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## ELLON ACADEMY UP-DATE FOR PARENTS/CARERS

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To: All Parents and Carers  
From: Pauline Buchan, Rector  
Subject: Information Up-date  
Date: 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020

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### Quote of the Week beginning 22.6.20:



Here are the updates for this week:

### On-line Learning/Google Classroom/Scholar

Members of our teaching staff delivered an excellent professional learning session on the various functions of Google Classroom. Over 50 staff participated in this virtual on-line training session and agreed that it was very helpful indeed. We are very fortunate at Ellon Academy to have teaching staff who are willing and able to share their experience and expertise with their colleagues. As previously mentioned, we are looking to install **Google Guardian** which is a function which will enable parents to have a more active part in learners' work and homework.

There are still some learners who have not yet accepted the invites to Google Classroom for their new timetable subjects. If your child has not been able to engage with on-line learning since the change of timetable on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, parents will receive a letter offering help and support. These letters were sent today. Learners who are not engaging with learning for no apparent or plausible reasons, have also been identified and their parents will receive this letter too. If your child/children have yet to sign up to their new google classrooms, please encourage them to do so as soon as possible. If there are any issues about their subjects or timetable, please contact the appropriate Guidance Teacher to raise these concerns and we will respond as quickly as we can to resolve any access issues. We are also working on a dedicated email address for parents to use if learners are experiencing technical issues with hardware or accessing Google Classroom or Glow. We are hopeful that this will be set up in the next week and we will ensure you have these details.

It is important to note that Google Classroom is a mechanism for teachers communicating with pupils, not parents. Any parent wishing to make contact with the school should do so through the normal channels of communication by emailing [ellon.aca@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:ellon.aca@aberdeenshire.gov.uk) or by contacting your child's Guidance Teacher.

Cheyne House	-	Mrs P Waugh	<a href="mailto:paula.waugh@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">paula.waugh@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a>
Keith House	-	Mr K Findlay	<a href="mailto:kris.findlay@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">kris.findlay@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a>
Forbes House	-	Miss N Jeffrey	<a href="mailto:nicole.jeffrey@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">nicole.jeffrey@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a>
McDonald House	-	Mrs C Kaczmarek	<a href="mailto:claire.kaczmarek@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">claire.kaczmarek@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a>
Sinclair House	-	Mr Niall Corser (Mon/Tues)	<a href="mailto:niall.corser@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">niall.corser@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a>
	-	Miss M Watt (Wed/Thurs/Fri)	<a href="mailto:may.watt@aberdeenshire.gov.uk">may.watt@aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a>

### **Lockdown Learning Schedule:**

This week's Lockdown Learning Schedule has been published today (Friday 19th June) ready for the week beginning Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June. This will continue to help and support pupils and parents/carers to see the work posted for the coming week on one document. We are aware that some parents have found it challenging to motivate their child/children to engage in school work at home, therefore, we have been collating the names of pupils who have not been engaging with on-line learning and we will be in touch with parents to offer support over the next week or so. We will continue with on-line learning for the rest of this term and we have finalised our plans for returning to school in August which will be shared with parents, week beginning 22.6.20

### **Google Meet:**

We are currently trialling staff to staff Google Meets in preparation for using this after the summer for more interactive staff to pupil on-line learning. This has been a welcome development from Aberdeenshire Council approving the use of Google Meet for Aberdeenshire schools.

### **Scholar:**

Scholar is a resource we use every year to support senior pupils in their courses and we are getting this set up again currently. This year, we are looking to set this up for S3 pupils too, so more information will come regarding this.

### **Return, Restore and Reset:**

Since my last up-date, the Senior Leadership Team have shared our final return plans with our Principal Teachers, who are now working with their faculties on the finer detail of implementing these plans. We will be able to share these plans with parents/carers and pupils during the next working week, and we are meeting with representatives of the Parent Council on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June to share our plans with them initially. These plans have been approved by our Head of Service and Director of Education, Aberdeenshire Council. As I have already said, the timetable for returning to school in August will not look like the one we have created for 'normal times'. Therefore, pupils only need to know what their subjects are at this stage.

The plan is based on blended learning from August with some teaching in school, and some aspects of courses delivered online. Our plan is agile enough to modify and adapt reasonably quickly when required, so that we can increase in-school capacity for learners and staff when restrictions are relaxed. We have completed an extensive Risk Assessment and Fire Evacuation procedure which is currently in trial, being tested in preparation for the return of learners and staff.

These are the issues we have made some progress on since last week:

- We have agreed on a refined and final plan for learners returning to the school building in August. We anticipate that this will be ready to share with parents and pupils during the week beginning Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June.
- Classrooms and teaching areas have been configured with 8 – 10 desks/workstations, all 2 meters apart

- We have agreed a curriculum delivery plan ensuring access to subjects and courses chosen by pupils
- We have ascertained our staffing capacity in preparation for August
- We have plans in place to safely deliver practically based subjects in school taking the hygienic use of tools, apparatus, computers, PE equipment, instruments etc into account
- Cleaning services have been mobilised to ensure the on-going deep cleaning of schools
- One-way directional signage and 2-meter distance floor markings have been installed all around the building and these systems are being tried and tested with school staff since Tues 16<sup>th</sup> June
- Pupils will work in Learning Zones with Home Rooms for junior pupils and will be allocated their own entrances/exit and toilet facilities within that Learning Zone
- Catering services are extremely flexible in meeting the needs of schools and potentially providing grab bags for pupil lunches. Pupils who are entitled to Free School Meals will still be able to access this provision
- An isolation/infection control room (G4) has been set up for those presenting with COVID-19 symptoms as part of Track and Trace. School nurses and first aiders will have full PPE
- Learners and staff can come to school with face coverings if they would like to
- School uniform will not be compulsory during Term 1. Pupils will not be in school full time initially, and we have been given advice from Aberdeenshire Council to relax our dress code expectations.

*It is important that after such a significant period away from school pupils are supported back into their new routines as swiftly as possible with their health and wellbeing firmly at the centre of everyone's attention. Whilst the school dress code is an important part of that routine in many schools, it should also be acknowledged that the priority focus should be on ensuring young people are safe and well and ready to re-integrate back into schools. Young people should be asked to dress appropriately for school but given the pressures many families may be under at present; no undue pressure should be placed on young people to wear school uniform. It is appreciated that some young people may stretch the definition of "appropriate" and individual schools should work with young people and their families on what is acceptable and what is not.*

- Still awaiting local authority plans regarding transport/ASN transport to school. A parental survey has been issued.
- A letter has been sent to all parents regarding registering for childcare hub places
- To minimise the spread of infection, after the summer, pupils will be asked to bring their own essential items:
  - **My Essential Toolkit** suggested items may include:
    - Pencil case (pencil, pen, rubber, ruler, sharpener, calculator, coloured pens/pencils, glue stick, small scissors, hand sanitiser, tissues)
    - Pupils who are entitled to free school meals will be provided with essential toolkits from the school

#### **Advice regarding Covid-19 Symptoms:**

If pupils or staff have developed symptoms (however mild) in the last 7 days, they must stay at home for 7 days from the start of emergent symptoms and arrange to be tested. Pupils and staff should remain at home until they get the result of the test, and then follow the advice given based on the result.

Transport Survey:

Here is the link to the transport survey. If you require school transport and you are in zone, please complete this survey as soon as you can.

[https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=BpPZ\\_i1NCUSVndDttzBKC3EDP5P7FqpBnuVisQO5s2VUN1o1UzBVWU03VIVGSTE2M1NZS1Q5UUFSVS4u](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=BpPZ_i1NCUSVndDttzBKC3EDP5P7FqpBnuVisQO5s2VUN1o1UzBVWU03VIVGSTE2M1NZS1Q5UUFSVS4u)

### Further information:

We will be ready to issue a comprehensive information paper regarding all of the above, along with details of our Return, Restore and Rest plan week beginning Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2020.

### School Leavers (S4/S5 and S6)

The staff at Ellon Academy are dismayed that we can't mark the end of a school era in the usual ways, to say our fond farewells to our leavers, wishing them well as they take the next steps in their lives. So, with the help of Ms Jane Smith, one of our parents, we would like to offer our S4, S5 and S6 leavers the opportunity to purchase a Leavers Hoodie 2020. If your son/daughter has just finished S6 and didn't order a hoodie prior to lockdown, they can still do so now. If your son/daughter is in S4/S5 and is leaving school now, you can order a Leavers Hoodie for them with their nickname or an appropriate favourite slogan on the back.

If you are interested in this for your 'school leaver', please contact Ms Smith at [marsmel2@gmail.com](mailto:marsmel2@gmail.com) She has kindly offered to contact the company for us to help support our amazing school leavers and mark this occasion for them in this way. We would also like to thank one of our senior pupils, Carla Clark, for organising the initial S6 Leavers Hoodies and for giving Ms Smith the information required to organise this.

S4 and S5 leavers will have 'S4 Leavers 2020/S5 Leavers 2020 under the school logo on the front of their hoodie, left hand side). Slogans/nicknames on the back will be vetted by the school for appropriateness! 2020 will also be printed on the back of the hoodies.

The company Ms Smith is dealing with will be setting up an on-line shop just for us and our specifications, so if you contact her, she will be able to provide the details for you.

We are also hoping to produce a video of memories for our outgoing S6 pupils to celebrate their time at Ellon Academy.

We are also planning a 'Farewell Video' for our S6 pupils prior to the end of term too.

### Summary

- **Weekly Rector's Newsletter** to be issued to all parents on Fridays via Groupcall email, up-loaded on the website and signposted on Facebook, detailing up-dates and on-going information
- **Ellon Academy Weekly On-line Lockdown Learning Up-date** - The next schedule has been published today Friday 19th June in preparation for learning week beginning Monday 22nd June
- **Weekly On-line Assembly for pupils** to be published ready for week beginning Mon 22nd June
- **Moving Learning Forward** – On-line learning will continue until the end of this term, but discussions are underway for more fun tasks during the last week of term.
- **Supporting family engagement in learning** – On-going work supporting vulnerable pupils and families to access on-line learning
- **P7 – S1 Transition** – P7 pupils were informed of their new S1 classes last week. P7 socially distanced tours of the school have been organised for 3 days in July. More information will follow via the primary schools for all P7 pupils. We also have the Ellon Academy P7 Transition Facebook page:  
**Ellon Academy P7 Transition 2020** has on-going information for parents/carers. This work has been done in collaboration with our P7 Transition Working Group comprising of staff from the Academy and our Cluster Primaries. Ellon Academy faculties and our S6 Exec Team have already posted introductory videos and task for P7 pupils to view.

## Communication

The Parent and Pupil Zones on our school website for information and up-dates, which are listed chronologically, newest posts first and I have included some other signposts to links you may find helpful:

- <http://ellonacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/parent-zone/>
- <https://covid19.nhsgrampian.org/pages/for-the-public/mental-health-covid-19/how-do-you-self-refer-to-the-psychological-response-hub/>
- Aberdeenshire Educational Psychology Service telephone line: 01779 403721

And, of course, contact us, when you need to.

We hope that our Ellon Academy families will continue to keep safe and well and that together, we can ensure that our pupils will be able to thrive in these challenging times as we plan the safest and most considerate ways of a new model of schooling for the start of session 20/21.

Have a restful weekend.

Warmest wishes,

*Pauline Buchan*

Pauline Buchan  
Rector

19.6.20