



ELLON ACADEMY WEEKLY INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS

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

Dear parents and carers,

It is good to be back to school after the October break and good to see our young people again.

We hope that those pupils who have contracted Covid-19 are feeling well and we look forward to having them back in school next week and for some, the week after.

Thank you to parents and carers for continuing to support our uniform policy and ensuring our pupils are appropriately dressed for inclement weather as we approach the winter.

Here are the updates for this week:

The Quote of the Week beginning 8.11.21:



A reminder of canteen concerns:

An email to all parents/carers was sent during the last week of term asking for support in ensuring all our pupils have a National Entitlement Card/Young Scott Card to pay for their school meals. In the email we have provided information regarding how to register for Free School Meals, how to order a new or replacement NE card and how to top the card up with credit/money. We have also included a school canteen price list in the email so parents/carers can see what our food and drink products cost.

Thank you in anticipation of your support.

Staff Absences:

Unfortunately, this week we have experienced a perfect storm of unexpected staff absences and unavailability of pre-organised supply staff.

For your understanding, teaching staff have an entitlement to marking and preparation time over the course of the week (non-contact time) and we are not permitted to allow a member of staff to go over that proportion of time to cover classes. Most staff have the time capacity to cover classes for absent colleagues, but always, even in a good week, we can run out of in-house staff to cover any absences at the end of a week when we have used staff to cover earlier in any given week, hence Fridays can be difficult if we have used all our permanent staff time and may have no supply on hand to cover.

This week, we've had a significant number of teaching staff struggling with colds, flu and other bugs and it can be difficult to determine if they will be well enough to return on any given day. Staff often make that decision when they wake up to see if they feel well enough to come into work. All staff follow our set procedures in contacting our staff absence line early in the morning, so that cover can be arranged before the start of the school day. On a daily basis, we keep on top of any planned and known absences by setting cover in advance, however, often staff can take ill overnight, and we have to adjust the cover in a very short window of time before school starts.

I am so grateful to staff for covering classes for colleagues, over and above their own personal workload. However, we are mindful too that this is not ideal for pupils, but we do everything we can to keep the school open so that staff absence has minimal impact on learning.

The decision to send our S4 pupils home today had to be made after trying a number of alternatives and trying to source supply cover. In 'normal' times, we could collapse classes and teach them in larger groups in the theatre of games halls, but under Covid-19 school guidelines, we are not permitted to have pupils in groups of over 50 in one place for an extended period of time. This is what we would have done pre-Covid, rather than having to take the decision to send a year group home. Any decision like this is hard and it is always the last resort.

We decided on S4 because of the short notice of this information being shared with parents/carers if we chose any younger years, it may have been very difficult for parents/carers to arrange childcare.

These decisions will always be difficult for staff, pupils, and families, but please trust that we do not do this lightly, but we do this with great consideration and thought.

Going forward, we hope that we will not be in this position again, but if we find ourselves in a similar situation and we have to make a quick decision, we will choose S3 pupils if there is a next time.

Thank you for your patience in exceptionally difficult times.

Student Teachers:

This week we welcomed 8 student teachers allocated to a range of faculties across the school. They will be with us until the Christmas break. (We can't use student teachers for cover, nor can they be left alone with classes because they are not fully qualified teachers.)

We will introduce them to you in next week's newsletter.

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 willing 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:

Aberdeenshire Secondary Schools Football Association

The Aberdeenshire Senior select will have their first National Trophy match next week against Dundee.

Date: Wednesday 10th November

Time: 12:30 arrival in shirt and tie (1:30pm kick off)

Venue: Garioch Sports Centre, Inverurie (Astro Turf)

Ellon Academy pupils in the squad are:

- Lucas Smith Ellon Academy
- Aiden MacRae Ellon Academy
- Jack Bowden Ellon Academy
- Ross Connon Ellon Academy
- Callum Kelly Ellon Academy



Congratulations to Aiden , Ross, Jack, Lucas, and Callum who have been selected for the first game vs Dundee on Wednesday. Good luck.

Pupil Achievements:

The following S6 pupils have completed booklet 1 of their Level 6 (Higher) Leadership award, predominantly through a distance learning approach on Google Classroom.

Mr Coe PT Pupil Development said "I have never enjoyed marking 26 pieces of work more. The quality of work both on paper and within our school community is outstanding. All 26 pupils should be on course to complete the full award if they continue in the same fashion, they are all doing their house teams extremely proud!"

Abbie Hutcheon
Aidan Macrae
Amy Duncan
Angelina Bannerman
Ashleigh McBain
Aymara Blinkenberg
Caitlin Mackay
Caitlin Fines
Demi Stevenson
Eilidh Hislop
Emily Inglis
Esther Morris
Eva Milne
Gareth Jones
Isla Carson
Jenna Milne

Julie Ambrose
Katharine Hales
Katie Stewart
Leah Clark
Olivia Haggath
Owen Edwards
Rachael Clarke
Rebecca Wilson
Samantha Milne



Pupil Achievement:

Sam H (5M2) is just back from competing at the Youth Windsurfing World Championships in Torbole, Lake Garda, Italy, as part of Team GBR.

Over 300 competitors from 21 nations raced over 7 consecutive days in relentless strong winds and waves on the lake. Despite the early starts and long days, the full-on conditions on the water with crashes and damaged boards, and hands and feet held together by super glue and tape by the end, Sam completed every race (many didn't!) and finished up a hugely respectable 21st in his fleet.

Fantastic achievement and experience, well done Sam! Windsurf Foiling takes over from Windsurfing at the next Olympics, so good luck to Sam and all his Team Scotland and Team GBR teammates as they transition into this new and exciting sport! Well done Sam and good luck!

**Staff Achievement:**

Our very own Canteen Supervisor Rachael Jarvis did a Fire Walk to raise money for the charity Erskine.

Rachel walked the fire path 3 times, so 15 metres in total! Well done Rachael, we are very proud of you!



Ellon Academy Sport Association (EASA):

We are now in the position to offer competitive sport and can restart EASA, which is great news for 2021-2022. If your son/daughter intends on participating in extracurricular school sport, then they will need to become a member of EASA. Annual subscription is £30. Pupils may take part in any sport and, if selected for a team, will be asked to attend fixtures in our school and in a wide range of other competitions. The money collected by EASA goes towards bookings of facilities, subsidises bus and entry fees, equipment and other expenses. Hardship grants are given to pupils who may struggle to pay membership fees. Parents/carers should contact their child's guidance teacher for this to be processed. Those on free school meals will have free access but must complete consent/medical form.

The membership covers any Sport activities shown in the EASA timetable, and also all representation of NASSA activities:

- NASSA Swimming
- NASSA Golf
- NASSA Football
- NASSA Tennis
- NASSA Athletics
- NASSA Cross Country
- NASSA Basketball
- NASSA Badminton
- NASSA Netball
- NASSA Volleyball
- NASSA Hockey

Those pupils who are not a member of EASA are still able to participate in all Interhouse competitions to gain points for their house. Most events are held at lunchtime on Thursdays.

How to sign up?

On Thursday 11th November and Friday 12th November there will be sign up days at lunchtime in the Games Hall. Pupils will need to hand £30 by either cheque (payable to ELLON ACADEMY) or in cash to one of our staff members. Prior to this pupils will need to complete a consent/medical form which will be available on EASA Facebook Page on Monday 8th November.

A staff member will provide the pupil with a receipt once payment has been received. If anyone is having difficulty accessing the consent form, they should notify a PE teacher who will provide them with a paper copy. Thank you.

Mr M Adam



Remembrance 2021 at Ellon Academy:



As you will be aware, this November commemorates 100 years of Poppy Scotland and we have been completely overwhelmed with the community support for our Poppy Challenge and we want to extend our sincere thanks to families and members of the local community for their time and generosity making such beautiful and creative poppies and providing wool, knitting needles and crochet hooks etc and sending them into our school. We are busy constructing our Commemorative Poppy Waterfall and will be ready to display this from Monday next week. We'll take lots of photos for our social media page and for next week's newsletter.

We are also working on a Virtual Assembly to be delivered by pupils and will involve a short input from our S6 Executive Team, a performance from an S3 Drama class, a minute of silence at 11am and a reading to end the minute of silence over the tannoy.

A huge thanks to Mrs Leslie, Mrs Murdoch, school staff, the Global Citizenship Pupil Group, Humanities pupils and members of our local community for their hard work and help with this excellent project. Here is the work in progress! Can't wait to show you the finished waterfall!



'You've been 'Mugged'!

Who is the mystery mugger?



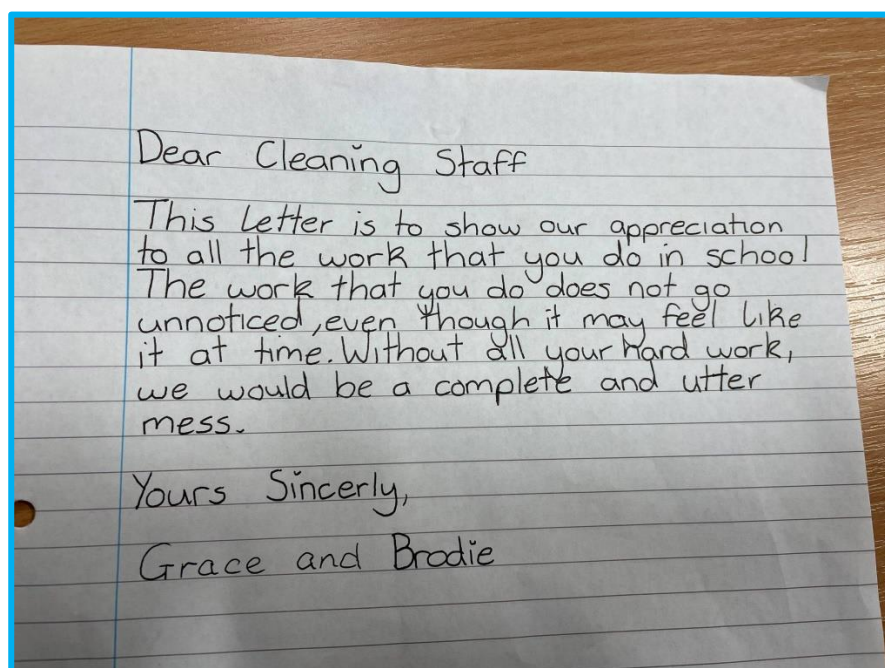
YOU'VE BEEN MUGGED (by a sanitised hand!)

think you're doing a great job and thoroughly deserve this mug full of treats. The past year hasn't been easy, but we've gotten through it together. Give yourself a pat on the back and know that your efforts don't go unnoticed.

If you feel up to it- please pass on this mugging to another colleague or 2! The more mugs the merrier! Thanks again, your friend, colleague, and mugger!

Random Acts of Kindness:

Thanks so much to Grace and Brodie for writing this lovely letter to our cleaning staff. Our Cleaning Supervisor Mrs Willox said, 'we are very proud of this'. I imagine this will be framed soon and displayed on the wall! It's lovely to see that our young people appreciate everyone in our school and the very important jobs they do for us.



Dear Cleaning Staff

This letter is to show our appreciation to all the work that you do in school! The work that you do does not go unnoticed, even though it may feel like it at times. Without all your hard work, we would be a complete and utter mess.

Yours Sincerely,

Grace and Brodie

Random Acts of Kindness:

So proud of Dylan 1K1 and Joshua 1M2 for finding another pupils' Young Scot Card and handing it in safely. Well done boys!



We are so fortunate to have such kind and thoughtful young people and adults in our school.

Parent Council:

Next Parent Council Meeting: The next virtual Parent Council Meeting is on Wednesday 24th November 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:

- Start of Term 2 – Monday 1st November
- Remembrance Activities – Thursday 11.11.21
- S1 Pastoral Virtual Parents Evening – Thursday 11.11.21
- Term 2 Inservice Days – Thurs 18th/Fri 19th November 2021
- S1/2/3 Tracking Reports to be issued via Parents Portal week beginning Mon 22.11.21
- S4/5/6 Full Reports to be issued week beginning 6.12.21
- End of Term 2 – Tuesday 21.12.21 (Last day of Term)
- Start of Term 3 – Thursday 6.1.22

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
5.11.21