



ELLON ACADEMY WEEKLY INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS

To: All Parents/Carers
From: Pauline Buchan, Rector
Subject: Weekly Information Up-date
Date: Friday 23rd April 2021

The Return to Full Time School:

This week we have been delighted to welcome all pupils back to school, and it has been good to see them all and to have the school brimming with excitement and chatter once again. We are aware of how the school environment is very different from learning at home and the majority of young people are glad to be back. However, we are taking their health and wellbeing very seriously and we are aware that this will be a significant re-adjustment for many pupils. We are also concentrating on building their confidence in learning and teaching and we plan to continue to use Google Classroom for homework tasks and for posting support materials for learners.

Quote of the Week beginning Monday 26.4.21:



Strength Quotes.net

Here are the updates for this week:

Next Parent Council Meeting:

The next virtual Parent Council Meeting is on Wednesday 9th June at 7pm via Zoom.

Please contact them via this email address: ellonacademyparentcouncil@gmail.com

Senior Phase Assessment Block Up-date:

Ms Booth DHT/SQA Co-ordinator has produced a Thinglink Infographic Guide for the Assessment Block for pupils, and this is now available on the website and formed the basis of the Virtual Assembly for S4/5/6 pupils at registration today. This Infographic was also sent home via Groupcall email today. Please follow the link to view:

<https://www.thinglink.com/card/1441716030253563907>

The Assessment Block Letter for parents/carers and the Assessment Block Calendar was issued on Friday 26th March and the 'How to Study Guide' for all senior phase pupils was issued on Monday 29th March. On Tuesday 30th March, we also issued a powerpoint presentation to parents/carers re Supporting Study 2021. Please click on the link below to view:

Supporting Study 2021: A Guide for Parents

<https://ellonacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/parent-zone/>

Also, the SQA have produced a booklet for senior pupils which can be accessed by following the link below:

[What you need to know for 2021 - National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher - SQA](#)



Learner Conversations:

Learner conversations with senior pupils regarding their progress were on going prior to Easter. Just a reminder that if your child/children are working on National 4 courses, there is no requirement from the SQA for assessments at N4 level, just N5, Higher and Advanced Higher.

Subject Choice and New Timetable Up-date:

Our Principal Teachers of Guidance have been working with pupils and parents/carers regarding their subject choices, if there have been issues with courses and any clashes which may occur. Mr Cowie DHT has been working hard and we now have a working draft of our new timetable, considering the increased number of pupils indicating that they plan to stay on at school next session.

Covid -19 Up-date – Every Mitigation Matters:

Although Secondary schools are back full time, with no social distancing, we remain in Level 4 nationally and we continue to do all we can to minimise the spread of infection to keep our school open, so here are our continued mitigations:

S1/2/3 pupils to enter and leave the school via the Pupil Doors:

S4/5/6 and G7 Hub/ASL Transport pupils to enter and leave the school via the Foyer/Reception Doors

- All pupils and staff are expected to wear face coverings at all times (not when eating/drinking) unless they are medically exempt
- Our one-way system is still in operation.
- All pupils and staff to hand sanitise on arrival.
- Pupils can gather in their designated year group zones prior to registration. See below:

- S1 – Canteen
 - S2/3 – Sunken Social Area and Street
 - S4 – Canteen
 - S5 – S5 Social Area on the First Floor
 - S6 – S6 Social Area on the Second Floor
- Pupils will be asked to hand sanitise on arrival at lessons and will participate in the faculty cleaning of tables/chairs and equipment as previously.
 - All PE classes have been outdoors since Mon 19.4.21 and pupils can come to school with suitable clothing for outdoor PE. Currently, we are not yet permitted to use indoor changing rooms. However, from Monday 26.4.21, indoor PE will be permitted (but not contact sports), but pupils will still not be able to use changing room facilities until further guidance is received.
 - Break and lunchtime food/drinks/snacks will be available as usual, but pupils will be asked to go outside when they have picked up their snack/lunch.
 - Senior pupils will be permitted to attend lunchtime study/drop-in sessions organised by faculty staff.
 - There is no requirement for pupils to wear school uniform until after summer.
- Break time will last for 20 mins.
 - Lunchtimes will be 45/50 mins each day and on Wed/Thurs/Fri, the school day ends at 2.40pm
 - Lateral Flow Test Kits – Pupils are able to collect, at lunchtime, 2 test kits from the office each time they need new ones. Also, NHS have asked schools to remind parents/carers that LF testing is for asymptomatic people only
- Outdoor breaks and lunchtimes:
NHS Grampian have also told schools that any mitigations we can put in place to stop the spread of Coronavirus is really helpful in keeping cases down and schools open. Therefore, this rationale has been applied to outside breaks and lunchtimes, where pupils are safest in an outdoor environment and can take off their masks too. Needless to say, if the weather is inclement, pupils will be permitted to remain indoors in their designated gathering areas. See above.
- Risk Assessment:
The latest version of our Covid Risk Assessment is now available on the school website by following this link:

<https://ellonacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/parent-zone/>
- Visitors to school will remain by appointment only

Staffing Up-date:

- Mr E Aldred Dow has been appointed to our Maths Teacher vacancy and he starts after the summer break
- Dr J MacPhee has been appointed to our Principal Teacher Science post and fully takes over from Dr M Cruickshank after the summer break
- Our new Aberdeenshire Quality Improvement Officer for the Ellon Cluster is Mrs F Cruickshanks

Congratulations to them all.

Budget Up-date:

Our Year-end spending plan is as follows:

- Purchased 10 new tables for the sunken social area. These tables have fixed seats and can accommodate 8 pupils each and are of much better quality for pupils. They are also foldable and can be easily moved if necessary.
- Purchased additional CCTV cameras in and outside school (Street, Sunken Social Area, Bike Racks and behind games hall)
- Purchased Maglocks for First Aid Corridor External door
- Purchased additional laptops for ASL Faculty
- Purchased additional whole school devices
- Purchased VPN laptops for all teaching staff
- Purchased replacement devices for the Business Education Faculty
- Changed the English Open Learning Area into a teaching space

S6 Leavers:

Yearbook – The S6 Yearbooks have been published and have arrived in school. More details re purchase and distribution to follow.

Hoodies – Pupils are in the process of ordering their Leavers' Hoodies.

Celebration Event – An S6 Leavers event is planned for the first week in June.

Leaving date - More details regarding official leaving date for all school leavers to be established by local and national agreements

Fusion App:

The Fusion App used for pre-ordering school lunches is currently out of operation as a result of technical glitches in the system regarding the new menus which have come online. This is expected to be resolved by the Aberdeenshire Catering Service in approximately one week's time.

Ellon Academy Sports Pitches Up-date:

After 5-6 long years of trying to get our pitches to be playable, after the final stages of remedial work, they will be ready for use after the summer break!

Heating and Ventilation Up-date:

Also, after years of extremes of temperatures in the school, there will be 2 engineers in school for the next few weeks checking every manifold re heating and ventilation in order to compile a report for the Local Authority. There will be no disruption to learning and teaching during this time.

Dates for your diary:

- S4/5/6 (National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher) Assessment Block starts on Mon 26.4.21 and runs for 5 weeks until Fri 28.5.21.
- May Day: Schools will be on holiday on Monday 3rd May.
- **Please note there is no Monday holiday on 7th June for the Ellon Cluster Schools**
- Additional Inservice days: The Scottish Government have agreed 2 additional in-service days to support school in meeting the SQA requirements for school staff to work on pupil's assessment evidence, draft predicted grades and the quality assurance processes necessary to meet SQA deadlines. It has been agreed that these 2 additional in-service days will be on Thursday 3rd and Friday 4th June.

Website up-dates:

Please follow the link below to the latest up-dates on our Ellon Academy school website:

<https://ellonacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/parent-zone/>

Thank you once more for your continued support.
Have a lovely spring break.

Yours sincerely,

P Buchan

Pauline Buchan, Rector 23.4.21