

ELLON ACADEMY WEEKLY INFORMATION FOR PARENT/CARERS

To: All Parents/Carers
From: Pauline Buchan, Rector
Subject: Weekly Information Up-date
Date: Friday 14th January 2022

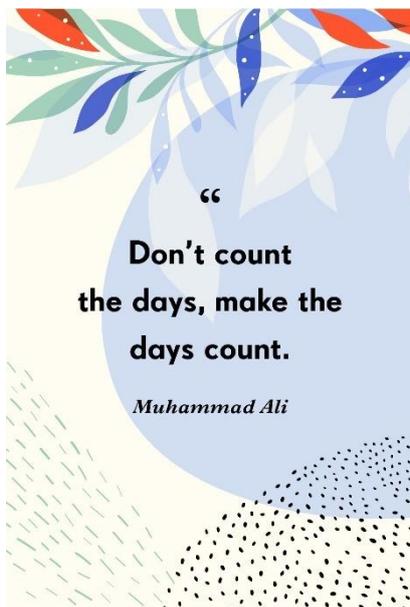
Dear parents/carers.

Once again, there have been more Covid-19 cases amongst our pupils this week, however, not as many as last week thankfully. Our thoughts are with the families affected and we look forward to seeing those who are self-isolating very soon.

If you have S4/5/6 children, you will be aware that the January Assessment Block started this past week. We really appreciate Ms Booth's efforts to ensure that there is only one assessment per day for most of our learners. Also, as Educationalists, we believe that learners benefit from being in school during the assessments for continued learning and consolidation and most are using their time well. Our senior learners have missed so much over 2 lockdowns, and we feel that they are best supported by expert teachers who can provide excellent support. Also, due to continued uncertainty for our learners in terms of exams in May, our staff are making every effort to support learners to show evidence of good work and progress on an on-going basis, so we are prepared for any change or eventuality.

Here are the updates for this week:

The Quote of the Week beginning 17.1.22:



School Uniform:

Thank you for your continued support of our school uniform. We certainly noticed that some white trainers had changed to black ones since our return. We appreciate your support in ensuring that pupils continue to come to school dressed in uniform as per our expectations.

As ever, the vast majority wear school dress code. This promotes school identity, safety on campus and a sense of pride in the school. Unfortunately, too many are forgetting ties, returning to white trainers, and remaining in PE kits. For some S5 and S6, you have chosen to return for extra schooling and dress code should be non-negotiable.

Registration Teachers will:

- Continue to encourage and support their class and school with dress code
- Continue to appreciate those learners supporting dress code
- Challenge those who need to take more responsibility
- Record a demerit for those not in dress code

Class Teachers will:

- Continue to encourage and support their classes and the school with dress code.
- Record a demerit for those not in dress code during Period 3 (after interval) and Period 5/6 (after lunch)

Partnership with Parents/Carers information to be aware of:

- We are aware that some pupils leave the house in dress code, but standards slip before arrival and sometimes throughout the day
- Dress Code Demerits will be analysed every week, and if a pupil is flagged on two or more days, a text message will be sent home

This is a reminder of our expectations:



ACCEPTABLE...

- Plain black skirt or trousers/black jeans, jeans-style trousers, black leggings or jeggings
- Ellon Academy school tie worn with a plain white collared/button down shirt
- A plain black jumper/cardigan or a plain black 'Ellon Academy' jumper

Footwear

- Black Shoes or trainers (black trainers with colour accents are acceptable)

Optional

- A plain black or 'Ellon Academy' fleece/jumper
- A black blazer (optional)



UNACCEPTABLE... X

- Clothes with patterns or other colours
- Joggers/tracksuit bottoms/faded black jeans
- Advertising brands/logos on jumpers/cardigans
- T-shirts or round neck tops instead of a collared shirt
- Sportswear (except for in PE classes and pupils must change back into school dress after PE)
- Wearing outdoor jackets, fleeces, hoodies or coats in class or registration
- Hats off and hoods down in school



January Senior Phase Assessment Block:

As you will be aware, our January Senior Phase Assessment Block started on Monday 10th January 2022. Senior phase learners have been preparing for these assessments in class during last term and these assessments will support us in ascertaining learners' progress so far in their chosen courses. At Ellon Academy we view the Assessment Block as an opportunity to generate evidence of learners' progress to date and teaching staff will go over the assessments with their classes and provide marks and next steps for pupils via Learner Conversations. The SQA are still planning for a full exam diet and as in any 'normal' year, they ask schools to submit estimate grades in February, and the assessment block will support this process too.

Assessment Block Covid Contingency:

We are aware that some pupils may still be self-isolating or might be unwell during the assessment block so here is our contingency plan for any missed assessments:

- Plan A - Teachers will arrange for the assessment to be taken after the learner returns to school following their period of self-isolation
- Plan B – We can use specific times in the week e.g., Wednesday afternoons to 'mop up' larger numbers of learners who may have missed assessments due to absence/illness/self-isolation
- Plan C – We do not anticipate that this will be required, but if so, we can use the best pieces of learners' work for evidence to ascertain at predicted grade

A PDF file of all Supported Study sessions/classes that are being offered to senior phase pupils (S4-S6) at Ellon Academy can now be viewed on the school website (in both Parent and Pupil Zones – see links below).

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

<https://ellonacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/pupils/>

SQA Information for parents/carers:

This information was published on Tuesday 11.1.22:

Supporting learners as Covid disruption continues

As the new term progresses, SQA is acutely aware of the impact the pandemic continues to have on learning and teaching as well as on you and your learners' experience of working towards National Qualifications in 2021-22.

SQA Exams

It is still the clear intention for the 2022 SQA exams to take place in April – June. Exams will only be cancelled by the Scottish Government if public health advice restricts physical gatherings at the time of the exams. We are closely monitoring the educational impact of the pandemic with our partners on the Covid-19 Education Recovery Group so that we can continue to provide as much support as possible for learners, most of whom will be sitting exams for the first time.

Clear contingency measures and plans, to deal with the kind of disruption currently being experienced, have been in place since the start of the 2021-22 session, and communicated to schools, colleges, training providers, learners, parents, and carers.

In August 2021, we published [significant modifications for each course](#) which mean less assessment than in a 'normal' exam year and more time for learning and teaching.

These modifications already play a significant part in supporting learners who are studying National Qualifications this year.

Revision support for learners

We are actively monitoring levels of disruption across the country, including levels of learner and staff absence. If significant levels of disruption continue, we will soon move to what has been referred to in previous communications as **Scenario 2**, which means supporting learners with their final revision in the immediate run-up to the exams.

In this scenario, revision support, for example guidance on topics, will be provided to help learners maximise their exam performance and reduce exam stress. There will not be any further changes to courses or course assessments, over and above those already in place through the existing modifications.

If we move to Scenario 2, revision support will be issued in March for most courses, to allow as much time as possible for learning and teaching. The type of revision support will differ across courses, depending on the assessment approach and the modifications made at the start of the session. We will provide more information as soon as these are finalised.

We know that you, your learners, and their parents/carers will have questions and Appendix 1 contains a Q&A to help answer some of these. Please be assured that we will continue to work with partners and listen to colleagues working in schools, colleges, and training providers to help support you and your learners as we progress towards the 2022 exam diet.

Appendix 1: Q&A

When will a decision on moving to Scenario 2 be made and on what basis?

Given the current levels of disruption, a decision is likely to be made soon based on information such as national teacher and pupil absence levels. That information, which is provided weekly to the Covid-19 Education Recovery Group, chaired by the Scottish Government, will inform SQA's decision to move to Scenario 2.

When will learners, parents and centres be told that a decision has been made?

If the decision is taken to move to Scenario 2 then this decision will be communicated to centres, learners and parents/carers as soon as is practicable and further advice made available on the types of revision support that will be provided. For some courses, this would be in the form of advice and guidance on what topics learners should focus their revision on to maximise their performance in exams.

When will centres, learners and parents/carers be given the revision support materials?

Learners will be given the support materials in March to aid their revision ahead of the Easter holidays. We will endeavour to give you early notice of the support materials for each exam so you can support your learners. It is important that this information is not provided too far in advance to avoid the narrowing of learning and teaching which will negatively impact learners' breadth of course knowledge/understanding and the next steps in their learning.

What additional support will be given to centres and learners impacted by significant staff and/or pupil isolation?

It is important to remember that the significant modifications already made to courses this year are designed to address the ongoing disruption to learning and teaching. Additional revision support, if provided, would provide further support.

If exams are cancelled when will that decision be made and communicated?

Exams will not be cancelled unless public health restrictions mean that physical gatherings are not permitted at the time of exams. Clearly this decision cannot be taken until nearer the time when the public health situation is clear, but the Scottish Government has indicated that this will be the end of March at the latest.

Will modifications be made to the timing of exams if the current situation continues to give centres/learners more time to catch up on learning/topics missed due to illness/ isolation?

No. The timing of the exams cannot be moved for a range of reasons, including allowing sufficient time for marking and informing learners of their results in good time to make decisions about their next steps.

Will modifications be made to actual examination papers if the current situation continues to give centres and learners pupils more time to catch up on learning and teaching missed due to illness/ isolation?

No but the revision support, if provided, will help learners focus their revision and maximise their performance in exams.

“Should the Scottish Government cancel the exams due to public health restrictions at the time of exams, we will enter Scenario 3. That means the evidence gathered through normal in-year assessment to determine learners’ estimates can be used to form the basis of their provisional results

Pupil Achievement:

Congratulations to Ben, Finlay, Aaron, and Aiden on being asked to represent Aberdeenshire at U15 football.



Pupil Achievement:

The pupils in the Junior Hub have made this beautiful patchwork quilt for an orphanage in Uganda. They worked on this for the whole of last term with the expert help of Mrs Jackson and Mrs McCraw. Be sure to zoom in to see the detail! It looks amazing and will be gratefully received and appreciated by the children in Uganda. Thank you and very well done.



The Young Person's Free Bus Travel Scheme:

Information about this scheme has been uploaded to the school website, and has been sent home via email. To view, please click on the link below:

<https://ellonacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/pupils/>

Litter in the Community:

This week we have received 2 letters of concern from members of the public regarding the amount of litter dropped between the school and the path to Tesco across Boaty Tam's Bridge. We always find this extremely disappointing because most of our young people are very responsible in the community. It has been reported to us that a person's dog became unwell after eating dropped food on the path and this is regretful. We frequently convey messages to pupils about litter and their school and local environment so any support you can give as parents/carers would certainly help too.

Dates For Your Diary – Important Up-date below:

- Occasional days for session 21/22:
 - Term 3 starts Thurs 6.1.22 – 8.25am
 - Thurs 10.2.22, Friday 11.2.22 (Mon 14.2.22 is already a holiday and Tues 15.2.22/Wed 16.2.22 are in-service days)
 - Aberdeenshire Council sent information to schools in the previous term regarding the May Day holiday and the additional day to celebrate HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.
 - The May Day holiday on 2nd May will now be removed and moved to Thurs 2nd June 2022
 - Friday 3rd June will now be a designated public holiday to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee
- This change will affect our planned timetable change, the S6 Leavers Event and our Senior Induction, so we will communicate those changes in due course.

Term 3:

- S1 Tracking Report (No.2) issued week beginning 17.1.22
- S2 Full Report issued week beginning 17.1.22
- S2 Course Choice Virtual Presentation to be published week beginning Mon 17.1.22
- S2 Course Choice Guidance Interviews week beginning Mon 24.1.22
- S2 Virtual Parents Evening – Wed 26.1.22 (4.30pm – 7pm)
- S3 Full Reports issued week beginning 7.2.22
- **S3 Course Choice Virtual Presentation/Parents Evening – This date is currently under review**
- Occasional Day 2/Holiday – Thursday 10.2.22
- Occasional Day 3/Holiday – Fri 11.2.22
- Holiday – Mon 14.2.22
- Inservice (1) – Tues 15.2.22
- Inservice (2) – Wed 16.2.22
- Fri 18.2.22 – S2 Course Choice Option Form deadline

This photograph was taken by one of our staff members on her way to school this morning and we've seen some stunning skies this cold January.



Thank you all for your continued support of our school.

Pauline Buchan

Rector
14.1.22