



ELLON ACADEMY WEEKLY INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS

To: All Parents and Carers
From: Pauline Buchan, Rector
Subject: Weekly Information Up-date
Date: Friday 26th November 2021

Dear parents and carers,

As you will be aware, there have been several further Ellon Academy families affected by Covid-19 this week, and we send our best wishes to them all for speedy recoveries.

Also, we are appreciative of the support of parents/carers in our decision to send our pupils home early in light of the Red Weather Warning issued by the Met Office today. Our early, precautionary decision has been followed by many other Aberdeenshire Schools with support of the Local Authority.

Here are the updates for this week:

The Quote of the Week beginning 29.11.21:

Thinking of World Children's Day 2021:



School Uniform:

It has been really encouraging to see our pupils back in school uniform since we returned to school in August. However, of late, some pupils are not fully complying with our school dress expectations: Here is a reminder of what we expect:

- All pupils must arrive at school in uniform, regardless if they have PE first thing
- All pupils must change back into their school uniform after PE classes
- White shirt and school tie
- Plain black jumper, cardigan or sweatshirt
- Black trousers, jeans, leggings or skirts (no jogging bottoms)
- Black shoes/trainers (white trainers are not part of the school dress code)
- School bag and warm outer clothing for adverse weather

We appreciate the support of parents and carers on ensuring our learners are compliant with our school uniform and appropriately dressed for school/bad weather.

Christmas 2021 Activities at Ellon Academy:

Christmas Lunches 2021 (Vegetarian/Vegan/Gluten Free options will be available):

- Wednesday 1.12.21 – S2 out early for lunch at 12.05pm
 - Wednesday 8.12.21 – S3/4 out early for lunch at 12.05pm
 - Wednesday 15.12.21 – S5/6 out early for lunch at 12.05pm
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- Christmas Jumpers as part of usual school uniform **for S6 only** from Wednesday 1st December until the holidays
 - Food Bank Charity Donations – Wednesday 1st December – Pupils/Staff are asked to bring donations of non-perishable items on Wed 1.12.21 for local food bank charities. Any donations can be left at the pupil doors and will be uplifted at 9.45am by the charity.
 - Christmas Jumper Day Dress Down Day (all pupils/staff) – Friday 10th December. Please bring a donation for 'Save the Children'.
 - Christmas Dress Up Day for all pupils and S5/6 Parade – Friday 17th December – All pupils can come to school in fancy dress on Friday 17.12.21

World Children's Day 2021:

To recognise and celebrate World Children's Day 2021, several events are planned, including a Virtual Assembly delivered by Finn Dixon in S5:

We are also hosting a Pupil Senate Summit meeting on Thursday 9th December. This will involve:

- The Exec Team, House Captains, Sports Captains and Class Reps
- Pupils to work in House groups looking at World Children's Day resources and identify potential input for our new Rights Respecting School Charter

Plan for the morning of Thurs 9th December:

1. Period 1 – The Importance of Children's Rights
2. Period 2 – Collating Resources
3. Period 3 – COP26 and Environmental Input from pupil committee supported by The Exec Team and staff
4. Period 4 – Creating charter for Ellon Academy and pupil and staff pledges

Acts of Kindness:

Ellon Academy Foodbank Collection Day/Kindness for the Community – Wednesday 1st December 2021
Based on the success of last year's collection and the overwhelming generosity of parents/carers, pupils and staff, our S6 Exec Team have been organising another local foodbank collection at Ellon Academy. We are asking parents/carers/pupils and staff to kindly bring a donation or non-perishable food items to school on Wednesday 1st December 2021, if you are able to do so.

Any donations given will be collected at the pupil doors as they arrive at school next Wednesday, and we have arranged for the charity to pick up the donations later that morning. Staff can leave any donations they care to give at the staff entrance. Thank you in anticipation of your support for this very worthy cause.



Celebrating Success:

We have been delighted that some parents/carers have been in touch to let us know of their child or children's recent successes and achievements out with the school. Young people can be quite shy about their success, but if they are will for us to celebrate these, please could you let us know if your child/children have had any external to school successes and achievements. We have seen quite a few out with school achievements since our return from the holidays and we are delighted to celebrate these achievements via our Facebook page, this newsletter and in school.



Pupil Achievements:

Y.P.I Final – Wed 24.11.21:

Our S6 pupils have spent the last term working on the YPI (Youth Philanthropy Initiative) programme where they identify an area of need in the local area and then find a charity that addresses that need. The best presentation on behalf of a charity wins £3000.

Other groups represented in the final were Rainbow Rogues, Foos yer Doos Singsong Club, Friends of the Anchor Unit, Alzheimer's Scotland, and Mental Health Aberdeen.

Thanks to all our wonderful senior pupils who have worked hard on this project and raised the profile of important issues and the amazing charities who support them.





Congratulations to Aymara B, Amy D, Emily I and Fergus S who were the overall YPI winners and recipients of the £3000 for their chosen charity Abernecessities. YPI is sponsored by the Wood Foundation.



Pupil Achievement:

Triathlon Scotland - Young Volunteer of the Year – Ella Chalmers!



S4 pupil Ella Chalmers has been actively volunteering at TrYthan for over 12 months, since successfully completing the Triathlon Scotland Young Activator course in 2020. Ella is involved in several areas of the club several times a week, supporting the coaches at the club's adult and TriStar swim training sessions as well as assisting at the TriStar run and bike sessions. The club like to mix things up and get the younger members involved with coaching the adults and vice versa, so lately Ella has started contributing to the planning of the swim training sessions and has been setting some good and challenging swim sets for the adult members. She is always on time, friendly, dependable and has a smile on her face.

She takes everything in her stride and often makes it look very easy. These are all assets that are often taken for granted but can be hard to find.

Ella is a huge asset to the day to day running of TrYthan. Club President, **David Horne**, said:

"We are super proud of Ella and the help and enthusiasm that she provides. She is also a strong role model to the younger TriStar members at the club by setting a good example, not just by what she does in training, but also how she supports the club by volunteering. She is always at races and events cheering everyone on and is always on hand to help set-up and clear away equipment. She is a key part of our club and helps provide a friendly and supportive environment. With Ella around, we feel the future of the club is in safe hands and the club and triathlon will continue to flourish in our community."

Read more: <https://bit.ly/3DT9aGx>

Pupil Achievements:

Aiden M and Jack B in S6 have just been invited down to Glasgow to trial for the Scottish Schoolboys Football team. It is an incredible achievement to be deemed some of the best Scotland has to offer and we wish them all the luck in the world. Go do yourselves proud!

Fund Raising Support for the Ellon Academy Community Memorial Garden:

Many thanks to the Ellon Co-op for their support with a donation of £966.57 for our Memorial Garden. Mrs Swallow and Mr Cruickshank picked up the cheque last weekend.



Unexpected Act of Kindness:

Well done to our Junior Hub pupils who have been making pencil cases and bags to sell to raise funds for The New Arc. The New Arc are thrilled to hear they have raised £50! What a wonderful job team. Thank you so much, and well done.

Columba 1400

Over the next couple of weeks, our S2 pupils will be engaging in a Virtual Columba 1400 Introductory Session during their PSE classes.

I have had a 17-year long association with Columba 1400, which is a Leadership Academy for pupils and school staff based on the Isle of Skye. S2 pupils at Ellon Academy are in the fortunate position of getting an opportunity to find out what this experience would be like, and what it would mean for them.

I have taken 3 previous groups of pupils to this experience in my previous school, and it has been an immensely impactful and positive opportunity for those involved in the past.

During the October break, I attended the Head Teachers' Leadership Academy on Skye for a week, alongside 12 other Head Teachers from all over Scotland. It was an exceptional experience, and we are excited for some of our pupils to benefit from this too.

In May 2022, (Covid restrictions allowing) we plan to take 13 S2 pupils and 2/3 staff to the Columba 1400 Leadership Academy on Skye for a week-long leadership training experience, using the amazing outdoor Environment on Skye and indoors at the Columba 1400 Centre in Staffin, Skye.

On Friday 10th December, we have spaces for 60 interested S2 pupils to attend the Columba 1400 Leadership Values day here in school and after that, we will ask pupils who are interested in the residential part of the course on Skye, to put their names forward. If there are more than 13 young people interested, then Mr Corser and I will interview the pupils to choose our final 13.

This experience is all expenses paid for pupils and staff, thanks to Columba 1400 and this includes travel, accommodation, all meals, snacks, drinks etc and the environment at the Centre is very comfortable and homely.

More information will be sent to parents prior to the Leadership Values Day on Friday 10th December.



The Columba 1400 Leadership Centre on the Isle of Skye



Sir Norman Drummond, Founder of Columba 1400

Staff Information:

Well done to Mr Adam, one of our PE Teachers, who has successfully been appointment to a Principal Teacher Pupil Development role at Banchory Academy. We wish him every success as he moves to this promoted post after the New Year.

January Senior Phase Assessment Block

Next week, we will be able to send all pupils, parents and staff information about our planned assessments in January 2022 and will provide a timetable of assessments for pupils and a summary of all supports and help clubs available. Currently our Principal Teachers Faculty are working on the assessment timetable and feeding that information back to Ms Booth, our DHT who co-ordinates and plans Learning, Teaching and Assessment at Ellon Academy.

Parent Council:

Next Parent Council Meeting: The next virtual Parent Council Meeting is on Wednesday 23rd February 2022 at 7pm via Zoom. Please contact them via this email address: ellonacademyparentcouncil@gmail.com

Dates For Your Diary:

- Occasional days for session 21/22
 - Wed 5.1.22 – occasional day added on the end of the Christmas break
 - Thurs 10.2.22, Friday 11.2.22 (Mon 14.2.22 is already a holiday and Tues 15.2.22/Wed 16.2.22 are in-service days)
 - It has been mooted that May Day and Jubilee Day are combined – National decision, so more info as it is received

Term 1/Term 2:

- Christmas lunches every Wednesday from 24.11.21 – 15.12.21
- Food Bank Donations Day – Wednesday 1st December (Non-perishable items)
- S6 Christmas Jumpers as part of usual uniform from Wed 1.12.21 until the end of term
- S4/5/6 Full Reports to be issued week beginning 6.12.21
- Whole School Christmas Jumper Dress Down Day – Fri 10.12.21
- Whole School Dress Up Day and S5/6 Parade – Fri 17.12.21
- End of Term 2 – Tuesday 21.12.21 (Last day of Term)
- Start of Term 3 – Thursday 6.1.22

Christmas Events 2021:

As you will have read, we are planning our Dress Up Day on Friday 17th December when all pupils and staff are invited to come to school dressed up in fancy dress or just dressed down with no uniform. This is always a lovely, fun day and we are so pleased that we can continue to do this, despite the Global Pandemic. This event sits well within our Covid-19 Risk Assessment and the Guidance which comes to schools from the Local Authority and the Scottish Government.

However, there are 3 events which cannot go ahead under the current restrictions imposed on schools by the Scottish Government. These are the Christmas Ceilidh, the Interhouse Cheerleading and the Swimming Gala. We are bitterly disappointed for our pupils and staff that we are unable to support these events at this time due to the restrictions placed on schools.

The Senior Leadership Team have spent significant time discussing how we may have stretched our risk assessment to accommodate these events, but in all honesty, we would be going against all government guidelines and inevitably, having large gatherings of unvaccinated pupils, would potentially lead to some contracting Covid-19, becoming close contacts and having to self-isolate over the festive period, which is something that neither pupils, parents or staff would wish to happen as a result of in-school events. We would hate the thought of our young people having to stay away from their families, stuck in their rooms self-isolating during Christmas.

At Christmas last year, the government imposed strict restrictions on the whole of society in terms of how, when, and how long we were able to meet with our families, to stem the spread of coronavirus and as you recall, we did not return to school after the New Year and entered a second lockdown.

Thankfully this year, there are no similar restrictions planned (as far as we know) and Ellon Academy does not want to be the source of a larger community outbreak which spoils family plans and get together over the festive period, so hence our decision to postpone these events, albeit to the great disappointment of us all.

Social dancing in PE can still go ahead because of the much smaller groups of pupils taking part in class groups, but a larger scale Ceilidh, with unvaccinated pupils from different year groups, dancing face to face and hand to hand, even with masks and sanitising, is just not viable under government restrictions at this time.

We have discussed this with our Parent Council, who are in support of our rationale and of our integrity in applying the guidance we have been given for schools by the Scottish Government.

NHS Covid-19 Weekly Up-date for Schools (24.11.21):

This information from our weekly meeting with NHS Grampian staff may be helpful to parents/carers in understanding the Scottish Governments continued mitigations in schools.

- Case numbers still increasing, especially amongst primary children
- Cases have stabilised in the Shire but there is an upward trend since summer in the City and Moray
- Hospital admissions stabilised.
- Multiple cases everywhere – leisure, football matches, swimming pools, cinemas, restaurants, seafood processing ... due to relaxed measures there is increased community transmission
- Flu season will start to circulate
- Low immunity due to lockdown last winter
- Grampian rate of increase similar across Scotland. Rate is 445 per 100,000; this is significant
- Pockets where rate is higher: all areas increased in City; Shire increased in Formartine (all others stable/decreasing); Moray stabilising
- Last week 2,600 new cases reported
- School data from 9-26 Nov: over 1,700 cases in schools; 1,500 are pupils; 2/3 overall are primary related

Ellon Academy School Calendar 21/22:

Our school calendar for session 21/22 can be viewed on our website.

[Ellon Academy Calendar 2021.22 Final.xlsx](#)

Thank you once more for your continued support.

Pauline Buchan

Rector
26.11.21