



ELLON ACADEMY UP-DATE FOR PARENTS/CARERS

To: All Parents and Carers
From: Pauline Buchan, Rector
Subject: Information Up-date
Date: 12th June 2020



Quote of the Week beginning 15.6.20:

I hope that this newsletter finds you all safe and well, particularly on this sad day, when many of us paid our respects to Harvey Western by lining the streets of Ellon en route to his burial service today. His family and friends continue to be in our thoughts. As a mark of respect to Harvey and his family, no on-line learning will be posted today apart from the weekly schedule for next week.

Here are the updates for this week:

SQA – The messages below are the same as last week’s, but we feel it important to keep these in your minds.

MySQA

Please encourage your child to set up an account with MySQA (link in the table below). This will allow them to check the details the SQA currently holds, e.g. their name, address, courses, etc. to ensure accurate certification and delivery of results. If there are any inaccuracies, they should advise the school by emailing ellon.aca@aberdeenshire.gov.uk as soon as possible.

2020 Qualifications: Parent and Carer Support

Due to Coronavirus the SQA 2020 exams were cancelled. However, the SQA has stated your child will still receive their results on 4 August. The SQA will base its decisions on three principles:

- fairness to all learners
- safe and secure certification of your child’s qualifications
- making sure the qualifications your child achieves are equal to any achieved in the past, or in the future

How the SQA will provide your child's results:

1. Estimating	2. Awarding	3. Results	4. Appeals
<p>Teachers tell the SQA what estimated grade they expect your child to achieve.</p> <p>An estimate grade is what teachers would expect your child to achieve based on your child's performance.</p> <p>An estimate grade is not just the result of one prelim or one project, it's an overall judgement based on all activity for the year.</p>	<p>The SQA check and validate your child's estimated grade, adjusting if necessary to be consistent across schools/ colleges and with results from previous years.</p> <p>The SQA will use the estimates to produce your child's result.</p>	<p>Tuesday 4 August</p> <p>The SQA issues your child's results.</p> <p>Your child can sign up to MySQA for results by text/email.</p>	<p>After 4 August</p> <p>If your child disagrees with their result, speak to their school who may use the free appeals service.</p> <p>The school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - must have evidence to support their estimate - can only request an appeal if the grade your child receives on 4 August is lower than the estimated grade that was sent to the SQA.

For more information on the process, visit the SQA website pages for parents/carers at:

https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/93825.html?mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiTIRVMk5qWXdaRFU1TWpReSIsInQiOiJweXpHa25oYUYxMFh5ZVA0UkpTS1o4dlU5cHR4aEdiOWNQd0dybkgwQmxSbmZyXC9tc3hUeGhhOEh0dEwweFZkckpMRmdzOVdNUkhXU UxqMkhtZGRtSWhPT2lwMXFVTmk0UkZxdEFDWWRrVUZqVklCK1paQXQyWHO4WVNkMGILNW8ifQ%3D%3D

A pupil version of the information is available on the school website at:

<http://ellonacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Pupil-Presentation-SQA-Awards-2020-002.pdf>

On-line Learning/Google Classroom

Following the Parent Council meeting on Tuesday 2nd June, we have been able to respond to some queries and concerns raised on behalf of parents.

On the 19th of March, we had only one day of notification that school buildings were closing and overnight, my staff were in the position of having to deliver all learning on-line. Up to that point, we used on-line learning for young people who were absent long term due to illness, so I am proud of my staff for being able to come together as faculties to get on-line learning up and running from March. Very quickly, we realised that the various modes of delivery were not satisfactory for pupils and parents and therefore a strategic decision was made that all staff would use Google Classroom (GC) from the change of timetable (2nd June). This timescale was to allow staff who had no experience of GC to be researching, training and learning from others behind the scenes.

The whole school move to GC had been wholly positive, but like anything new, many staff are still learning and finding out the full capacity of this platform. Therefore, we have a group of experienced staff who will be leading training for all teachers of Ellon Academy to ensure consistency of learner experience across the board. In strategic terms, we have opted for Google Classroom because of its various functions. One of these is Google Guardian which is a function which will enable parents to have a more active part in learners' work and homework.

However, there are 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 2nd June, parents will receive a letter offering help and support.

Learners who are not engaging with learning for no apparent or plausible reasons, have also been identified and their parents will receive a 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 or by contacting your child's Guidance Teacher.

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

This week's Lockdown Learning Schedule has been published today (Friday 12th June) ready for the week beginning Monday 15th 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/carers to offer support over the next week or so. We will continue with on-line learning for the rest of this term and we are also working together to plan for a return to school in August.

Next Term

There have been some further changes to the return date for next term, which has been extremely frustrating: Mon 10th and Tues 11th August will be In-service days for school staff and the new term will start for some pupils on Wed 12th August.

The 'lost' week of summer holiday this year will be tagged onto the start summer break of 2021.

Return, Restore and Reset

Since my last up-date, the Senior Leadership Team have reviewed a number of additional models which other schools are adopting for the return to school buildings in August. As we 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 going forward.

We are now in the planning process for delivering blended learning in August with some teaching in school and some delivered online and this information will be given to pupils in due course.

We had have narrowed down our discussions to 2 different models of return and we are working to refine our preferred option so that it is adaptable to overnight change if required, so that we can easily increase capacity for learners and staff if there are timely changes and relaxation of restrictions. We have completed an extensive Risk Assessment and Fire Evacuation procedure which will be trialled during this month and tested in preparation for the return of learners and staff. These are the issues we continue to work 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 by Monday 22nd June.
- Classrooms and teaching areas will be configured with 8 – 10 desks/workstations, all 2 meters apart
- Deciding if on-line delivery of some curriculum areas/subjects is preferred and feasible
- Ascertaining our capacity in terms of staffing after the summer
- Deciding on how we safely deliver practically based subjects in school and the hygienic use of tools, apparatus, computers, PE equipment, instruments etc
- Cleaning services have been mobilised to ensure the on-going deep cleaning of schools
- There will be one-way directional signage and 2-meter distance floor markings all around the building at Ellon Academy - these systems will be trialled by school staff from Tues 16th June
- Pupils will work in learning zones and will be allocated their own entrances/exit and toilet facilities in that learning zone
- Still awaiting local authority advice on catering services – is it better for pupils/staff to bring their own snacks/drinks and packed lunches to avoid queuing and hygiene concerns when using school canteen and servery facilities?
- An isolation/infection control room (G4) will be 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
- Discussions regarding the potential relaxing of school uniform – to be decided in consultation with Parent Council representatives and Senior Leadership Team
- Still awaiting local authority plans regarding transport/ASN transport to school
- Awaiting information regarding the Ellon Child Care Hub and how parents apply for places after the summer
 - This hub is currently at Ellon Primary School but will move to the Community Wing at Ellon Academy Community Campus from Monday 29th June 2020
- To minimise the spread of infection, after the summer, pupils will be asked to bring their own essential items:
 - My Essential Toolkit including:
 - Pencil case (pencil, pen, rubber, rule, sharpener, calculator, hand sanitiser, tissues)
 - Pupils who are entitled to free school meals will be provided with essential toolkits

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 22nd 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 marshmel2@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 'Virtual Prizegiving' prior to the end of term too.

Return of School Items (e.g. textbooks, locker keys, library books, hardware, donations of school ties etc)

School Leavers will also be able to return school items and S6 pupils will be able to pick up their Yearbooks during the last week of term. This has been organised with strict social distancing and health and safety precautions in mind, so more details will follow.

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 12th June in preparation for learning week beginning Monday 15th June
- **Weekly On-line Assembly for pupils** to be published ready for week beginning Mon 15th 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** – The 2nd letter to P7 parents/carers has been issued this week and P7 pupils were made aware 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 information for parents/carers too. 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

12.6.20