



ELLON ACADEMY WEEKLY INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS

To: All Parents/Carers
From: Pauline Buchan, Rector
Subject: Weekly Information Up-date
Date: Friday 28th May 2021

Quote of the Week beginning Monday 31.5.21



We have now completed week 5 of our assessment block and staff continue to be busy with marking, feedback, and moderation. As you will be aware, the Director of Education Laurence Findlay issued a letter regarding the release of Provisional Grades to pupils by Wednesday 23rd June and we are confident we will meet that deadline.

Here is the letter from Mr Findlay:

Dear Parent/Carer,

National Qualifications 2021

Further to my letter dated 1 April 2021, and as we move toward the latter stages of assessment evidence gathering under the SQA Alternative Certificate Model, I wish to provide you with an update regarding the remaining weeks.

Firstly, I am pleased to report that Aberdeenshire received extremely positive feedback on the manner in which our processes have been developed and implemented. This scrutiny activity was undertaken by Education Scotland in their National Review of the implementation of the Alternative Certificate Model. Publication of this report by Education Scotland is expected shortly.

Throughout this term, while assessment evidence gathering has been ongoing, young people will have been kept informed of their progress by their teachers through learning conversations. Provisional grades based on demonstrated attainment remain subject to the completion of the relevant quality assurance processes both within and between schools which will continue into June.

Once the process and all stages of determining Provisional Grades is complete, young people will be provided by their school with a collation of the grades being submitted to the SQA. This will be an ongoing process, and it is expected that schools will issue these notifications by Wednesday 23rd June. The SQA remain the awarding body and candidates will receive confirmation and certification of their results from the SQA on Tuesday 10th August.

At this stage we still await publication of the SQA Appeals procedure around the Alternative Certification Model. This information is expected imminently.

It is recognised that this year and particularly this term has been challenging for our young people in the Senior Phase who are working exceptionally hard and showing remarkable resilience.

Our staff in Aberdeenshire continue to work extremely hard to deliver the Alternative Certification Model to ensure that the grades awarded to our young people are evidence-based, fair, and underpinned by strong quality assurance processes.

Yours sincerely,

Laurence Findlay
Director of Education & Children's Services

We must commend our pupils for their perseverance, resilience, and determination. We see some very tired faces, and we are proud of our learners in how they are doing their very best in exceptionally difficult circumstances.

In order to provide well deserved recuperation time for them, our senior pupils have been granted an extended break from school on Monday 31st May, Tuesday 1st June and Wednesday 2nd June. There are also the in-service days on Thurs 3rd and Friday 4th June for all pupils so our seniors, (S4/5/6 only) will have a full week at home, with no expectations to do any schoolwork, so that those returning for S5/6 can reset and prepare for the change of timetable on Monday 7th June, when all seniors are expected back to school.

We wish all our school leavers every success, health and happiness for the future.

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

Change of Timetable:

Our new timetable for session 21/22 will start on Monday 7th June.

Senior pupils who are 16 prior to the 30th of September 2021 can leave school from Monday 31st May when all coursework and deadlines will be completed.

Staffing Up-date:

- I am delighted to let you know that Mr Findlay and his wife are the proud parents of a healthy new baby boy. We send them our congratulations and warmest wishes.
- Next week we say a fond farewell to Maria Collins, who has been one of our school technicians for many years. Maria originally worked at Meiklemill Primary School and has had various roles at the Academy including PSA and First Aider prior to her appointment with the Technicians Team. We wish her well for the future, with retirement bringing more opportunities to see her family more often. Thank you for all you've given to Ellon Academy and your colleagues who will miss you.

Mental Health Matters at Ellon Academy

NHS Self-Care for Teens

Pupils can access these helpful NHS videos looking at various topics, including:

- Self-care with Social Media
- Dealing with Change
- How to Deal with Unhelpful Thoughts
- The Worry Tree
- Sleep
- Physical Exercise – ‘Sweat’

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-wellbeing-tips/youth-mental-health/#videos>

Also:

Here is an excellent website designed for parents/carers to support the mental health and wellbeing of their children:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/>



Resetting our Expectations

In preparation for the change of timetable, we are keen to re-establish our routines and expectations with our learners. We had hoped to run live assemblies for each year group, but the Covid-19 restrictions do not grant us the opportunity to have over 50 learners in the Theatre all at one time, so these assemblies will continue on a virtual basis.

The themes to be covered are:

- School Values – In particular - Respect, Responsibility, Integrity and Dedication
- School Uniform in preparation for re-introducing this in August 2021
- Classroom Expectations
- Corridor, canteen and social area expectations
- Attendance and punctuality

Session 21/22 – School Uniform

As you will already be aware, in planning for next session, we are keen to re-establish our school uniform for pupils returning to school in August 2021.

We are working to produce a clear guide on our expectations prior to the summer, so that parents/carers and pupils know what to expect. We have been listening to pupils' views and this will be reflected in our publication which has been sent to you today.

S6 Leavers Hoodies – Due to a delay at the supplier end, we now expect our S6 hoodies to arrive next week.

S6 Leavers Event – Wednesday 2nd June 2021

As you will be aware, the global pandemic has affected what we have been able to do in school for our young people over the past 17 months and we wanted to give our S6 Leavers something back for missing out on a Prom and other things which usually happen for our eldest learners in school. So, for the past few weeks, we have been planning a S6 Leavers' event behind the scenes, and we can confirm that in discussion with our pupils, the event will be held on Wednesday 2nd June 2021.

The event will be held outside in the PE courts in a marquee, so we are ready for anything the weather could throw at us!

We plan to start at 10.00am with a "Crystal Maze" task devised by Mrs H Campbell, with four fiendishly difficult and hilarious challenges.

Then, we have organised a BBQ lunch supplied by Aberdeenshire Larder, and after lunch the Health and Wellbeing Faculty are running a Ceilidh.

Our staff have been invited to join the event at lunchtime and if they have any non-contact time during the day.

The event will close at 2.30pm in time for the school buses to take pupils home.

Many thanks to Miss Tomlinson, Mrs Campbell, Mr Corser and the Exec Team for their support in planning and organising this event and we hope that our S6 pupils have a lovely day, and we wish them every success, health and happiness for the future.

Active School Basketball:

Active Schools Basketball will run from Wed 26th May – 16th June at Ellon Community Campus outdoor courts from 6pm – 7pm.

To book follow the link <http://bit.ly/ASEllon> or contact kelly.green@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Young Enterprise – Flames and Frames:

Our six S5 Young Enterprise finalists, Flames 'N' Frames, are up for a People's Choice award as part of this year's Young Enterprise Scotland Company Programme Finals (to be held on Tuesday 1st June). The people's choice award is entirely down to you, the public, so if you would like to get behind our girls, you can scan the QR code below (if you have your registration teacher's permission) and fill in your name and email address. Your email address will only be used to verify your vote and no further correspondence will be sent to yourself from Young Enterprise.



Skills Development Scotland – Useful links for parents/carers and learners:



- **My World of Work**: Scotland's careers website
- **Apprenticeships.scot**: about apprenticeships in Scotland
- **My Kid's Career**: website for parents and carers
- **Skills Development Scotland**: Scotland's national skills body
- **Marketplace**: connect with businesses and apprentices
- **Digital World**: promoting digital technology skills and careers in Scotland

Live Life Aberdeenshire Online Resources and Activities:



The latest online [newsletter](#) from the Scottish Book Trust has been circulated and is packed full of inspiring content.

If you know someone who's still living life at home, why not tell them about Live Life Aberdeenshire's [range](#) of online activities and resources.

Details about Youth Music Initiative Projects:

The Youth Music Initiative is running free, fun music making sessions with priority spaces for care experienced children in P6 & P7 across Aberdeenshire. A picnic lunch will be provided and transport by taxi or minibus can be arranged at no cost if needed. There's a limited number of places so forms need to be completed by Monday, May 31.

Musicians Jenny Sturgeon and Adam Ross will run the sessions which will include making outdoor sound recordings, writing and recording a new song – most of which will take place outdoors – and there will be input from Aberdeenshire rangers, offering outdoor activities too. Jenny and Adam have recorded a welcome video with a link in the info sheets for each project. Children are encouraged to bring a friend if they'd like to take part but are feeling apprehensive about going on their own and not knowing anyone. Friends will need to complete a form too. Parents and carers are welcome to attend for some or all of the time if they wish, just let the Youth Music Initiative Coordinator know.

There are three projects which run 10am - 1pm for four days:

Crathes Castle 19 - 22 July (Pupils in catchment for Aboyne Academy, Alford Academy, Banchory Academy, Westhill Academy, Inverurie Academy, Kemnay Academy, Mackie Academy, Mearns Academy, Portlethen Academy)

Aden Country Park 26 – 29 July (Pupils in catchment for **Ellon Academy**, Meldrum Academy, Mintlaw Academy, Peterhead Academy)

Aden Country Park 2 – 5 August (Pupils in catchment for Banff Academy, Fraserburgh Academy, Gordon Schools, Turriff Academy)

Please contact Youth Music Initiative Coordinator Susan Whyte for more info:
susan.whyte@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Do you fancy sounding out this summer?

Live Life Aberdeenshire's Youth Music Initiative is running an exciting music and filmmaking project this summer. Called Sounding Out, the project is open to care experienced children and young people from S1 to S6 across Aberdeenshire.

Participants will work with music, sound and film professionals Dave Martin and Graeme Roger to create original sound and visual installations. These pieces will be inspired by local stories, legends, people, songs and the local environment and participants will be involved in all aspects of the project from planning, research and recording to final production.

Everyone will be involved in creating original sound pieces, music, film and projections using the latest industry standard professional software and hardware to produce their work.

There will be the chance to learn how to record in a studio environment and on location, composing music, manipulating sound, using and understanding MIDI and how to produce, mix and master using Logic Pro X on MacBook Pro Laptops Participants will also learn how to create exciting films and visuals using professional Hi Def cameras and then editing their work on Final Cut software. Work produced will be exhibited as a sound and visual site-specific installation in a final celebration which will be open for the public to view. There are a limited number of places so application forms need to be submitted by **Monday, May 31**.

The projects take place at Aden Country Park on either:

Monday 28 June 28 - Thursday July 1 or Saturday 3 July - Tuesday July 6

There is support available with providing transport.

For more information and an application form, please contact Youth Music Initiative Coordinator Susan Whyte susan.whyte@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

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.
- Monday 31st May – official leaving date for Senior Pupils.
- **Please note there is no Monday holiday on 7th June for the Ellon Cluster Schools**
- **Reset and Recuperate Week** – Break for our S4/5/6 Learners from Mon 31st May to Fri 4th June.
- 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.**
- Change of Timetable – Monday 7.6.21.
- S6 Leavers Event – Wednesday 2nd June from 10am
- Occasional days for session 21/22
 - Wed 5.1.22 – occasional day added on the end of the Christmas break
 - Thurs 10.2.22, Friday 11.2.22 (Mon 14.2.22 is already a holiday and Tues 15.2.21/Wed 16.2.21 are in-service days)
 - It has been mooted that May Day and Jubilee Day are combined – National decision, so more info as it is received
- Release of SQA Provision Grades by Wednesday 23rd June 2021.

Website up-dates:

Please follow the link below to the latest updates on our Ellon Academy school website:

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

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

Yours sincerely,

P Buchan

Pauline Buchan, Rector 28.5.21