

ELLON ACADEMY WEEKLY INFORMATION FOR PARENT/CARERS

To: All Parents/Carers
From: Pauline Buchan, Rector
Subject: Weekly Information Up-date
Date: Friday 28th January 2022

Dear parents/carers.

I hope this newsletter finds you well and I'm glad to let you know that there have been much fewer covid cases amongst our learners this week. However, our thoughts are with those families affected and we look forward to seeing those who are self-isolating very soon.

Here are the updates for this week:

The Quote of the Week beginning 31.1.22:



School Uniform:

Thank you for your continued support of our school uniform. We continue to send text messages to parents and again we have noted some improvements. Thank you so much for your support with this.

January Senior Phase Assessment Block:

Our Senior Phase January Assessment block has now ended, and work goes on to mark, moderate and provide results, marks, and next steps to support and feedback to S4/5/6 pupils preparing for SQA exams in May/June, if these go ahead.

Below, I have included some information for parents about SQA and the expected examination diet in the summer term which you may find helpful.

Some parents have enquired about a further assessment block under SQA conditions and so far, the SQA are planning for a full examination diet in May/June this year, and the SQA 'Plan B' is already underway in that SQA will release revision information for pupils/parents and school staff regarding what to study and prepare for as a mitigation against absences from school due to Covid/self-isolation. We welcome Plan B as a school, and we have been informed that by March we should know if this plan is operational and what pupils are expected to study and prepare for.

If the traditional exam diet goes ahead in the summer term, we will be held to SQA conditions re timings, rooming, and invigilation etc, and at Ellon Academy we do not have an assembly hall, so therefore, we will be using our Games Hall and adjacent smaller gym halls.

We have been unable to provide a full exam experience this month during our January assessment block, because currently guidance for schools prevents gatherings of over 50+ pupils in one place for an extended period to time. However, these assessments have been carried out under SQA exam conditions albeit in classrooms.

Our pupils will also have input from Ms T Booth, DHT/SQA Co-ordinator about what to expect in exams 'proper' in May/June, including how the exam conditions in classrooms during January will be replicated in larger hall settings and highlighting what is expected of candidates in terms of what to bring/not to bring into exam halls, what to do if a candidate needs the toilet, the importance of candidate numbers and allocated seats and where to leave bags and personal devices/smart watches for security, integrity of papers and safety.

Since we do not have a dedicated assembly hall at Ellon Academy, we were unable to use the Theatre for the January Assessment Block due current Covid mitigations of no more than 50 learners in one space and also, the ventilation in the theatre recycles internal air. There is also the fact that the Theatre is a teaching classroom for Drama classes. Nor can we use the Games Hall/gyms in winter because we would have to displace all our PE classes outside. In May/June will be able to use the gyms and Games Hall because PE classes can be displaced and can be taught outside in better weather, and we can open external doors in the halls for better ventilation in the summer term.

I cannot comment on the January assessment arrangements in other schools, but I do know that some older schools have more larger halls and more additional spaces than Ellon Academy, and they may well be able to keep within 50+ rule if they have the space available. What I can say is that we, as a school, have done our best for our pupils under the current guidelines and have complied with our school Covid risk assessment and we ensured that most learners had one assessment only on any given day.

We are trying to navigate how best to provide some sort of further experience for our learners, under current covid restrictions. However, many Principal Teachers Faculty do not wish to lose any more teaching and revision time in the run up to the exams because some subjects have folios and assignments to finish and need the pupils in class to ensure the best outcomes for these essential elements of their courses. We will communicate any new plans in due course with all parents/carers.

SQA Up-date:

Supporting learners as Covid disruption continues – a message for parents and carers

As the new school term gets underway, SQA is very aware that the ongoing pandemic continues to impact on your child's learning and teaching.

We want to reassure you that we have taken this into account when developing plans to support learners as they progress through their National 5, Higher, and Advanced Higher courses and prepare for their exams in April – June. These plans continue to be developed with our partners across the education system – including the National Parent Forum for Scotland – and will ensure that the grades awarded to your child on results day will be a fair reflection of their skills and knowledge.

Outlined below is a reminder of how National 5, Higher and Advanced Highers will be assessed in 2022 and the additional support measures in place should significant levels of disruption continue.

What has been done to address disruption to learning already faced by learners?

We have already made changes – referred to as modifications – to course assessments (exams and/or coursework) to make them more manageable and allow for lost learning and teaching caused by the pandemic. The types of changes made to course assessments for this year included removing or reducing elements of an exam or coursework, changing the exam to provide more choice or time, or removing a topic.

What plans are in place should there continue to be disruption to learning?

We are continuing to monitor public health advice and levels of disruption across the country. The level of disruption to learning is being measured against national data such as teacher and pupil absence. If these levels of disruption continue, we will provide revision support for learners in March to ensure maximum time for learning and teaching, and to help with your child's preparation and reduce stress in the run up to the exams. The type of revision support depends on the modifications that were already made at the start of the session and will therefore differ across courses. For some courses, this would include advice and guidance on what topics learners should focus their revision on. We will provide more information as soon as it is available.

There is revision support currently available for learners. Education Scotland, in partnership with e-Sgoil, is running a series of Study Support Webinars for learners working towards National Qualifications in 2022. Details can be found on the [e-Sgoil website](#) and you should speak to your child's teacher or lecturer if you require further information.

Are 2022 SQA exams going ahead?

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. The Scottish Government has indicated that, whilst they can't know what the public health advice will be at the time of the exam diet, they will provide as much notice as possible.

SQA is closely monitoring the educational impact of the pandemic so that we can continue to support learners, most of whom will be sitting exams for the first time.

Can the timing of exams be changed to allow learners to catch-up on missed learning?

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, for example college or university places, apprenticeships, or employment.

How will my child be assessed if exams are cancelled?

If public health advice in Spring 2022 restricts physical gatherings and SQA exams are cancelled by the Scottish Government, teachers and lecturers will decide your child's provisional results based on the assessments they have completed throughout the year. This could be a mix of prelims, practical activities, performances and class tests. Teachers and lecturers will use their professional judgement to select the assessment evidence that best shows your child's skills, knowledge and understanding of their course.

Your child will not need to sit additional assessments.

Where can I find more information on National Qualifications in 2021-22?

Your child should have received a hard copy of our [guide to National Qualifications 2021-22 booklet](#) from their school, college or training provider, which you may also find useful.

To stay up to date, please visit sqa.org.uk/nq2022 and follow us on Facebook [@ScottishQualificationsAuthority](#).

Community Spirit:

Well done and thanks to Amelia S and Seren M in 1C1 for their work on litter posters for the school. Thanks girls! 🍷🍷🗑️ ❤️ the 🌍



Pupil Achievement:

Congratulations to Aidan M and Kade M, both S3, who have signed for Montrose FC U16's. Well done!



Pupil Achievement:

Brilliant achievement again by Millie U in S5.

[#SCOW17s](#) | Pauline MacDonald has named her Scotland Women's Under-17s squad for two friendlies against Wales next month.

➔ Read more: scotfa.co/wu17walf

VS Wales v Scotland

Tuesday 8 February – 6pm

📍 Central Park, Denbigh

VS Wales v Scotland

Friday 11 February – 12pm

📍 Colliers Park, Wrexham

SCOTLAND WOMEN'S UNDER-17s SQUAD

EILIDH AUSTIN RANGERS	KAYLA JARDINE RANGERS	LEAH SIDY SPARTANS
MYA BATES GLASGOW CITY	ELISE MACARA BOROUGHMUIR THISTLE	REBECCA TAYLOR RANGERS
TREE BURCHILL HAMILTON ACADEMICAL ¹	KIRSTY MACLEAN RANGERS	MILLIE URQUHART ABERDEEN
KIERA CHUTER CELTIC	LISA MAHER-RODGERS HEART OF MIDLOTHIAN	EMMA WATSON RANGERS
LEIGHA DOBBINS CELTIC	MIA MCAULEY RANGERS	¹ ON LOAN FROM CELTIC
MADDIE FINNIE ABERDEEN	ANNALISA MCCANN ABERDEEN	
LILY GRAHAM SPARTANS	JODI MCLEARY RANGERS	
GEORGIA GRAY RANGERS	NIAMH NOBLE GLASGOW CITY	
BRODIE GREENWOOD ABERDEEN	OLIVIA POTTER CELTIC	

Lead partners of the Scotland National Teams

Pupil Achievement:

Last Saturday, Hannah T became the new under 17 Scottish indoor 800m champion with a time of 2min 16.62s. The Under 17s Scottish championships took place in the Emirates Stadium, Glasgow. An amazing achievement Hannah, well done!



Pupil Initiative:

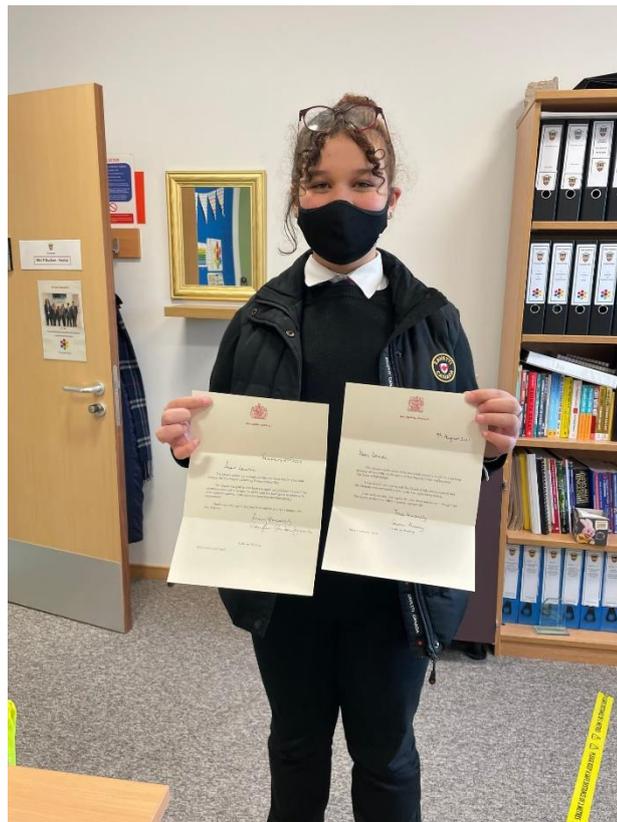
Mrs Murdoch our Senior Librarian tells us that Natasha W 5S1 did an excellent job (on her own initiative) tidying and re-shelving the senior fiction area of the library. Thanks, and well-done Natasha!

Pupil Initiative:

Cameron T 3S2 went along to the library on a day when he isn't actually on library rota, to help Mrs Murdoch, Senior Librarian to prepare for the lunchtime opening of the library. He said he was at English and just thought it would help me if he did that. Mrs Murdoch said, 'I really appreciated that he thought of me/the library particularly'. Thanks, and well done Cameron.

Act of Kindness:

Lauren M in 1S1 wrote to HRH The Queen to express her condolences when the Duke of Edinburgh died. She wrote to the Queen again in November after Remembrance, asking after her because she had been unable to attend the Remembrance Day events. To her surprise, Lauren received replies to both letters as you will see below. Well done, Lauren, it's clear that your kind letters were really appreciated. 🙏



Ellon Academy Bike Library is here! 🚲🚲🚲

'Ellon Academy is committed to supporting pupils and families with genuine active travel solutions and opportunities to further young peoples' wellbeing.

Outgrown your current bike? Need a new one? Want to be able to cycle safely to school?

In partnership with Sustrans, Ellon Academy is launching its new BIKE LIBRARY. There are 35 state of the art bicycles ready for short- or long-term loans.

If you're interested in loaning a brand-new bike with safety equipment included, please complete an application form at the following link or by scanning the QR code seen on posters around the school. Please see Mr Coe (S52) with any questions.

Applications will open on Monday 1st of February and assessed by a panel including DHT, PT Guidance and Mr Coe PT Pupil Development.

<https://forms.office.com/r/R1fNin9aNb>



The North of Scotland Universities Collaborative Project:

Dear Parents and Carers,

This project aims to support school pupils from across the region in thinking about future careers and pathways. On Thursday 10th February at 18:30 we will host an online information session for pupils currently making their course choices who are thinking about university in the future.

Our booking form can be found here: <https://gck.fm/khztz>

All pupils, as well as their parents and guardians, and school staff are welcome to attend. We would greatly appreciate if these events can be circulated to your pupils and across your school network.

With best wishes,

Anna

On behalf of the North of Scotland Universities Collaborative Project

NESCOL Higher Support Preparation for Exams:

Message sent on behalf of Dr Douglas Fraser Curriculum Manager of Science

Dear all,

We are pleased to make you aware of short courses which are on offer at NESCOL to assist you in preparing for end of year exams in Higher Sciences and Maths. We would be grateful if you are able to pass this information onto your learners.

Over seven evening sessions in the weeks leading up to the final exam, learners will work in small groups with other candidates to practice exam-style questions. Coaching during the class will help them improve the way they approach a range of questions. We will also cover aspects of the curriculum that have been identified as poorly answered in previous exams.

Further details of all courses may be found on the links below.

Preparation for Higher Biology – commencing 14th March
[Biology - North East Scotland College \(nescol.ac.uk\)](https://www.nescol.ac.uk)

Preparation for Higher Chemistry – commencing 3rd March
[Chemistry - North East Scotland College \(nescol.ac.uk\)](https://www.nescol.ac.uk)

Preparation for Higher Maths – commencing 9th March
[Maths - North East Scotland College \(nescol.ac.uk\)](https://www.nescol.ac.uk)

Preparation for Higher Physics – commencing 15th March
[Physics - North East Scotland College \(nescol.ac.uk\)](https://www.nescol.ac.uk)

Preparation for Higher Computing Science – commencing 30th March
[Computing Science - North East Scotland College \(nescol.ac.uk\)](https://www.nescol.ac.uk)

For further information on Maths, Chemistry, Physics, Biology please contact Douglas Fraser douglas.fraser@nescol.ac.uk or for Computing Science please contact Ben Thorn b.thorn@nescol.ac.uk

Dr Douglas Fraser
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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/>

Chinese New Year at Ellon Academy – 2022 Year of the Tiger

On Tuesday, 1st February, we are celebrating Chinese New Year.

Pupils and staff will get a wee surprise at registration!

There will also be a Chinese lunch served in our school canteen thanks to Rachael Jarvis and her team:

Here is the menu:

Soup

Chicken Noodle

Mains

Sweet and Sour Chicken with Rice

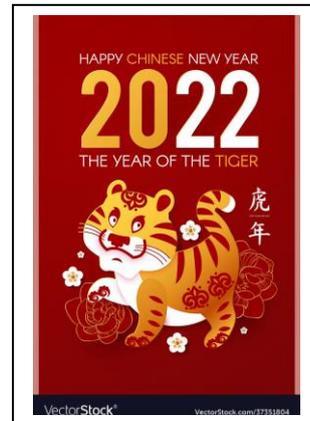
Beef in Black Bean Sauce with Noodles

Vegetable Chow Mein

Pudding

Iced Sponge and Custard

All the usual snacks will be available too!



Dates For Your Diary – Important Up-date below:

- Occasional days for session 21/22:
 - 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
 - The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Holiday will be on Friday 3rd June 2022
 - 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: (Change of date in red type below)

- S3 Full Reports issued week beginning 7.2.22
- S3 Guidance Course Choice Interviews – 8.2.22/9.2.22
- S3 Virtual Parents Evening was planned for Wed 9th Feb, but this is the night before the February long weekend, so it is now scheduled for Thursday 17th February (4.00pm – 6.30pm)
- Occasional Day 2/Long Weekend 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
- S4 Guidance Course Choice Interviews – week beginning 21.2.22
- S5 Guidance Course Choice Interviews – week beginning 28.2.22
- S4 Virtual Parents Evening – Wed 2.3.22 (4.00pm – 6.30pm)
- S5/6 Virtual Parents Evening – Wed 9.3.22 (4.00pm – 6.30pm)
- Last day of Term 3 – Friday 1st April

Thank you for your continued support of our school.

Pauline Buchan

Rector

28.1.22