



ELLON ACADEMY WEEKLY INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS



To: All parents/carers
From: Pauline Buchan, Rector
Subject: Weekly Information Up-date
Date: Friday 11th September 2020

Quote of the Week beginning 14.9.20:



Thank you once again to all parents and carers for your continued support this week. We continue to be encouraged, noting that almost every learner is supporting our risk assessments by complying with the mitigations currently in place to keep everyone safe. Learner walks have shown excellent engagement in lessons and we suspect learners are pleased to be back at school, although some may not admit that!

Here are the updates for this week:

Virtual Assembly:

This week's Virtual Assembly will be shown on Wednesday 16th September and registration will be extended for 5 minutes to ensure that there is enough time to view and for the Register Teacher to read the daily bulletin notices to all learners.

Google Meet:

There are still a number of parents/carers who have yet to grant/deny permission for their child/children to access Google Meet as part of the Google Suit. Ms Booth sent out a link prior to the summer. Google Meet facilitates video conferencing for teaching lessons. So far, over 500 parents have granted permission, so if you have yet to do so, please follow the link below. Thank you:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=BpPZ_i1NCUSVndDttzBKCw15nWANUipGkQs1n2P-2hZURTE4TzJCUVJGWEEzTjBYWDgzT1ZDSklBMS4u

Google Classroom: Frequently Asked Questions:

1. *Will our children be able to have video lessons now on Google Meet? If not why not?*

If parents have completed the online permission form – their child(ren) would be able to participate in Google Meet video conferencing lessons. Ongoing staff discussions around delivering face-to-face lessons and offering content/VC on the digital platform. Workload implications for staff that need to be carefully considered and planned within the school's Working Time Agreement.

2. *Do our teachers have CPD with this form of software and feel up to speed with Google Suite which has many add ons to enable accountability and smooth running of learning?*

We are lucky to have a member of staff who is an experienced Google Classroom Trainer. She produced an hour-long electronic training session that was accessed by a large number of staff during Lockdown. There was a follow-up CPD session whereby good practice and expertise was shared by several staff members from across different faculties. Aberdeenshire Council also offers regular IT training opportunities and staff have been signposted to these. Individual teachers will be at different stages in their digital learning and teaching journeys: any professional development requirements will be identified through our annual process of Professional Review and Development meetings with appropriate training opportunities identified and secured.

3. *Will learning materials be attached in Google friendly formats e.g if for editing by pupil it would be Google Docs?*

The more practice staff members have using Google Classroom, the more familiar they will become with its strengths and weaknesses and the struggles learners have with certain aspects of it. In the beginning staff grappled with using materials originally designed for print and the production of e-friendly versions of these materials. These issues have not gone away but staff are becoming more familiar with what works and does not work in terms of accessibility.

4. *Will we be able to see our child's work without having to log in as them? To allow us to monitor work set, marks gained, ask questions if need be etc?*

Not at the moment. It is hoped to introduce Google Guardian, a feature within Google Classroom, which will push out such notifications to parents. Permissions will be required from parents and they must have a Google account. We are currently working on progressing this.

Google Classroom Refresher Sessions:

Over the next few weeks leading up to the October break, all pupils will have a refresher period of how to use and navigate Google Classroom:

- Senior Leaders had their session on Thursday 10th September
- Mrs K Leslie, Principal Teacher Humanities and her staff will lead the in-class sessions for S1 – S4 learners.
- S5 learners will have their session during their Study Time with their House Depute Head Teacher
- S6 learners will have their session during Team PSE

Parentsportal

If you have not yet signed up for Parentsportal.scot, please do so as soon as you can by following the link below:

<https://parentsportal.scot/home/>

You will need to have a MyAberdeenshire account to do this. If you pay for school meals online through IPayImpact, you will have this already. If you require any help with setting any of this up, please contact the school office on 01358 281150.

In previous years, we have sent you our Annual Data Check Forms in paper format. These forms ensure the school holds accurate and up to date information for children and parents/carers. This year we shall be asking for this information electronically. This is done through parentsportal, hence the reason for our request.

Strategic Planning:

As you will understand, learning and teaching is our core business and never more has this been so crucial than now. Therefore, I thought it would be helpful for parents/carers to see what staff are working on behind the scenes at school:

Tracking, Monitoring and Reporting:

Senior Leaders have submitted a proposal to all teaching staff regarding how we continue to track, monitor and report (TMR) on learner progress in light of lockdown learning last session. We should have information on what our TMR calendar will look like next week.

Senior Pupil Ties:

The supplier has been in touch and finally, our blue Senior Pupil ties will be delivered next week.

Pupil Conduct:

Covid-19 Health, Safety and Wellbeing – Learner Compliance with School Mitigations:

A significantly small number of learners have not been able to comply with our Covid-19 mitigations and have displayed a laissez faire attitude to what we have had to put in place for the health, safety and wellbeing of all. We are glad to say that this only involves a very small minority of learners, so my Depute Head Teacher team have been in touch with those parents/carers and I have sent a letter, asking for their support.

Dangerous Cyclists:

Thanks to a parent with a dash-cam in their car, we now have identified some of the pupils who have been cycling unsafely for some time and causing distress to road users, pedestrians, and members of the community. We will be contacting their parents/carers and taking further action.

Thank you once again for your continued support as we navigate these challenging times, and I hope you all have a restful and peaceful weekend.

Yours sincerely

P Buchan

Pauline Buchan
Rector
11.9.20