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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 19th March 2021

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We were pleased to hear the First Minister this week confirming that all pupils will be able to return to school full time after the Easter break. This is welcome news, and we look forward to welcoming all pupils back to full time live learning. We will provide more information about the full time return to school in due course.

Here is a link to a Tree of Knowledge video for Senior Phase pupils to support motivation in getting back to school

Getting Unstuck – Upper Secondary  
Video: <https://vimeo.com/512007850>  
Password: zoo-mushroom-cube

Here are the updates for this week:

**Quote of the Week beginning Monday 22.3.21:**



**Next Parent Council Meeting:**

The next virtual Parent Council Meeting is on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> April at 7pm.

Please contact them via this email address: [ellonacademyparentcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:ellonacademyparentcouncil@gmail.com)

## Broad General S1/2/3 Up-date:

It was so good to see our S1 pupils on Tuesday this week. The school has been so quiet, and it was lovely to hear excited voices and lots of laughter. We were delighted in how they responded to the 'boost' sessions and they seemed genuinely pleased to be back at school. This has given them a mini induction back into the school environment and routines, so it will be wonderful to have them back full time after Easter. We are looking forward to seeing:

S2 Learners on	Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> March
S3 Learners on	Tuesday 30 <sup>th</sup> March



## Senior Phase Up-date:

Again, it has been so good to see our S4/5/6 learners back in school for the all-important live delivery of essential work, in preparation for assessments after the Easter break. S4/5/6 learners have had so much to contend with over the past year, and we are committed to giving them the best in-school experience to enhance their remote learning at home to prepare them for assessments next term.

Next week we continue to see:

S5/6 Learners on	Mon 22 <sup>nd</sup> and Wed 24 <sup>th</sup> March
S4 Learners on	Thurs 25 <sup>th</sup> and Fri 26 <sup>th</sup> March

## SQA Up-date:

Principal Teachers and Senior Leaders have been working hard to interpret SQA advice as soon as it comes to the school regarding the Alternative Certification Model for 2021. It has been extremely challenging to put together our timeline for assessments because even as late as Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March, we were still receiving guidelines, changes and key dates from the SQA. Between Easter and Summer, there are specific key dates which relate to the wide range of SQA units and course entry deadlines, over and above the deadlines for National 4, 5, Higher and Advanced Higher. The final date for submission of grades is Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June (last day of term) but schools have to build in time for marking, moderation, verification and quality assurance procedures to verify our grades.

This has proven to be exceptionally challenging for all schools, but at Ellon Academy, we would want to provide information to learners and parents/carers as soon as we can. However, we had already drafted our timeline to dove-tail with the most recent SQA dates and guidance, but the latest information has meant that we have had to amend our timeline again. We will now be ready to share our timeline of assessments at the beginning of next week. We did not want to publish anything too early, because of the on-going up-dates from the SQA.

We were ready to send our assessment calendar this week, but...

- New information from SQA – Tues 16.3.21 (afternoon)
- Principal Teachers (Faculty and SLTs) review new information and consult with faculty staff
- Principal Teachers feedback to Ms Booth (DHT/SQA Co-ordinator) by the end of the day on Wed 17.3.21
- Final proposals to be agreed by SLT on Thurs 18.3.21
- Parent Council Meeting on Thurs 18.3.21 to share parental concerns and feedback
- Assessment calendar to be finalised – Fri 19.3.21
- Information to be shared with all staff – Fri 19.3.21 or Mon 22.3.21
- Further discussion with Parent Council – week beginning Mon 22.3.21
- Information to learners and parents/carers week beginning Mon 22.3.21

We are currently working on a How to Study Guide for all senior phase pupils and this should be ready to issue week beginning Mon 29.3.21.

Please be assured that we are working in the very best interests of our pupils and will support them as much as we can under these exceptionally challenging circumstances.

Also, the SQA have produced a booklet for senior pupils which can be accessed by following the link below:

[What you need to know for 2021 - National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher - SQA](#)

Copies of this booklet will arrive in school after the Easter break and will be passed on to senior pupils in due course.



### **Course Choice for 21/22 Up-date:**

Now that Mr Cowie DHT has finalised additional work on the return to school timetable for the last 3 weeks of term, he is now turning his attentions back to constructing the new timetable for session 21/22.

He is working through learners' option forms to allocate subject choices and for over 600 learners, this is a huge task. Our Principal Teachers of Guidance have also scheduled in catch-up sessions via Google Classroom with learners who would like/need this, to support the course choice process in preparation for the next timetable.

We are awaiting guidance from the local authority regarding the change of timetable which usually happens in June. However, because SQA deadlines have been pushed to the end of June, change of timetable is still under review.

### **Plans for S6 Leavers:**

Our Exec Team are working in partnership with Miss Tomlinson and Mr Corser in planning events and activities for our S6 Leavers 2021. Watch this space for more news!

### **Dates for your diary:**

- Easter Break: This year the Easter break will be from Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> April – Friday 16<sup>th</sup> April inclusive, with the start of term 4 on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> April.
- May Day: Schools will be on holiday on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> May.
- **Please note there is no Monday holiday on 7th June for the Ellon Cluster Schools**
- Additional Inservice days: The Scottish Government have agreed 2 additional in-service days to support school in meeting the SQA requirements for school staff to work on pupil's assessment evidence, draft predicted grades and the quality assurance processes necessary to meet SQA deadlines. It has been agreed that these 2 additional in-service days will be on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> and Friday 4<sup>th</sup> June.

**Website up-dates:**

Please follow the link below to the latest up-dates on our Ellon Academy school website:

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

Thank you once more for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

*P Buchan*

Pauline Buchan, Rector 19.3.21