



PB/ed
01 April 2021

Dear Parent/Carers

As we approach the end of an extremely difficult and stressful term, I would like to personally thank the parents and carers of Ellon Academy for your continued support, patience and understanding.

The impact of Covid-19 on our young people cannot be underestimated and sadly, may have far reaching consequences in the future.

For the past year, our young people have been denied the simple things that we've always taken for granted. Going to school, meeting with friends, attending clubs and activities, going to town and seeing family members. These things are so important in the development of young people, and they have missed some of these necessary milestones in their growth and development towards adulthood. However, young people are resilient and they will bounce back with your support and ours.

One of the many roles of schools in the near future, will be that of 'recovery'. As you will be aware, since the start of the first lockdown, we have referred to our plans as 'Return, Restore and Reset', and we are determined to make the recovery from the impact of Covid as positive as it can be for our young people, as we return to full time school after Easter and beyond. It is my personal hope that the whole Scottish Education System will be reviewed in light of the pandemic, and that schools and parents/carers and pupils will have a voice in what that may look like in the future.

We plan to continue to use Google Classroom and Google Guardian for in-school lesson preparation and for homework, so we hope that if your child/children has/have been struggling with this at home, we can support them in school to be more confident. As a school, we have tried to assist pupils if they have encountered barriers to accessing the online curriculum in a variety of ways including:

- Providing access to school laptops/Chromebooks to help families who have no or little access to ICT at home. This may be because of having to share one family device
- Providing dongles for pupils to access the internet at home if connectivity is an issue
- Providing support and guidance to access Glow, Google Classroom and other learning platforms via teachers and Principal Teachers
- Manning a dedicated Technical Support email inbox for support with any technical issues encountered

For many families, this has been so hard. Trying to juggle work commitments and remote learning has been no easy task, not to mention the challenges around keeping in touch with family and friends, whilst trying to keep safe and well. Many of us have missed seeing family and friends, and our wellbeing has suffered as a result. There is a deep sense of loss this year, but there is also hope and optimism for the future, as the vaccination programme rolls out.

What silver linings can we keep, and what we can learn from the last year regarding a deeper value of life and relationships?

I want to commend you as parents/carers in all that you've done to support your child/children during this time, and also to recognise the challenges and struggles faced by our young people, who the vast majority of, have really tried to keep up with remote learning and faithfully complete the work set by their teachers.

A huge thanks and well done to you and your child/children. We really understand and appreciate how hard everyone has tried to make this work. Our young people have risen to the challenge, and so many of them have produced amazing work over the 2 lockdown periods. The majority of young people have shown great resilience, perseverance and determination in keeping their school work going, under the most difficult of circumstances and we genuinely thank them for that and for doing their personal best.

We are looking forward to seeing all of our pupils back after Easter, (fingers crossed for Mr Swinney's announcement on 6 April) and we will be ready to continue to support them through Term 4 and beyond, as we begin the process of recovery, and having our school filled with fun, laughter and learning again.

Have a lovely spring break.

With thanks and warmest wishes

P Buchan

Pauline Buchan, Rector