



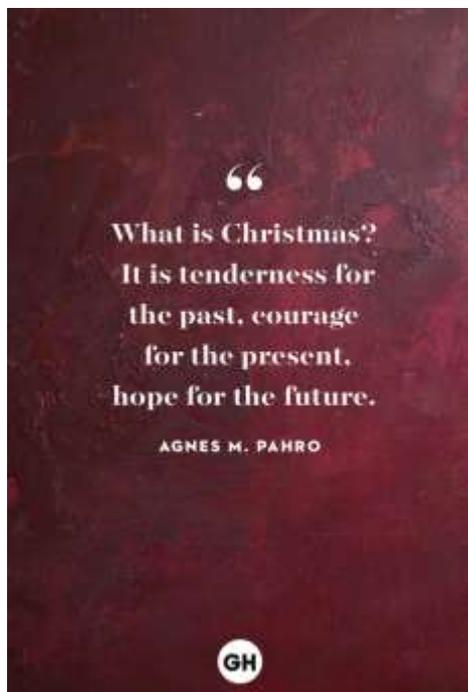
ELLON ACADEMY WEEKLY INFORMATION FOR PARENT/CARERS

To: All Parents/Carers
From: Pauline Buchan, Rector
Subject: Weekly Information Up-date
Date: Friday 17th December 2021

As you will be aware, we have had several further new positive cases of Covid-19 amongst our pupils, ranging from S1 – S6 this week. We hope that all families affected will be back to normal very soon. As a reminder to all parents/carers, due to the increasing numbers of pupils now absent due to Covid, absent due to self-isolating and absent due to shielding, we do not have the capacity to populate Google Classroom as much as we'd like. Staff in school are still teaching full timetables, writing reports and currently covering classes for absent colleagues, so have limited time to up-date and check Google Classroom.

Here are the updates for this week:

The Quote of the Week beginning 20.12.21:



School Uniform:

Thinking ahead to January 2022, we have noticed that some pupils' standards of school dress has slipped somewhat, in particular, white trainers are creeping in, and some pupils are wearing tracksuit bottoms or joggers. We would appreciate parental support in ensuring that pupils return to school in January dressed as specified below:

- All pupils must arrive at school in uniform, regardless of if they have PE first thing
- All pupils must change back into their school uniform after PE classes

Expectations:

- White shirt and school tie
- Plain black jumper, cardigan, or sweatshirt
- Black trousers, jeans, leggings, or skirts (no tracksuit or jogging bottoms)
- **Black** shoes/trainers (white trainers are not part of the school dress code) Black trainers with white stripe/markings are permitted
- School bag and warm outer clothing for adverse weather

Covid Up-dates:

The Scottish Government CERG group will be sending new guidance to schools later today and Head Teachers will have an up-date next Monday from our Director of Education. As ever, we will ensure parents/carers have all the latest information which affects schools.

COVID-19 Lateral Flow Device Testing at Home:

Up-dated information was sent home to parents/carers last week with clarification about home LFD testing and pupils can continue to pick up test kits from the school.

This information has also been up-loaded to the school website. Click on the link below to view:

<https://ellonacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/covid-19-information/>

Thank you for all you do to help keep our school safe for everyone. A vitally important part of this is regular testing at home using Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests. For that reason, I am asking you to encourage or support your child this winter to:

- **Test regularly (twice a week) at home (not in school); and**
- **Report all results, whether positive negative or void, at www.covidtest.scot or by calling 119.**

Why does testing and reporting results matter?

- Regular, twice-weekly testing at home can identify people at an early stage who have Covid with no symptoms. By asking them to self-isolate, we can reduce the risk of the virus being passed on and avoid more of our young people and staff missing school over the winter period.
- Reporting positives means your family will receive the advice and support you need. Reporting negative and void results helps public health experts to understand the full picture of COVID in our area, and to plan to protect communities and keep schools safe and open.

What else do I need to know?

- The online portal for reporting results has been improved following feedback – you can now register family accounts that save key information for all your family members, so it only takes a few minutes to report results using your phone.
- All our school pupils can access LFD test kits free of charge from our school.
- LFD tests are very good at identifying people who don't have symptoms but who have a "high viral load". Those are the people who are most infectious and likely to pass the virus onto others. All LFDs supplied by schools have passed rigorous safety tests.

NB: If your child receives a positive result from their LFD test at home or has symptoms, they must report any LFD test result online (or by calling 119), self-isolate and book a PCR test via NHS Inform at www.nhsinform.scot. Everyone in the household should also self-isolate and follow the advice about next steps on NHS Inform.

There are no plans to instigate testing in school, only at home.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, and for contributing to the shared effort to test, report and keep our school community safe during the winter period.

Further information for parents/carers is at: www.parentclub.scot/articles/covid-19-testing-staff-and-pupils, and more general information on LFD testing can be found at www.nhsinform.scot. Frequently Asked Questions for young people, designed in partnership with Young Scot, can be found here: <https://young.scot/get-informed/national/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-for-young-people-at-school>

Christmas Lunches 2021 at Ellon Academy

A huge thank you to our catering staff for the excellent service throughout the year and for providing 4 opportunities for pupils and staff to have a home cooked Christmas lunch.

Ellon Academy Library - Risk it for a Biscuit:

Groups of S6 pupils in the library choosing mystery books, making up clues and wrapping the books, matching them to their teachers' likes!



Acts of Kindness

This week some of our intrepid S6 pupils delivered cards and gifts to the residents in our local care homes and they were received so graciously. Thank you to them and to Miss Tomlinson for supporting.



Thanks again to our Fair-Trade Committee for serving up so welcomed and warm hot chocolate today!

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:

Foundation Apprenticeship Afternoon Tea

This afternoon, staff were treated to a fantastic St Andrews Day Afternoon Tea, prepared, and served by our S5 Hospitality Foundation Apprenticeship pupils John 5S2, Kai 5C1 and Duncan 5S1 and although absent today, Joe 5K1 has also contributed and worked hard to make this event successful. Top marks to all 4 lads and to Angela, their Tutor. Proceeds from staff donations are going to Charlie House. Well done and thank you.



Pupil Achievements:

We continue to give those pupils with the most merits a Fast Pass to skip the canteen queue every week. This is proving to be very popular with pupils as you can imagine!



Pupil Achievements:

Last night Jason B, was presented with his Chief Scout's Gold Award, the highest award in Scouts, showing great perseverance and personal achievements over his years in Scouting (despite over a year off Scouts due to Covid) We are all very proud of him! (Photos provided by Jason's mum.)



Pupil Achievements:

Alyssa G 4K1 qualified and swam in 6 events at the Scottish National Open Championship from the 10th to 12th of December in Edinburgh.

This is an open championship for all ages and was a great achievement in getting into a prestigious event at her age and a great learning experience for Alyssa swimming with the best Scottish competitors of all ages from all over UK. Alyssa had a strong meet adding some new personal best times and enjoyed the experience. Well done Alyssa!



January Senior Phase Assessment Block:

Ms Booth, DHT has sent a letter to all senior phase parents this week, detailing the arrangements for our January Assessment Block along with a timetable of assessments for pupils.

All assessments will also be posted on pupils Google Classrooms and will appear on their 'To Do' lists which parents can also access via Google Guardian.

This is the letter sent by Ms Booth last week:

Dear Parents/Carers

SQA Examinations & January Assessment Block 2022

Currently the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) is planning for a full examination diet, which will run from Tuesday 26 April – Wednesday 1 June 2022. This means a pupil's final grade will be determined by how well they perform in the final exam plus any SQA course assessment that contributes towards their final grade (e.g., assignments, projects, performance, etc.) Course assessment is usually marked by the SQA.

This means the grades teachers would expect their pupils to get (provisional results) will not determine their results this session. Due to the Covid-19 global pandemic and schools shutting during Lockdown, a new system of awarding grades to pupils had to be introduced for sessions 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 as exams could not take place. This was called the Alternative Certification Model (ACM). This model was based on teacher judgements and predictions.

*However, as session 2021-2022 is being treated as a 'normal' year by the SQA, teachers will submit estimates to the SQA as in previous years, pre-pandemic. The estimates submitted by teachers to the SQA will be used to: help to prioritise learners' scripts for re-consideration during the finalisation stage of awarding procedures; check that awarding outcomes are as fair as possible to learners; support the interpretation of evidence for Exceptional Circumstances Consideration requests. They will **not** be used as provisional results by the SQA unless exams are cancelled.*

According to the SQA an estimate is:

"... a judgement of a final grade and band for a graded National Course across all assessment components. It is based on a holistic review of a learner's performance as indicated by assessment evidence that is generated at the centre. It is important that each estimate is a realistic, evidence-based prediction of a learner's final attainment in the course assessment."

'Assessment evidence' is made up of assessments that learners have done throughout the year that best shows their skills, knowledge and understanding of the course.

SQA Mitigations and Contingencies

The SQA has made changes to course assessments because of the disruption caused by the pandemic. For example, in some subjects, elements of coursework have been removed or the exam has been reduced. In other subjects the SQA has removed some parts of the course. This means that learners should do less assessment than in previous years prior to the pandemic, so that there is more time for learning and teaching.

The SQA is also looking at what it can do in case the levels of disruption increase even more than what we already have. If this were to happen, the SQA may be able to provide additional support to help learners' revision and help to reduce stress in the run up the exams.

The Scottish Government will continue to monitor public health risks and if the COVID-19 pandemic gets worse to the point where large physical gatherings are restricted at the time of the exams in April and May, the SQA exam diet will be cancelled. If this happens, the focus for schools will continue to be learning and teaching, with assessment to support that process.

If this does happen, for session 2021–22, teachers will use learners' assessment evidence to decide provisional results. This means that teachers will base learners' predicted grades on assessments that have taken place during the session, such as prelims, practical activities, performances, and class tests.

January Assessment Block

With learning and teaching of courses well in progress, with assessment supporting this process, learners will be demonstrating evidence of how well they can apply their skills, knowledge and understanding of their courses so far. Usually, prelims in January provide a key checkpoint to assess progress under exam-style conditions. Due to continued public health restrictions due to Covid-19, we are still unable to run a traditional style prelim diet. Instead, we have planned a timetable of classroom-based assessments, which accompany this letter.

The timetable, which runs from **Monday 10 January – Thursday 27 January**, aims to manage pupil workload by timetabling one assessment per day, and on occasion, two at most. Assessments have been timetabled in a double period for each subject (although the full 100 minutes may not be required) and will take place in your child's normal classrooms unless informed otherwise.

Depending on each subject's requirements, there may be none, one or two double periods timetabled during the January Assessment Block. Your child's teacher will go over the arrangements for each assessment, so pupils are clear on what to expect and when. This information will also be shared on Google Classroom.

Your child will attend their normal classes throughout the assessment block. Teachers may deliver revision in the classes running up to an assessment, if appropriate, or they may continue to teach the curriculum.

If your child requires Additional Assessment (AA) arrangements for an identified learning need, they may sit their assessment in a different classroom, for example, to access IT, or have different finishing times if they qualify for Extra Time. AA arrangements will be communicated separately to individuals.

Ellon Academy recognises the importance of parents as partners in supporting their child to achieve their potential. Please discuss the contents of this letter with your child and encourage them to speak to their teachers should they require further advice or support regarding their forthcoming assessments.

King regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T Booth', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ms T Booth
Depute Rector (SQA)

Mental Health and Wellbeing - Your Mind Your Body Podcast - New Episode Live

The fifth episode of the second series is now live and available to listen to via the links below. In this episode Mitch is joined by Kerry (Kooth) & Roisin (Togetherall) to discuss these two digital wellbeing resources. Kooth is an online mental wellbeing community aimed at children and young adults, from 10 years of age up to 18 years old. Togetherall is aimed at anyone aged 16 years old and over and is an online community where people support each other anonymously to improve mental health and wellbeing. These services are available 24/7, 365 days a year.

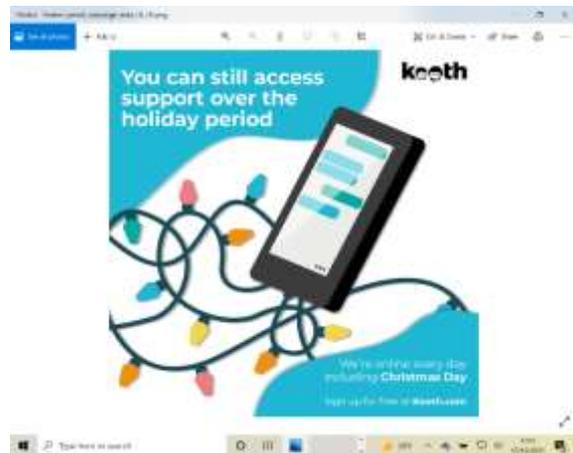
Promotional videos for both services and links to both websites are available via the links below:

Kooth: [Promotional Video](#) [Home Page](#)

Togetherall: [Home Page](#) [Promotional Video](#)

Links for podcast: [Spotify](#), [Pocket Casts](#), [Breaker](#), [Radio Public](#), [GooglePodcast](#), [Anchor](#)

Holiday Chat is still available over the holidays for all young people:



Chat Availability Dates and Times		
Thursday 23/12/21 12pm - 10:00pm	Monday 27/12/21 4pm - 8:00pm	Friday 31/12/21 12pm - 6:00pm
Friday 24/12/21 12pm - 8:00pm	Tuesday 28/12/21 4pm - 8:00pm	Saturday 1/01/22 4pm - 8:00pm
Saturday 25/12/21 4pm - 8:00pm	Wednesday 29/12/21 12pm - 10:00pm	Sunday 2/01/22 6pm - 10:00pm
Sunday 26/12/21 6pm - 10:00pm	Thursday 30/12/21 12pm - 10:00pm	Monday 3/01/22 4pm - 8:00pm

Find support today by visiting [kooth.com](https://www.kooth.com)

Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) – Message from the Aberdeenshire EMA Team:

As we are approaching the end of another busy year, we just want to send a reminder that EMA

Applications are still open [Education Maintenance Allowance \(EMA\) - Aberdeenshire Council](#)

The deadline for winter intake is 28th February and we cannot accept any applications after 31st March 2022.

Dates For Your Diary – Important Up-date below:

- Occasional days for session 21/22:

- Wed 5.1.22 – occasional day added on the end of the Christmas break
- Term 3 starts Thurs 6.1.22 – 8.25am
- 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)
- Aberdeenshire Council sent information to schools this week regarding the May Day holiday and the additional day to celebrate HM The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee.

➤ The May Day holiday on 2nd May will now be removed and moved to Thurs 2nd June 2022

➤ Friday 3rd June will not be a designated public holiday to mark the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee

- This change will affect our planned timetable change and our Senior Induction, so we will communicate those changes in due course.

Term 2:

- S6 Christmas Jumpers as part of usual uniform from Wed 1.12.21 until the end of term
- End of Term 2 – Tuesday 21.12.21 (Last day of Term)
- Start of Term 3 – Thursday 6.1.22
- S1 Tracking Report (No.2) issued week beginning 17.1.22
- S2 Full Report issued week beginning 17.1.22
- S2 Virtual Parents Evening – Wed 26.1.22 (4.30pm – 7pm)

Thank you once more for your continued support. I hope that all Ellon Academy families have a lovely, safe, and warm Christmas.

Pauline Buchan

Rector
17.12.21

