



ELLON ACADEMY WEEKLY INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS

To: All Parents/Carers
 From: Pauline Buchan, Rector
 Subject: Weekly Information Up-date
 Date: Friday 5th March 2021

We continue to be impressed by the work ethic of our S4/5/6 pupils who have been in school over the past 2 weeks, working on practical subjects. We have been pleased with their progress so far. We are also extremely appreciative of staff who have continued to come into school to supervise our keyworker pupils and vulnerable learners.

Here are the updates for this week.

Next Parent Council Meeting:

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

Please contact them via this email address: ellonacademyparentcouncil@gmail.com

Practical Subjects timetable Week 3 (8.3.21 – 12.3.21)

I'm pleased to report that feedback from pupils and staff regards the phased return of some practical subjects has been very positive and productive. This has now been extended to include certificate Art and Graphics classes next week.

We remind pupils to check Google Classroom for any updates. Technical/Drama continue to offer full day teaching and Admin/Hospitality have half-day sessions, with supervision and remote learning available in their bubble in the afternoon. Parents collecting pupils after a half-day session should confirm with the office. Thank you.

We add Graphic Communication and Art to the Practical rota. Both will be full day sessions.

	Tech Bubble	Drama Bubble	Admin Bubble	HE/Art Bubble
Mon 8th	4C WW - A Cruickshank	S6 AH Drama	4D N345 Admin	6 Art AH - 5 pupils - hourly appts
Tue 9th	4C Graphic N45 - N Wylie 5D Graphic - L Moir	11 NPA Drama 8	5C Admin H	4C Art N45
Wed 10th	4G MW 5B WW - A Scott			4G Art N45
Thu 11th	4F Graphic N45 - A cruick	19		4F Art N45
Fri 12th	5B Graphic H - P McBeat	17		5BE Art N5/H

Break and Lunch Bubbles:

Woodwork/Metalwork Pupils	-	Canteen
Drama/Hospitality Pupils	-	Sunken Social Area
Admin Pupils	-	S5 Social Area
ASL Hub Pupils	-	G7 ASL Hub
Keyworker/Vulnerable Pupils	-	Games Hall

Entry/Exit Arrangements for Senior Pupils accessing Practical Subjects:

- Woodwork and Metalwork Pupils – use the main pupil doors
- Admin Pupils – use the main reception doors
- Drama and Hospitality Pupils – use the main reception doors

Catering

- The usual catering facilities will be available for pupils in school:
 - Breakfast club, break and lunch

Pupils will be directed to a social zone at break and lunchtimes and must stay within this zone. We strongly encourage pupils to stay on campus at lunchtimes, but pupils who choose to go off-site for lunch will be expected to follow the rules in place for wider society.

Keyworker/Vulnerable Children Provision

Keyworker/Vulnerable children will continue to access school to access remote learning and will be supervised by a rota of subject faculty teaching staff. I will ensure that we will continue to up-date Parents/Carers regarding the future phasing back of pupils and we hope that this will be as soon as possible.

Please contact your child's Principal Teacher of Guidance if you have any queries.

Issue	Support/Contact Details
Lack of devices	Email: techsupportellonacademy@aberdeenshire.gov.uk or contact your child's Guidance Teacher
Connectivity issues	Email: techsupportellonacademy@aberdeenshire.gov.uk or contact your child's Guidance Teacher
Technical Difficulties	Email: techsupportellonAcademy@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
Unsure of task	Message Class Teacher through Google Classroom
Need help with task	Message Class Teacher through Google Classroom
Any other issue	Contact your child's Guidance Teacher Cheyne: Paula.Waugh@aberdeenshire.gov.uk Forbes – Nicole.Jeffrey@aberdeenshire.gov.uk Keith – Kris.Findlay@aberdeenshire.gov.uk Macdonald – Claire.Kaczmarek@aberdeenshire.gov.uk Sinclair – Lyndsey.Donald@aberdeenshire.gov.uk (Mon/Tue), May.Watt@aberdeenshire.gov.uk (Wed – Fri)

Return, Restore and Reset – Phase 2 from Monday 15th March 2021:

As per the First Minister's statement given to Parliament on Tuesday 2nd March 2021, all secondary pupils will be given some time in school between Monday 15th March and the Easter break, with a full return after the Easter break. (Monday 19th April 2021)

Ellon Academy's Rationale for Return to School:

- To support the transition back to full-time schooling
- To maintain the provision for keyworker children and vulnerable learners
- To support learners to readjust to the school environment
- To ensure that learning continues towards national qualifications in the Senior Phase under the 2021 Alternative Certification Model
- To support learners' health and wellbeing

Here are the Aberdeenshire Council guidelines set out by the Director of Education and Children's Services, Mr Laurence Findlay, by which schools will plan for Phase 2 of the Return to School from Monday 15.3.21:

- Each school will decide on the number of pupils who can be in school each day based on available accommodation, staffing availability, transport availability and other constraints.
- Each school will have flexibility to deliver what is best for their learners based on the 2m physical distancing requirement. It should be noted, however, that only one third of the overall school roll is likely to be able to be accommodated in the school building at any given time given the 2m physical distancing requirement. For example, a 900-student school will be able to accommodate no more than 300 young people at any given time. Furthermore, some schools will have an imbalance in numbers across different year groups which will exacerbate the timetabling challenges they face.
- This should not be perceived as a full time return to school. The First Minister indicated that she hoped to be able to announce a full time return after Easter. Given the 2m physical distancing requirements, any time in school between 15th March and the end of term will be minimal. There are only 14 school days between 15th March and the end of term. The term ends on Thursday 1st April and Term 4 starts on Monday 19th April.
- Priority will continue to be given to senior phase students working towards SQA and other qualifications.
- Further to the senior phase students, schools will prioritise the groups of learners they bring back into school based on their tracking and monitoring to date, for example, those pupils who have practical elements to complete for SQA certification.
- Further guidance about remote learning delivery will be forthcoming in the new guidance as clearly more staff will now be needed in school settings and as such will not necessarily be available to support the remote learning. Schools will do what they can to continue supporting remote learning, including signposting to nationally developed materials, but the availability to support remote learning will be greatly constrained by the requirement for more staff to physically be in school.
- We will work with schools to augment in school learning with an appropriate outdoor learning and health and wellbeing package to support learner wellbeing where we have available staffing and facilities.
- On school transport, one metre social distancing will be in place in line with the arrangements for public transport. As such, there will be constraints on transport availability, and we will work with our colleagues in the Council's transport team to consider how best these constraints can be addressed.
- Face masks will require to be worn at all times in secondary schools and on all school transport.
- At Ellon Academy, there will be no expectation for school uniform for the last 3 weeks of term, but all going well, we expect all learners to be in uniform after the Easter break. More information regarding provision for Physical Education will be forthcoming prior to the Easter holidays.

Current situation:

Ellon Academy staff are meeting together and working on the following to implement this plan for the last 3 weeks (14 school days) of term:

- A timetable which will show which days learners will be expected in school
- A plan to ensure that Senior Phase pupils (S4/5/6) can maximise this opportunity in school to experience as many of their courses in-person
- A plan to ensure our Broad General pupils (S1/2/3) can experience in-school learning and a health and wellbeing input
- A continued model to support remote learning at home provision
- To consider and implement how provision for ASL Hub pupils, keyworker children and vulnerable learners' provision dovetails with the whole school return plan
- Rooming and accommodation to meet with the 2-metre distancing requirements
- The implementation of face coverings for all learners, apart from those who are medically exempt
- A plan for Senior Phase pupils to collect optional self-test kits prior to Monday 15.3.21
- Liaison with transport providers
- Liaison with catering facilities
- Liaison with cleaning staff
- Liaison with North East College for those senior pupils who have NESCOL courses on their timetables
- A clear communication strategy for staff, pupils and parents/carers

When all of the above comes together, we will communicate this to parents/carers prior to the return to school from Monday 15th March.

Thank you for your continued patience and understanding,

Recognising pupil engagement in remote learning:

In our discussions about remote learning at home, we would like to recognise all the pupils who have consistently engaged or have really tried to engage, despite various difficulties, so before the end of term, these learners will receive a praise postcard to thank them for fulfilling two of our school values - perseverance and dedication. We are very proud of our pupils, who have had so much to cope with and have lost so many experiences over this past year.

SQA Up-date:

The revised Alternative Certification Model is based on five key stages:

Stage 1: ongoing until April 2021 - Teachers access subject specific guidance, assessment resources and Understanding Standards materials and webinars from SQA.

Stage 2: April - May 2021 – School, college, training provider and local authority quality assurance continues. During May, SQA requests, reviews and provides feedback on assessment evidence from each school, college and training provider.

Stage 3: end May to 25 June 2021 - Schools, colleges, training providers, local authorities and SQA work through final stages of local and national quality assurance and feedback, to reach provisional results that are consistent, equitable and fair.

Stage 4: by 25 June 2021 - Schools, colleges and training providers submit quality assured provisional results to SQA.

Stage 5: Appeals process for 2020-21 - to be advised following consultation.

Delivering National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher results in 2020-21 – parents/carers

Following the First Minister's announcement last week, the National Qualifications Group* is sharing further information about the alternative certification model. This is how National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses will be resulted in session 2020-21. Further information about the Appeals service for 2021 will be available following consultation.

The Group understands that when your child returns to their classroom, they will need time with their teachers and lecturers to review their learning. This is known as consolidating your child's learning. To provide as much time as possible for consolidating learning and carrying out assessment, the final date for your child's school, college or training provider to send provisional results to SQA has been extended to **Friday 25 June 2021**.

SQA will not change provisional results. They will check for any administrative errors that may occur when schools, colleges and training providers enter the data into the system. Your child will receive their final results by post on Tuesday 10 August 2021, and by text and/or email if they register for this service at www.MySQA.org.uk

You and your child can stay up to date on their progress by talking to their school, college or training provider.

Minimising disruption to learning

We know that all learners have experienced disruption to their learning this session. Actions have therefore been taken across the Scottish education system to ensure your child has time to complete the assessment needed for their teachers and/or lecturers to determine provisional results. For example, SQA has already reduced the evidence required for each National Course to the minimum while maintaining the standards of the qualifications.

Published guidance and assessment support

Your child's provisional results will be based on assessments they have done which are consistent with SQA's subject-specific guidance. SQA has provided 250 subject-specific guidance documents and assessment materials, as well as Understanding Standards materials to help teachers and lecturers apply national standards consistently and fairly when assessing learner evidence. Teachers and lecturers have the flexibility to collate assessment evidence in ways and at times that are appropriate to the needs of their learners.

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance of qualifications is the process of carrying out checks to make sure that assessments are accurate and consistent with the national standards. It is at the heart of fair and credible certification, carried out locally in schools (with support from local authorities where appropriate), colleges and training providers, and nationally by SQA.

Local quality assurance ensures consistency and fairness within schools, colleges and training providers across the whole of Scotland.

National quality assurance carried out by SQA ensures that assessment evidence is appropriate and consistent with the national standard across all schools, colleges and training providers delivering the qualifications. It ensures that a grade A awarded in the north of Scotland is worth the same as a grade A awarded in the south of Scotland and everywhere in between.

Fairness for learners

The [equality impact assessment](#) and [children's rights and wellbeing impact assessment](#) underpin this alternative certification model. They will continue to be developed as we progress with the Appeals service.

The alternative certification model aims to ensure fair and credible results for all National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher learners. Schools, colleges, training providers, local authorities and SQA are committed to working together to support teachers and lecturers in providing their provisional results in 2020-21.

All partners are working as quickly as possible in an evolving situation to provide answers to your questions.

Stay up to date on [2021 National Qualifications](#).

National Qualifications 2021 Group

*The National Qualifications 2021 Group is represented by the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES), Colleges Scotland, Education Scotland, the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), School Leaders Scotland (SLS), the Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS), Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), the Scottish Government, National Parent Forum of Scotland, and the Scottish Youth Parliament.

Assessment of National 4 added value units in session 2020-21:

SQA has been reviewing its approach to assessment of National 4 courses, in response to feedback from teachers and lecturers and to support schools, colleges, and training providers to manage assessment where it has been impacted by disruption to learning and the ongoing restrictions associated with COVID-19.

We have decided that candidates will not be required to complete National 4 added value units in session 2020-21. This decision is supported by the National Qualifications 2021 Group.

Assessment Evidence for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Mathematics:

Many teachers are planning assessments for later in the session. In Mathematics, a single piece of assessment that covers the breadth, depth and challenge of the course, and provides a secure evidence base for the provisional result is sufficient.

SQA has provided subject-specific guidance and Understanding Standards materials to support the creation of assessments for 2021.

School Catering Questionnaire:

School Catering are currently conducting a review of the Catering Service to ensure it meets the needs of pupils and the nutritional guidelines. A key part of the review is to seek the views of those using the service. To facilitate this, the Catering Service has prepared a questionnaire for pupils along with the letter below:

Dear Pupil,

We would appreciate if you could fill in the online questionnaire to help us review the school catering service.

This will take no longer than 5 minutes and is completely anonymous.

Here's the link to the form "The Catering Service - Secondary School Pupil Questionnaire":

[Secondary Questionnaire](#)

Your feedback will assist us in planning for the future and your participation in sharing this questionnaire with your son/daughter would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you, Ian Paterson, Catering Service Manager

Dates for your diary:

Easter Break:

This year the Easter break will be from Friday 2nd April – Friday 16th April inclusive, with the start of term 4 on Monday 19th April.

May Day: Schools will be on holiday on Monday 3rd May.

Occasional day holiday: Monday 7th June.

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. We will inform you of when these days are when it has been decided by Aberdeenshire Council and they are likely to be planned for early 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 5.3.21