received some queries regarding third year pupils needing to choose subject for S4 before they have their S3 reports.

G Cowie explained that dates for choices have been pulled forward due to the pressure expected to create new timetables for possible blended return to school. It is known that final decisions on the initial pupil returns will not be until 16th February. After this, it is expected that there will be pressure to create more timetables for more pupils returning so many schools have brought forward subject choice dates to provide space for the additional workload which schools will need to deal with. Therefore dates for reports are out of synch.

What has the school done to help to sort the issues caused by this?

Each teacher will provide recommendations for levels of presentation for SQA awards so that pupils will know what level is appropriate for them for each subject.

So far, although there are some difficult conversations, PT Guidance are working hard to support pupils and parents. When there have been any problems with columns etc., the pupils have been great and understanding and some creative and innovative solutions are being found.

Google Choices forms are circulated to appropriate year groups in turn and there will be sessions led by PT Guidance to help pupils and parents through this process.

There was an issue highlighted to Parent Council very recently regarding a typing error on the remote learning schedule which is sent to parents on a Friday involving the time for one of the choices meetings which meant that some pupils and parents missed this – what can the school do to help?

The PT Guidance is the first contact for all queries to do with subject choices. Parents can contact them directly by email with any questions they have.

Further Comments/ Questions from Parents

Parents are waiting for information on levels for s2 pupils – this was raised at the Google Meet.

P Buchan responded that s3 moving to s4 will receive this information first as their choice forms have to be submitted first. S2 into s3 will be next (this information may have been sent out today).

G Cowie then clarified that PTGs have this information for S2s however it is the BGE so whatever learners choose, there will be differentiation of levels to help individual pupils to best realise their potential. Science has been in some discussion as L3 and L4 will appear on the form. G Cowie is happy to offer further information on this but PTGs will feedback once s2 have done their practice form.

Comment made regarding 40 pupils attending one Google Meet resulting in children not feeling encouraged to engage / contribute.

10. Support Queries

Is there a plan for supporting our leavers this year at this important transition time in their lives?

No plan has been considered yet.

The formatting of the Friday Remote Learning Schedule makes it difficult to read – can anything be done to alter this to make it more accessible to parents?

The school realised that there was a formatting error with the s1-13 schedule and work was completed by office staff to resolve the issue. Specifically the fault includes producing very small print despite a relatively large font being used on the document. Parents reported using magnifying glasses to allow them to access the document!

Unfortunately, the formatting error appears to have reappeared. Attempts will be made to resolve this again.

E-sgoil is offering 1:1 tutoring for pupils under certain circumstances – are Ellon pupils able to use this facility?

Yes – they have to be identified to meet certain criteria to be accepted onto this scheme. There are some Ellon Academy pupils who are accessing these.

Do Ellon Academy Pupils have access to the West Platform which is mentioned on the Education Scotland reference document?

Yes. Initially Aberdeenshire Council had not signed up to this facility but they have now. Access is through GLOW.

A parent asked if an Agenda is sent out prior to the meeting as it had not been received on this occasion.

N Topping confirmed that the agenda is published on the Parent Council Facebook page but that this can be sent out by email to parents who acknowledge an interest in attending these meetings.

11. Next Meeting

3rd March Agreed for next meeting

12. AOCB

The school staff and senior leadership team were thanked for their ongoing hard work in challenging and ever changing circumstances.

Appendix 1

Ellon Academy remains committed to ensuring the wellbeing of all young people during this challenging period of lockdown and beyond. At the beginning of January, a range of pupil needs and support structures were identified to support the individual circumstances of young people and their families. This has included the offer of on-site provision for vulnerable young people and the children of Key Workers. This provision is currently staffed voluntarily by a fantastic group of teaching staff who have been working exceptionally hard to offer worthwhile input and care each day. To compliment this, Guidance Teams, ASfL Teams, House Deputes, Pupil Support Workers, Pupil Support Assistants, Community Learning Development staff and our PT Pupil Equity deliver weekly check-ins to over 150 young people in a variety of ways dependent on need. Results of these are tracked weekly to ensure that the wellbeing of this enhanced group of check-ins is accounted for each week.

To further our commitment to the wellbeing of young people at Ellon Academy, registration teachers have been posting a 'wellbeing survey' each Friday to their registration Google Classrooms. This is a fantastic opportunity for young people to reflect on their week of home learning. I would encourage families, if appropriate, to discuss the implications of these wellbeing ratings each week and I attach the stimulus for the questionnaire to this post. It is vital that we continue to engage young people in these conversations and your help in doing so is greatly appreciated. The SHANARRI Wheel is a Scottish Government initiative which your children should be familiar with through their usual PSE lessons with their respective Guidance Teacher. The survey asks pupils to rate their week with respect to each section of the wheel from 'Great' through to 'Awful'. Last week, we received 813 responses which was a great start. These results are analysed each week by House Teams and used to track wider-school trends of wellbeing. Already, we are looking at further ways to target groups of young people who may be finding the current situation a struggle.

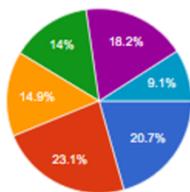
I hope this brief synopsis gives an indication of the vast amount of work that is currently being done to support the wellbeing of young people at Ellon Academy and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support. Please continue to contact your child's Guidance Teacher in the first instance with any concerns or queries as they arise.

Appendix 2



Year group of child

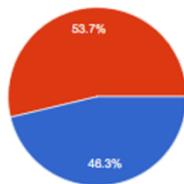
121 responses



● S1
● S2
● S3
● S4
● S5
● S6

Has your child experienced a live class?

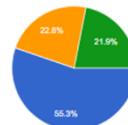
121 responses



● Yes
● No

What do you think about the quantity of live classes

114 responses



● I would like more
● I think there are too many
● It's about right for my family
● I don't know

What do you think about the quantity of pre-recorded video lessons?

116 responses



● I would like more
● I think there are too many
● It's about right for my family
● I don't know

Do you have sufficient broadband width to facilitate live classes?

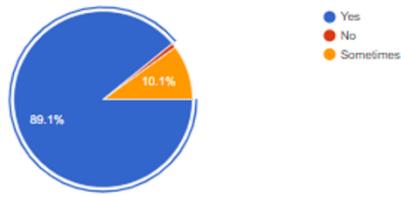
119 responses



● Always
● Usually
● Sometimes
● Never

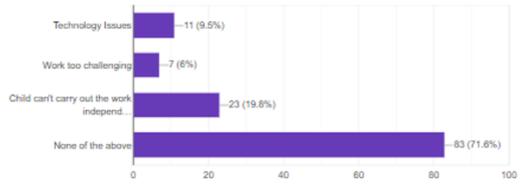
Are the online tasks accessible to your child?

119 responses



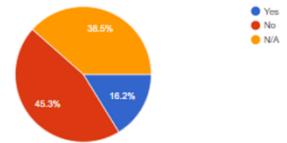
Any issues with accessibility?

116 responses



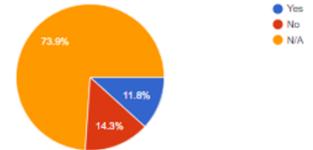
Do you have any specific challenges regarding additional support needs?

117 responses



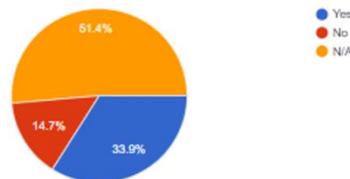
Have you contacted the school about this?

119 responses



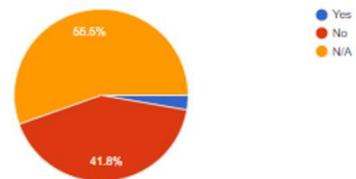
Senior pupils - Do you have any concerns regarding SQA work?

109 responses



Have you contacted the school regarding the SQA issues?

110 responses



THANK

YOU



Appendix 3

Any comments on live/pre-recorded lessons?

The teachers are doing a fantastic job of creating these lessons. I can appreciate how difficult it must be to create them and also the time involved for each class that they are involved with. A big thank you from our household.

Live teaching would be more helpful for learning

The longer the school closure continues, the more important live classes will become. Children need to be taught new material, not left to work it out by themselves. Other state schools manage this very well.

My son has had only one pre recorded lesson to date. Little to comment on.

Never experienced them

Should be like a class, not just optional for questions

Having only had one live meet which was about subject choice, I am very disappointed. I am very appreciative of the audio recordings attaching to work from Art, English and french, this is very helpful and helps my son work more independently. As a teacher in a secondary school in Aberdeen City I really find it difficult to understand why this platform is not more readily available to pupils. As you know, however able the pupil, it is not the same working at home. Live meets or recorded input from teachers promotes independent learning, engagement and improves attainment. The live meet my son attended this week is the only interaction he has had from a member of staff both this lockdown and the last. As a family, we realise how fortunate we are that his mum is a teacher, although I am sure he does not feel the same at times!

There have been no pre-recorded lessons for my son. Some slides have audio which have been great if not basic. There has been little to no 'teaching' just the pushing out of other people's youtube videos & written instructions.

We haven't had any

Can't get them to play or they play with no sound. Waste lots of time trying to get them to work.

Could they be recorded to allow access after?

Child has had no live video meets as yet. There was an Q&A on the stream but this was poorly attended & not what was expected - child was really upset when teacher said live was 'typing on the stream' she was looking forward to interacting/seeing peers/teacher.

The only live lesson my son has had is with his guidance teacher who was speaking through the class choices for next year with them. This however was with 2 classes at once. There has been one pre recorded lesson which was good and beneficial. The only other live lesson was merely the teacher available to answer questions in real time rather than my son waiting for several hours to have a question answered (this should not be badged as a live lesson).

We have not had either a live or recorded lesson so far

Pre-recorded: good idea as can be accessed at anytime, and referred back to if required.

Live: my son is reluctant to participate in these sessions! Any queries he has, he'll message via Google Classroom. It would be good if the whole class could be encouraged to have an informal session just for that face to face contact, rather than a "if you have any questions" session which is seen as optional.

They are more of a question and answer session rather than a lesson

Very useful and have been deemed very useful in the one subject my S3 has had

Very difficult for staff with their own young children and/ or poor broadband in rural areas to produce these during normal working hours.

Child very focussed and helps understand new concepts

Pre-recorded lessons have been of a high standard & are very useful for pupils to rewind & rewatch areas they might have missed first time. Good quality teaching is what is important not whether it is live or not.

Not very many

All have been great and the teachers are doing a fantastic job

I think there should be live lessons everyday

Good content with live pre - recorded but would like to see zoom class like other schools

I think The Maths Dept will start on these, so not sure yet what form/duration these will be.

Really helpful also keep them motivated. It is nice for them to see the teachers

Good for the child to have the connection with teacher.

Only had one that was abandoned due to lack of numbers. Just a general short chat but that in itself is good

As we haven't had any to actually get some would be good.

Having the live lesson made my child a lot more engaged in the subject and made them more willing to learn.

It would be great to have more but it's difficult to spread them out over the week.

My son finds it easier to listen to teacher explain rather than reading the task

On speaking with our son he has advised that he hasn't had any live or pre-recorded lessons. We feel there has been a complete lack of live and pre recorded lessons with teachers only making themselves available to answer questions in real time.

Live classes aren't what we thought they would be

Daughter hasn't had any pre-recorded lessons and only one live class (which was just going over previous week's work). More than happy for them to be pre-recorded as know not all teachers will want to go live, but do feel teaching new topics would benefit from some sort of video.

My son has not had any live classes yet but would certainly benefit from them. He has persisted and said he would prefer a live or recorded class a time least the work would be explained to them and make the homework easier to do

When we are at work my children won't go on

Haven't had any

Pre recorded is better than live! In terms of live lessons - it wouldn't be equitable if not everyone has access to attend live lessons!

So far the prerecorded ones have all been from other schools. The live ones seem to be Q &As rather than a class per say, they have a place but perhaps some short live or recorded sessions to explain key concepts would be good. Notice there is a very low uptake of pupils in live classes which is very worrying. At the moment I'm moving meetings to facilitate enough wifi width for a live class, if we had more notice I could blank out this time in my diary. Could there also be a back up recording if there is actual teaching in case the wifi goes down totally which is a regular occurrence for us.

Something the kids can interact with

My son understand the work after watching a video explains the task

Both live learning sessions and pre- recorded lessons are really helpful in engaging my child in their learning and motivating them to keep going. Some faculties (English, Modern Studies and Modern Languages) have provided good quality sessions and are obviously working very hard behind the scenes to keep learning going. Unfortunately, some faculties have provided very little to help my child with their learning.

The pre recorded slides are good because not all people learn from reading, many people learn from listening and reflecting. It helps understanding as well as engagement as the teacher explains things as they go.

Pre recorded are good because you can go over them until it sinks in

Adequate

My child would greatly benefit from a live/prerecorded class especially as one of his subjects is maths.

English done an excellent job.

'Live' text chats not really cutting it for Nat 5 Physics.

Haven't had any

Pre-recorded: good idea as can be accessed at anytime, and referred back to if required.

Live: my son has attended the PSE subject choice session but is reluctant to participate in other sessions. Any queries he has, he'll message via Google Classroom. It would be good if the whole class could be encouraged to have an informal session just for that face to face contact, rather than a "if you have any questions" session which is seen as optional.

No

Really helpful especially at this year group. Wish there were more to explain the work. Power-points are difficult to go through and understand on their own also very time consuming

A mix is good, and a live class needs a pre-recorded back up of the same content (if possible)

Depends what you mean by "live". A better term may be "interactive". My son has two types:

- Q&A session where the students typed questions and the teacher spoke the answers, live.

- instant feedback by written comments on "live" lesson work.

Both worked well but not what I would consider "live" teaching.

He's only had one pre-recorded - nice for a change but would have been better if done live.

Either is fine, but an occasional live teach through would be nice just so kids don't feel so isolated.

That said, I have been offering this as a teacher and virtually no pupils attend. That actually wastes time I could be spending marking and preparing lessons that can be accessed by all at any time.

Recorded lessons are more useful. Live lessons perhaps only offer that sense of inclusion as a benefit.

Harry has enjoyed the 2 x science live sessions and the pre-recorded lessons work well as we can go through them together.

Would like them recorded.

Don't class typed questions/answers on a comments thread as live without audio or video or shared resources/screen.

The content is fine

Pre-recorded would suit us just fine as there's a few of us sharing different devices for different purposes and sometimes timings of live lessons just wouldn't be convenient. My child benefits from being able to go back and re-watch a recording at different times too.

They are good to explain what they have to do

I think my son would benefit from live class. Seeing his peers would help with mental health.

I think live lessons and pre-recorded lessons are crucial to help maintain learning, consolidate past knowledge and help introduce new concepts.

Been a great help. Even knowing a teacher is available for an hour to answer questions online has helped a lot.

Never had pre recorded only live

There haven't been any live lessons - science offered 'live lesson' but it was an online typed question and answer session

a quick 5 min explanation of tasks would be a huge help.

Think the kids need contact with their teachers. My child has only experienced 1 live class but made a huge difference as he is doing a crash higher and the teacher went over a topic as if in class and

explained the Nat 5 work which was also required. So much easier than by messaging especially as there were a few in the class confused.

The "live" lesson was a waste of time and a very poor effort from the school/teachers

We need much more of these to engage and allow the children to learn.

We don't seem to be having any

How are you and your family coping with home schooling generally?

Ok

Ok

Fine

Well

There's no denying it's tough but we are getting there. Knowing that there is so much support available from academy staff, if required, is reassuring.

Coping but frustrated

Not well at all. My own workload has increased substantially so little time to support child.

Well. Although I think it is isolating for the child when working through their tasks alone with no class / teacher input

Generally it is getting done well but I have reservations as to how much my son is taking in and actually learning.

Following timetable, focus mainly on "core" subjects, keeping on top of others as and when suits ability or personal interest .

Generally good

Its not easy

Not great. Very stressful and usually just try getting the kids outside instead

OK.

Reasonably well. I am working from home one day a week and we prioritise the more challenging work.

Very well but only because i am a teacher & can support in terms of ict & explaining google classroom, accessing docs.

It has been very frustrating at how little some (not all) depts have done to aid accessibility of materials. More are now attaching docs/slides etc while others make no effort to provide google accessible materials & insist on microsoft despite the school choosing google as the online platform.

Difficulty in motivating child!!!

Coping well. My son needs some support with work being S2 but he is managing the work.

Has to be done so just getting on with it. We use the private comments if we need help and teachers are usually quick at getting back. Some take longer understandably with work loads, but they do reply eventually.

Very stressful and often argue

Very well as a whole. All tasks are being completed. Some dept are very supportive, provide audio in slides, clearly send google docs, slides, quizzes, respond quickly to queries etc. Others not so much or not at all. The difference in basic gc skills between depts/teachers is shocking.

Find it hard to keep child motivated and engaged when so much uncertainty surrounding Highers

We are coping well and structuring the home schooling well with a good mix of differing start times, finish times, exercise daily along with good family time.

We are doing what we can, parents are working and we are trying our best.

At present, all seems manageable.

I don't feel that there is enough work or direct feedback in some subjects leading to a lack of motivation

Generally coping well. S3 does feel that some subjects are setting work that requires more time than would be spent in those subjects during the normal school week.

Some days are better than others.

Fine apart from poor broadband connectivity - now have to pay for an additional 4g router and data so all family members can work from home and do home learning at the same time.

Generally well

Children in different years results in many arguments about who uses what technology to access learning.

Motivation is incredibly difficult.

Very well overall. Tasks come in on a Monday (except for 1 subject) & my daughter works out an order to complete them in. She starts her work about 10:30 & finishes about 5pm. We walk & discuss learning daily. Usually she takes most of Friday off as tasks are complete. We feel we have struck a good balance.

Poor inconsistent quality of work given and also support given real concern on Physics and children's future

Whilst we appreciate it is exceptionally difficult for teachers at the moment too, it does feel that some of the work coming through home learning is for the sake of having work to do, rather than being directly related to what's actually needed for the subject. It still needs to be made clear urgently what and how senior pupils are going to be assessed on.

Challenging by times especially to keep them motivated

Very stressful between working full time and supporting 2 children both of whom require lots of help.

We would very much like more interactive teaching.

Varies from day to day. Some days are very hard to get child to do the work especially if they find the work too challenging.

My academy child isn't the issue thank Jesus she is finding all of this ok. Because the primary ones I can just about bluff my way through.

Ok. Challenging at times with one keyworker, one parent working from home and 2 kids on laptops. It's challenging at times to get both children engaged while we are both working. It is difficult to help them if they need it. My S2 does not ask for help either!

We are coping well in general and our boys are completing the work that is being provided by the teachers.

Would be better with some live lessons as self directed study is difficult for new topics and if struggle can be demotivating

Coping well.

Not bad.. some days are more stressful than others .

Really struggling. Its very hard to motivate my child , especially when I have my own job to do too Its very difficult when working full days to make sure work gets done. It's stressful for everyone but needed to keep everyone safe.

We are coping ok with home learning however, I was under the impression all work had a Friday hand in date so it was easier to organise the week but now this is all changing with different dates and days, some teachers are even giving work out for the beginning of the week and then again for the end. These times are difficult enough and without any online/recorded lessons/classes this can be a struggle with more difficult subjects ie. to have additional work added on top of work given that week. Surely one set of work from each teacher would be sufficient ?

Finding it difficult to get my child to fully engage with his learning.

My S4 is completing all his work but just the essentials. My S3 is struggling to manage his workload when we are at work.

Generally ok. Lot of questions been put to teachers but usually answered

It's manageable - no issues

In general we are coping but Wifi is a major concern, balancing the needs of two working from home, one doing Uni classes from home and one homeschooler on rural 4G as we can't get broadband is challenging and that despite paying for a second account. I am still regularly running my work meetings on my phone if they can't be moved to accommodate school and Uni classes. More advance notice ie class every week at same time would be helpful so I can block the time out in my work diary.

S6 child/young adult is working well independently, not a huge amount of work to do but enough to keep him engaged, also home schooling 2 primary age children which is challenging in a different way. S6 is helping out with this while parents both work. Generally we are doing well, it's not an ideal situation obviously but we are getting on with it.

Difficult as both parents working from home and also have a primary school child who needs help too.

Fine

Kids are trying their best, me and husband both work full time so makes it difficult to help when the kids are stuck.

Doing as well as can be expected .. some days better than others

Managing but with me sitting beside he all day explaining what needs to be done and joe like a teacher can't work independently

It is difficult and my child feels that motivation is a huge issue. Not having peers to share the learning with is eroding confidence. This year has been full of challenges and constant change. Many hours are being spent plodding through the many tasks in the week and this includes evenings and weekends. Feeling my child is not getting a break this time- so much pressure due to impending SQA assessments (however this will be done).

Whole family working from home means a lot of juggling of needs.

S1 gets a bit anxious around it as finds it difficult to focus and wants back to school. S3 cannot sit at peace and focus on the laptop, his concentration can wane at school but at home it's non existent. I don't think his teachers will understand. It just looks like he can't be bothered. Discipline is not effective as behaviour isn't the issue.

Ok going as well as it can

Stressful at times, as work can be confusing and child not given adequate teaching to complete work

Can be challenging juggling home learning with own jobs

With my child being S6 they are just getting on with learning as best they can. I do think 5e learning has suffered as they are being left to research and answer by themselves. Sending questions to a teacher and getting written replies is not the same as a recorded/live lesson.

On the whole ok everyone working at home

An absolute nightmare

Struggling with motivation and low mood

It's very chaotic, managing best we can. Can't fit in all work

At present all is fine. Feel lucky that all of us (1 working from home, 1 home from Uni, 2 at the Academy, and me!) have laptop access and available space to do carry out work/studies and can provide each other with support when necessary.

Challenging to keep motivated. Also difficult to help child with understanding the work

It is very challenging though I prefer it to the anxiety caused by risk of covid transmission via school.

Generally ok.

All good. Girls thankfully are very conscientious and are working hard.

Fine but sometimes seems like a lot of work (my child's answer).

Motivation along with multiple children at different stages and still working nightshift is a big issue.

Both children managing work well and work independently.

We are doing our best considering the circumstances

Ok. It is difficult to balance with my own job and husband working offshore and a younger child who needs more support.

We are getting better. We set targets each morning depending on my own workload and what I know Harry can achieve. He is generally enjoying the tasks and we are keeping up with the submission deadlines.

Ok generally. Many lows but highs too.

Both children managing well, working independently.

Ok apart from the worry of how the higher results will go

In general things are going well, my child was given maths tasks to complete last week and this was topics which been covered when she'd been absent for a few days last term and so she struggled a bit with that. She is dyslexic and doesn't always know what to say to/ask her teacher when she needs help so it's about me being aware of when she is struggling a little. She tends to be very engaged in most areas of the curriculum though!

Trying to get the child to engage in the work some days is hard

Well

Hard going. Especially as it's very task oriented from each class. My son is struggling to find the motivation as the weeks are passing by.

We are all coping okay but I am worried that the lack of face to face teaching is having a detrimental effect of the quality of the learning. My child is having to read a selection of powerpoints and effectively teach themselves new and complex Higher level concepts. We are hoping that the increase of live lessons and/or pre-recorded lessons will help bridge the gap to some extent.

Very well

Getting on well but being out of any village/town means internet service is poor and things can struggle to load or for us to upload work can take a while.

Relatively well however with working from home and children doing home learning there is a strain on time and devices.

It's a juggling act trying to keep the motivation going.

It is challenging with two children and both parents also working.

Alright

Ok on days when child stays on task, trying not to turn the other days into a battle, I'm more stressed about them missing work than they are, hoping this doesn't last beyond Feb mid-term the amount of screen time is too much. some face to face interaction with teachers is needed to answer questions and get more detailed explanations of the work set and how to complete.

We are managing but behavioural issues are making it harder.

Generally coping well but we have 2 capable pupils who are able to work independently. Whilst coping there is concern that all curriculums are not being covered and how evidence for sqa will be gathered the longer they are out of school.

It is not working, Ellon Academy is clearly behind other schools. The kids should not be just given piles of work to read and learn by themselves. They need to be TAUGHT. Not just live lessons but pre-recorded videos could work. Very poor effort from the school. A few minority of teachers are putting in the effort but it should be consistent across all subjects. It should not be a teacher lottery. There are no excuses with technology available today.

The juggle of home working and home schooling is never one that can be easily reconciled.

Any other comments on what is going well or not so well with remote learning?

Our son finds the motivation to get through all of his work, difficult but that is something we support him with. This is true of his management of the week as most things come in on Monday morning and it is quite overwhelming for him (and us). He is also missing the interaction with his friends and teachers.

The work is fantastic though so a huge thank you to all staff that prepare and plan it for the children.

Compared to other schools live lessons are lacking. Teachers are responsive

Main issue is lack of live classes. Teachers need to try and will see it is easier than anticipated and very rewarding (speaking from own experience).

I worry that there is no social / face-to-face time. Could reg class be more than checking a box?

Perhaps a 15min Google Meet. So pupils are communicating face to face with peers and teacher.

Teachers feedback is timely and information accessible but not ideal constantly sitting at a screen all day. It's a case of getting it done and meeting the deadlines rather than enjoying and meaningful learning.

I think more videos or live sessions would be beneficial to pupils, don't think subject matter is absorbed in same way without teacher interaction.

Going well: guidance teacher been very attentive and well reachable. Not well: like should be at school and people should fight harder to get them back in class

I am pleased to see a bit more variation in the work/activities set - less 'create a presentation/research this topic'.

I would like to see more interaction with staff - live or recorded meets. In my school every subject teacher is must offer at least one meet per week in the BGE if they see the class more than twice a week. This increases in senior phase. Engagement is high.

Recorded meets or audio where live meets cannot be offered, particularly when new topics are introduced.

Go in well

1. Some depts have progressed - e.g. english, humanities - volume of work is better
2. Audio embedded in slides
3. Live meet - physically seeing teacher
4. Live video discussion - interaction with peers
5. Feedback is quicker

Needs improvement

1. Thinking live lesson is being 'available on the stream' - not acceptable. More reading/writing for child to do, no audio, no interaction with peers, totally disengaging
2. No prerecorded videos from own teacher. Pupils want taught from staff they know & are familiar with. Not watching a random youtuber.
3. General lack of teaching. Plenty of tasks/work but this is not 'teaching'.

4. Some depts are not even marking. Appreciate kids doing their own has a place but only to a point. When they are swamped with so much work then this is very disengaging.

5. Volume of work is excessive in comparison to other subjects at same level.

Hate it and worry constantly about his exam results

Generally work is set up well online in google classroom and both my children are coping well with online learning. My S5 has great support from her teachers and my S2 is the same but i feel he would benefit from online classes. He has had none so far. We are computer literate and can support our children daily with the work. Projects that are to be completed with materials from home are a bit challenging with regards to finding materials to use that are suitable. Also the time scales given to complete the project ie. 1 hour per week are not realistic. Also we had school work set on friday to be completed by sunday. This is not acceptable, the children and parents need the weekend off. Overall we feel the school and teachers are doing a great job teaching in a totally new way

Just think the kids miss seeing their friends and teachers. A wee hello video/ or explaining work for the week, once a week would be nice.

Lots of printing required which takes time. If work could be ALL uploaded Friday evening parents have a chance to view, prepare. A lot of time is spent Monday morning planning work.

Goin well

1. Some depts have progressed - e.g. english, humanities - volume of work is better
2. Audio embedded in slides
3. Live meet - physically seeing teacher
4. Live video discussion - interaction with peers
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3. General lack of teaching. Plenty of tasks/work but this is not 'teaching'.
4. Some depts are not even marking. Appreciate kids doing their own has a place but only to a point. When they are swamped with so much work then this is very disengaging.
5. Volume of work is excessive in comparison to other subjects at same level.
6. Whole school gc cpd is required even if just to cover the basics - ensuring tasks are posted correctly, decluttering the stream with classwork posts (esp if teacher wants to use stream for discussion', when returning tasks ensuring it doesn't reactivate on kids 'to do list' unless they want it corrected & resubmitted - causes issues as parent then seein it on GG as incomplete/missed I have already submitted some comments regarding this for my son who is in S5 but just to reiterate I firmly believe there is a complete lack of live lessons.

In one of my sons PE lessons he was told to make contact with his class project group to complete a presentation that they would be marked on. No contact details were provided with the teacher just

saying to make contact via snap chat or some other social media format. This should be getting completed once school is back and not during home schooling.

Our children need a mix of live lessons, live peer group sessions and tasks to work on by themselves. As it stands they are only really getting tasks to work on by themselves and this is not home schooling.

It is very difficult to support practical lessons when working from home. We are trying to submit work at weekends despite the work being classed as overdue or missing e.g home economics, technical

On the whole, systems in place this lockdown (eg registration and Google Classroom/Guardian) are working well for us, and work is more likely to be completed than during the previous lockdown.

Teachers frequently posting work with answers on it

Not been able to access live videos on any other devices other than a laptop.

S1 and S2 workload is more realistic this time around (too much last time). Morning registration has helped with routine. Google Guardian has been helpful.

This is the second lockdown, I would have liked the school to look at how higher education has continued, with it being entirely online and used more pre recorded lessons and drop in question sessions.

Better family interaction & discussion about learning. Lots of non-measurable skills (eg organisation, planning) being developed too.

The support from the school is very good

Mostly ok, but with some issues

Modern studies / PE and English well supported and doing a good job

Because of the lack of clarity over SQA work, the situation is still very stressful. Pupils don't know what end game they are facing, which makes it very difficult to balance learning with revision. It would have been good for the SQA and schools to work on scenario planning, with several different options for assessment/blocks/assessed work, to tie in with the length of lockdown. We feel this is something that could have been worked on well before now.

We have broadband issues with 2 academy kids and one parent working from home sometimes but generally things are working ok so far. ASN fantastic and really helpful and supportive.

Files often need reformatted, would prefer all work to be uploaded on a Friday night to allow parents time to look through and plan ahead especially as children sharing laptop. Although most uploaded Monday morning a few other classes upload during the week with deadlines of just a couple of days. Having to take time out of own work on a Monday morning to help organise and plan

I personally think the school are doing a great job . However I think we all underestimate the good the interaction with other kids does them. Not just friends but peers. I've seen it with my small Two and asked the primary Head if he would leave the kids to just freestyle for ten mins at the end of each meeting and they have a ball. It really just helps them know they're not alone.

No

My biggest issue is that under the Scottish governments remote learning guidelines it states that young learners are entitled to live lessons which they have not had to date. I think both pre recorded and live lessons are essential as at present they are not being taught. Handing out work and saying get in touch if you have any issues is not teaching. I fully understand the difficulties around this issue but when I am hearing about friends children, at other schools having both zoom & Microsoft team lessons with teachers scheduled virtually every day I find it hard to understand why Ellon Academy is not providing something similar.

In relation to SQA concerns we are in the same situation as everyone else in that the SQA are still to issue guidance on what is happening with National 5 assessments.

Both my sons have dyslexia therefore we have to provide the support they need, the school is aware however and have asked us just to get in touch as needed which is all that we can ask for. However live lessons I believe would be beneficial for their learning.

Anna enjoys the recorded messages and contact from her teachers. Technical issues with downloading work and photos.

More live interaction with teachers be appreciated

Motivation to get my child out of bed 😞

Thanks for the work you all do!

See previous answer.

A positive is this time round most teachers are using the google classroom front page to add a hand in date which makes it clearer to the kids.

Kids are adapting slightly better to the system this time round and how to hand in work.

Negative - I thought google guardian would give us weekly feedback on the homework marking and where our kids need extra help but it just rehashes what is put on google classroom to the kids with regards to what work they're given that week or the next week with no feedback or marking for adults to read

Think more recorded instructions would be helpful and may cut down number of questions needing to be sent

I don't feel there is sufficient work for the senior pupils over a week and have major concerns over how they will be assessed as this year is vital for my S6s future.

Not enough interaction from teachers

Seems to be an overload of tasks especially if you have a child who has learning difficulties and becomes overwhelmed with large volumes of tasks. At least children are getting some online learning and there are more live lessons

Positive .. The flexibility of being able to do the work anytime is welcome, working towards the Friday deadline ... negative ... not always given feedback on work submitted

Some teachers respond really good others really bad response

Positives are: all faculties are sending out work this time, Google Meet is working really well for music tuition, registration helps in getting child up in the morning

Negatives are: really worried about SQA assessments and finishing courses in time, hardly any live sessions means we are not making enough of the positive relationships between pupils and teachers to encourage learning, child is really missing interaction with classmates, lack of interaction in registration is missing an opportunity to encourage pupils and teachers to interact in a meaningful way.

Loving the pre-recorded lessons and teacher feedback. The amount of work is quite a lot for S3 I think. I'm worried about how they are going to catch up if they fall behind.

Some subjects are giving out lots more work than others

Should run the school classes like a normal school day but virtually. Work is handed out for your child to complete without any formal class teaching, advised always look online for information, ideas and guidance. Meets so far have been optional and do not give teaching only support if required to do the work issued. Private schools are running there home schooling like being in a classroom but virtually and also a number of public schools are carrying out several actual teaching classes throughout each day. I feel as this is not available therefore a downfall with the current process at the school.

Lack of teaching due to no recorded/live lessons. Our kids are trying to teach themselves. Even the feedback they receive is written comments on work, they could do with some interactive feedback especially if they have struggled with the topic due to lack of teacher input through no live/recorded lessons. This is a final school year and grades matter more now than ever - it is a stressful time for our students.

Some factualities are doing better than others. English very good, health and food great communication feed back within an hour maths not so good expects them to mark their own work would appreciate live lessons for this or at least a recorded video from the teacher like English Total lack of motivation for school work.

Parents of S2s have had no parents evening or chance to talk to teachers (other than a guidance meeting) since starting S1. Feel completely disengaged from their entire academy experience. Two academy kids and one parent working from home we have issues with broadband sometimes but generally the kids are coping. More information on assessments so the kids know what they are working for/towards.

Teachers are putting in a huge amount of work which is very much appreciated and it is very clear that they are doing their best. In an ideal situation, I think that live lessons or pre recorded lessons would be very helpful for my child. Reading instructions from a script and completing worksheets or questions is ok but some face to face interaction and opportunities to ask direct questions would be helpful. Thank you for the opportunity to give feedback and for the continued support.

Motivation can dwindle if work handed in is not marked within a reasonable timeframe. Thankfully, though, this lockdown my son is completely all tasks set.

I am having to spend up to 3 hours a day guiding my child on prioritising and goal-setting as well as monitoring that he is still focused. This is on top of my full-time job as a university lecturer and I am at breaking point. The school could help a bit by making it clearer what is ESSENTIAL work for Highers assessment and in the weekly pdf of next week's learning having a page break between faculties. Most faculties are just putting 'all resources are in google classroom' which isn't very helpful. Google Guardian has not worked very consistently, but there was no clear reason for this when I contacted tech support.

Not enough work, daughter generally finished all work for the week by Wednesday. Getting emails saying she hasn't registered or submitted homework when she has.

Sometimes can waste far too much time trying to work out how to access and edit files, in different formats, programmes and applications.

On the whole it's going well though - luckily my son is motivated and has friends doing same subjects and they help each other out.

I think more live with teachers would help keep pupils more interested, motivated and accountable. Not a lot of explanation from teachers

The work provided is well explained, manageable in volume and varied. Well done to the teachers involved.

Just trying to maintain focus for Harry is tricky at the best of time, but I am impressed with the personal feedback he is receiving from teachers for submitted work, it gives him great encouragement, thank you all

No differentiation in lessons. Too much work. Limited or no feedback from certain subjects. (maths) No live and limited recorded lessons. Well done the English department.

Too many written tasks from practical subjects eg Drama

Technology issues cause increased time for completion.

Live lessons would allow for class interaction too.

I wonder if there could be some clarity with regards to the payments we have made for practical subjects, Home Economics in particular. My daughter missed out on a few practical lessons last

term due to staff absences and exams being on during her HE periods and both at the beginning of her 2nd year when the timetables changed, and since Christmas, we have obviously been in lockdown yet there was/is still an expectation that our children should partake in cooking, therefore I feel we are having to pay twice as we are obviously not being supplied with ingredients, equipment etc at home to facilitate this. We are in a position where we can manage this but there will be children and families who can't afford it.

Finally I would just like to thank everyone, staff and parent council for all that you are doing, these situations we find ourselves in are not easy but I do think everyone's doing a great job.

My son needs reminders and constant prompting to go look back at the tasks he has done for feedback. He gets stressed if there's an issue with the wifi as is worried about emails coming saying he hasn't completed work. For his first year in academy I can imagine this is daunting.

Keep up the good work!

Most teachers supply replies back to any private comments but there are a few who have not replied at all which is disappointing and though work then handed in, frustrating when they comment something incorrect that child asked about and they didn't respond (plenty time given and not left until last minute)

S3 to S4 subject choices are not easy with so little teaching.

Pre-recorded lessons have helped with understanding of work

The lack of live sessions isn't helping. The bonus is that there is something to be done.

If they are given work & past papers that they haven't covered before think that the teachers should be given feedback/corrections on papers rather than just the marks

Not got time to keep checking they are doing their work as we're both working full time at home, motivation an issue some days so doesn't stay focussed for long on those days, child misses the teaching and classroom discussions on work set

The weekly summary is hard to read, the lists on missed and required work is excellent and incredibly helpful.

It is not working for most subjects.

Much better this time around but more direct engagement from teachers is required.

I don't think there is enough interaction with the teachers and I really worry about exam results for my S4 and subject choices for my S2.

I'm concerned that we are not getting enough work. My s1 could complete all work in a day if he wanted. The one live class he had was a test and involved no teaching and not had any more and he doesn't seem to be getting any recorded content. I feel we aren't getting enough work or teaching. I would not be happy if home learning is going to be lasting for a while and this is the level we are going to get.

Appendix 4

1. There is some worry by parents around lack of contact and interaction amongst pupils. What can the school do to help with this? The Education Scotland guidance states that all children and young people are entitled to regular opportunities for engagement with other pupils to support learning, as well as informal engagement. Are there plans to expand the live sessions to fulfil this entitlement? Or maybe this is going to be done in another way? **Many pupils are using social media platforms to meet face to face and discuss their learning and social things. There is a safe forum for doing this on google classroom but they are not using it. IT doesn't have to be teacher led. We have check-ins for the most vulnerable who need it most.**

2. Parents are receiving emails regarding missed work by their children but these contain no information about the subject. For younger pupils where there are multiple subjects, looking at Google Classroom does not make it obvious what is missing. Can more information be provided to parents in these emails? **Google Guardian daily and weekly summaries show clearly with has still to be done, also when pupils are in Google Classroom, they can clearly see their 'To Do' list with information regarding each subject and what needs to be done. Lots of requests coming in to PTGs for more info which we are working hard to support. Pupils talking to classroom teacher via GC is always available. We have stopped sending individual texts from faculties to parents, as some would be inundated.**

3. Some pupils and parents are telling us that feedback from programmes such as My maths provide little information other than a mark. Sometimes answers are marked incorrect simply for using a capital letter or too many decimal points. Some work is marked with "good work" or "good try". Some parents have shared that this has not been particularly helpful in pupils learning from mistakes or understanding how they can improve. **For this reason, we have moved away from My Maths, although there was very high engagement with this tool**

4. Is there an update on World Challenge? **See attached letter.**

5. Some teachers are stating in Google Classrooms that work completed during lockdown may/ will be used as evidence for SQA awards. Is this correct? Others have been telling pupils that it will not count towards awards. Our senior pupils are very anxious about SQA assessments. **If the work meets the required standards, yes, we will use it. We need as much evidence as we can gather. It depends on the tasks set.**

6. Is there an option this year to provide Computing Science as a subject, (there was mention last year it maybe).

No, but we have PT Digital Learning who is looking to focus on IT from S1. We have a link with NESCol to plug this gap. We have extended Business Education to include Economics and there is a strong case when staffing changes to grow this faculty to potentially include Computing Science.