

ELLON ACADEMY WEEKLY INFORMATION FOR PARENT/CARERS

To: All Parents/Carers
From: Pauline Buchan, Rector
Subject: Weekly Information Up-date
Date: Friday 4th February 2022

Dear parents/carers.

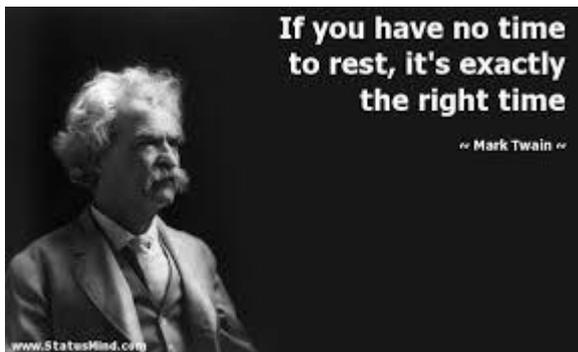
I hope this newsletter finds you well and I'm glad to let you know that there have been much fewer covid cases amongst our learners this week.

As you will be aware, when we have Covid cases, you receive a letter from me. This is Aberdeenshire Council protocol to inform parents and carers when there are positive cases amongst pupils.

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 4.2.22:



School Uniform:

Thank you for your continued support of our school uniform.

We have come a long way over the past 2 years in living with Coronavirus and for good reason, uniform was relaxed previously. However, Ellon Academy has high standards of ourselves and our learners, and we want to reflect this in the way that we turn out for school. When young people come dressed for school, there is a marked difference in conduct and again, learners wearing uniform helps us to be aware of potential intruders on the campus more readily.

We continue to send text messages to parents/carers to support pupils who need more encouragement and again we have noted some improvements. Thank you so much for your support with this, we have reduced the number of uniform texts by 50%! . We are now recording uniform issues during the school day because some learners' uniform fluctuates during the day, especially if they've had PE at some point.

SQA Up-date:

Information for parents and carers on the 2022 exams and revision support provided by the SQA

National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher exams are expected to take place in April to June 2022. The Scottish Government will only cancel the exams if public health advice restricts physical gatherings at the time the exams are due to take place.

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) has continued to closely monitor the levels of disruption to learning and teaching across the country, including learner and staff absences.

As a result, SQA is providing revision support for learners during week beginning 7 March, to help your child prepare and focus their revision, in the run up to the exams.

It is important that this information is not provided too far in advance of the exams, to ensure your child has had the opportunity complete the learning for their courses and focus on their coursework before their attention moves more fully to preparing for exams.

The type of revision support for each course will depend on the modifications to assessment that SQA already made at the start of the session to help reduce the workload of learners and their teachers and lecturers. It will also be tailored to reflect the types of questions that are in the exam and will therefore differ across courses. For some courses, this will include advice and guidance on what topics your child should focus their revision on.

A table showing the type of revision support that will be provided for each course is now available on the SQA website.

[View the table on the SQA website.](#)

Education Scotland, in partnership with e-Sgoil, is also 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 if you require further information.

Information for parents and carers on the exam exceptional circumstances service

SQA's exam exceptional circumstances service is in place to support your child in the following scenarios:

- If they are unable to attend an exam due to unforeseen circumstances, such as a medical condition (including Covid-19 related absence) or bereavement. Should your child be unable to attend an exam on these grounds, you will have the opportunity to discuss it with us.
- If there has been disruption at our school on the day of the exam, which means the exam can't take place.

It is normal for learners to feel nervous or anxious before an exam. However, SQA recognises that there has been a significant increase in the number of young people experiencing mental health issues because of

the Covid-19 pandemic. If your child is experiencing mental health issues that go beyond pre-exam nerves or stress, and they feel unable to attend the exam, please discuss this with us.

SQA will publish more guidance on this service in the coming weeks, including guidance for schools, colleges and training providers. This guidance will explain, in more detail, how the service will work and who is eligible. Once this guidance is available you will be able to have a conversation with us about the criteria for this service.

Your child's teachers are already gathering examples of the assessments your child has been completing in each course. If your child needs to use the exam exceptional circumstances service, we will send evidence of their assessments to SQA. SQA appointees, who are practicing teachers and lecturers, will judge this evidence against the national standard for that course to determine your child's grade.

Information for parents and carers on the 2022 appeals service

This year, SQA is running a free appeals service for learners who want to question their results. This service will be available after results day and your child will be able to inform SQA directly that they want to appeal one or more of their results.

There will also be a priority appeals service for learners waiting on a result for a university or college place or for an employment or training programme.

The 2022 appeals service will involve SQA appointees – practicing teachers and lecturers – reviewing evidence of the assessments that your child has completed through the year. They will judge this evidence against the national standard for that course. SQA will also conduct a clerical check on your child's exam script.

Through the appeals process, your child would be awarded the higher grade of the two types of evidence (their exam and/or coursework and the assessment evidence we have submitted in support of the appeal).

SQA blog post: Support services for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher learners - a message for parents and carers

Today we have published a new blog post to explain these measures to parents and carers.

- [View blog post.](#)

Frequently asked questions

We are continuing to update the frequently asked questions section of the SQA website and have added new questions about revision support, the exam exceptional circumstances service and the 2022 appeals service.

View our frequently asked questions at www.sqa.org.uk/faq

Support available for young people from Kooth during February:

On Glow there is a list of things that Kooth are providing during February which young people can sign onto for support. Click the underlined phase above to access.



S3 Virtual Parents Evening – Thurs 17.2.22 (4.00pm – 6.30pm)

Based on the experience of the S1 virtual Pastoral Parents' Evening in December and the S2 Virtual Parents Evening last week, we are again offering virtual appointments to S3 parents to attend the first parents evening in quite some time for our current S3 cohort of learners.

Due to the digital nature of the Parents Evening Booking system (PEBs) staff have the option of conducting the parents evening in school or from home, depending on their personal circumstances.

Also, there can be no additional appointments added prior to or after the designated time slot of 4.00pm – 6.30pm. Secondary teachers have a minimum of 5 parents' evenings across any given school year, excluding P7 Parents Evening and other Family Learning events. Also, based on national and local guidelines set by the Scottish Government, Local Authorities and teaching unions, teaching staff must work within their set *Working Time Agreement* (WTA). The WTA agreement is set in May of each calendar year and locally agreed in schools with staff and professional union representatives and then ratified by the local authority.

Over and above the teaching day, the WTA takes into account additional teacher time for marking, preparation, reporting, parents' evenings, staff meetings and professional learning, so no additional appointments can be made available. However, the S3 report will be a good guide to your child's progress if you are unable to make an appointment with any specific teacher.

S3/4/5 Course Choice Information:

This week, we sent a letter to parents of S3/4/5 pupils regarding course choices for next session when the pupils are in S4/5 and S6.

The letter includes a link to a presentation from Mr Cowie DHT, explaining the process. Please click on the link below to view. Thank you.

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



Virtual Assemblies:

Last week I started my 'Shout Out About...' series of assemblies, discussing key themes that learners tell me they are interested in.

Last week the theme was 'Shout Out About Sexism' and this week, we've had 'Shout Out About Neurodiversity'.

Please follow the links below to view:



Shout Out About Sexism:



<https://youtu.be/Lj29Qfk2UX0>

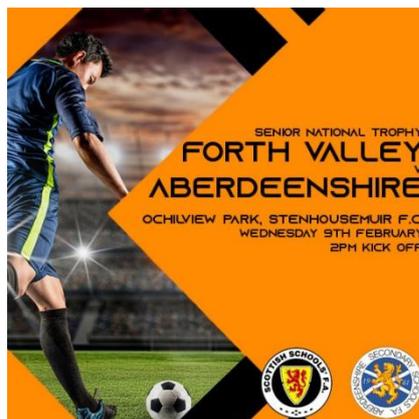
Shout Out About: Neurodiversity:



<https://youtu.be/wOkNle9QjiU>

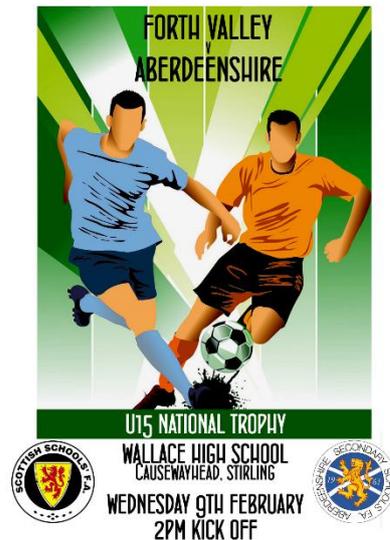
Pupil Achievement:

Congratulations to Lucas S, Jack B, Aiden M, Callum K, Ross C, and Connor G who have all been asked to represent Aberdeenshire in their Senior team to play Forth Valley. Good luck!



Pupil Achievement:

Congratulations to Aiden M, Ben R, Aaron V and Finlay M who have all been asked to represent Aberdeenshire in their Under 15 team to play Forth Valley. Good luck!



Pupil Achievement:

Here is another handmade quilt for the Ugandan orphanage, this time made by Sophie L in S4. Well done to Sophie, it's beautiful!



Pupil Opportunity:

FOR PUPILS INTERESTED IN A CAREER IN TECHNOLOGY:

One of the biggest technology focused career events of the year is taking place on Monday 7th February from 5-7pm

Here, some of the fastest-growing tech companies in the world will be present, such as IBM, VMware, Goldman Sachs, Capgemini, Worldwide Technology, Virgin Media, Vodafone, Experian and QA. No matter the career you decide to go into, technology will undoubtedly be at the forefront of most job sectors / industries. This event is a fantastic chance to hear from some of the world's leading technology professionals and give you the chance to start learning about this fascinating, ever-evolving industry and ultimately help you decide whether it's a path you'd like to pursue.

Throughout the evening you will hear from all the employers mentioned above in the form of mini-interactive workshops where you will be able to see first-hand how technology is changing the way we work and live in today's world. Certificates will be awarded to those who attend the event as well as in person work experience opportunities up for grabs for the most engaged students. On top of this, there will be competitions throughout giving away amazing tech prizes such as iPads, smart speakers and more

If you'd like to apply please register on the link below.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/TechTheFuture-Event>



Celebrating Culture and Diversity - Chinese New Year:

This week on Tuesday 1st February, Ellon Academy celebrated Chinese New Year.

A tradition at this time is to present children with a red envelope containing money and it is hoped this will bring them good luck for the coming year.

We were unable to give every pupil money, but each pupil received a red envelope in Registration containing a raffle ticket.

Coby and Jenna from our Exec Team then held a live draw during registration. The winners received vouchers from local businesses such as Bare, Bakeology, Hey Sweetie and Symposium and also, Fast Passes to help them get to the front of the lunch queue more quickly! Thanks to Mrs Duffus, Mr Corser and the Exec Team for organising the event.



Winners!



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, NESCOL

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

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/>



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
4.2.22