**NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER**

 November 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to our latest newsletter. These newsletters are sent out on a monthly basis to keep you informed about what is happening in school. If you ever want to contribute an ‘article’ or suggest information that should be on the newsletters, I would be delighted to hear about them.

*Please note events that are underlined and in italics are new or amended since the previous newsletter.*

**Monday 20th November –** Woodpecker pollution walk 2:15 – 3:15 pm

**Tuesday 21st November –** Y4 Samba drumming, 1:15 – 2:15 Kingfisher pollution walk**,** Starling pollution walk 2:15 – 3:15 pm

**Wednesday 22nd November –** Foundation Stage Maths Workshop to parents at 9:15am, KS1 and 2 Maths workshop to parents at 2:30pm – *please see below*

**Friday 24th November –** Inclusion coffee morning for parents – *please see below*

**Monday 27th November –** Santa Challenge begins, Full Governors Meeting 6:30 pm

**Tuesday 28th November –** Samba drumming to parents in Y4 *(please see email already sent out)*

**Thursday 30th November –** 9:30 am -New Intake Meeting – Foundation Stage September 2024, KS1 Open the Book Assembly at 1:20pm

**Friday 1st December –** PTA ‘Mistletoe Mingle’ (more details to follow)

**Saturday 2nd December and Sunday 3rd December –** St Andrew’s Christmas Tree Festival, with the choir singing (most likely on Sunday afternoon) – more details to follow

***Monday 4th December –*** *PTA/Lions Santa Sleigh around Ampthill from 5:30pm*

**Tuesday 5th December –** Foundation Stage nativity to parents at 9:30am

**Wednesday 6th December –** Foundation Stage Nativity to nurseries at 9:30am, Christmas Lunch day, FS Nativity to parents at 2:15pm *(please see email and Google Form for ‘tickets’), Flu vaccinations in school*

**Thursday 7th December** – Year 2 performances to parents (show 1 at 2:15pm, show 2 at 5:45pm) *an email with Google form ‘tickets’ will* *follow shortly*, Year 3 Christmas Theatre trip (pm)more details to follow

**Friday 8th December –** Year 4 Christmas Theatre Trip (am), Year 3 sports festival (Bocca/Kurling) for some children (am), Ladybird concert to parents at 2pm, Year 1 Christmas Theatre Trip (pm)

**Monday 11th December –** PTA Elfridges Day – more details to follow,

**Tuesday 12th December –** Year 2 Christmas Theatre Trip (am), Foundation Stage Christmas Theatre Trip (pm)

***Wednesday 13th December –*** *Extra New Intake Meeting 2024 at 9:30am (due to overwhelming demand), 1:20pm Violin/Viola assembly (more details to follow)*

**Thursday 14th December –** Year 1 Superhero Day (TBC – more details to follow), *Choir perform at two care homes in Ampthill (pm), PTA/RoundTable Santa Sleigh around Ampthill from 5:30pm*

**Friday 15th December -** Christmas activity morning with parents (9 – 10:15 am), Christmas Jumper non-uniform day – more details to follow

**Tuesday 19th December** – Last day of the school term, break up for Christmas today

**CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY Wednesday 20th DECEMBER – Tuesday 2nd JANUARY 2024**

**Tuesday 2nd January 2024 – INSET Day – SCHOOL CLOSED TO ALL CHILDREN**

**Wednesday 3rd January 2024 –** ALL children back to school today

**Thursday 4th January 2024 –** 2:45pm – Parent Volunteers in School Induction sessions, (more information to follow)

***Friday 5th January 2024 -*** *Extra New Intake Meeting 2024 at 9:30am (due to overwhelming demand*

**More detailed information on the above events will follow in due course**

**Online Safety talk this morning:**

A huge thank you to the very many parents who gave up their time this morning to join us with PC Denton to learn a little more about how to keep our children safer online. I am sure you will agree, it was an incredibly powerful and useful hour. Once we receive the materials from PC Denton we will share them with all parents and other local lower schools.

**Term dates 2024/2025:**

Please find on the website: <https://www.russell-lower.co.uk/website/term_dates_events__galleries/543714> and as an attachment our agreed term dates for 2024/25. These have been agreed with all lower and middle schools in Ampthill, Flitwick and Maulden.

**If there are just two things:**

There are two things we are really passionate about at Russell: Attendance of 96%+ for every child and reading at least 4 x a week at home (for around 5 – 10 minutes a time). *Why?* Because all the evidence (nationally) shows that this is what parents can do to make a HUGE difference to their child’s life chances in the 4 – 8-year-old age range. Please can we ask that all children attend school every single day that they are possibly well enough to do so (we only have 190 days out of 365 at school each year – they are so precious) and that parents prioritise reading 4 x a week (little and often) with their children (and recording this in the reading diary, please) as all the evidence shows that this is what *really* matters to supporting progress, confidence and happiness at school in lower school children. We can only do so much reading at school. Thank you so much for your support. If you need any help or support whatsoever, please do not hesitate to contact your child’s class teacher. Thank you again – we really appreciate the special partnership we have with all of our parents.

**Aviary club charges – price increase from January 2024:**

Unfortunately, we are having to increase the charge for using The Aviary before and after school club from January. Although we have resisted this for as long as possible, we are unable to sustain the rising costs of staffing, energy, consumables and food within the existing pricing structure.

In setting the new price, we have researched other local before and after school clubs (Ampthill and Flitwick) to ensure that we remain in line with the cheapest available. Our new pricing structure ensures that we are still in line with the cheapest available locally.

**From 1st January 2024, the new pricing structure will be:**

Morning and afternoon Club sessions will cost **£5.00 per hour**.

We charge for the first hour and then in 30-minute sessions from 4:30pm.

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| **Breakfast Club (includes breakfast for arrivals up to 8:20am)** | Opens at 7:45am | £5.00 (flat rate) |
|  |
| **After school Club (includes snack between 4 and 4:30pm)** | 3:30 – 4:30pm | £5.00 |
|  | 3:30 – 5pm | £7.50 |
|  | 3:30 – 5:30pm | £10.00 |
|  | 3:30 – 6pm | £12.50 |

We continue to request that use of **The Aviary is only for childcare whilst you work**. We want to make Club available to our working parents first. The Aviary is not to be used for ‘play dates’, for example.

If you need to use Club for childcare, but can no longer meet the costs, please do talk to us in confidence as we may be able to help, especially if your child is in receipt of Pupil Premium.

**School Councilors 2023/24:**

Following tightly run elections in the classrooms, congratulations to the following children who will be representing their classes on the school council this year. Thank you in advance, children!

Owls - Hollie; Jax

Puffin – Michael; Cece

Wrens – Nell; Zak

Penguins – Finn; Aubree

Robins – Ethan; Lucy- Rae

Greenfinch – Eloise; Beau

Nightingales – Esmee; Teddy

Blackbirds – Sylvie; Vinnie

Goldfinch – Ellie; Teddy

Woodpeckers- Ava; Ralph

Kingfishers- Isabel; Austin

Starlings – Keira; Tadhg

**Social media, online activity and mental health:**

We have been sent information about this one-hour webinar for parents and carers who want to understand young people’s use of technology and the impact this may have on their mental health and wellbeing. If this might be of interest, please see further information [here.](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDEsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vY29udGVudC5nb3ZkZWxpdmVyeS5jb20vYXR0YWNobWVudHMvVUtDQkNDLzIwMjMvMTAvMjAvZmlsZV9hdHRhY2htZW50cy8yNjU0MDAzL1lvdW5nTWluZHMlMjBXZWJpbmFyJTIwZm9yJTIwUGFyZW50cyUyMCUyMENhcmVyc18yMDIzLTI0MjglMjAlMjgwMDIlMjkucGRmIiwiYnVsbGV0aW5faWQiOiIyMDIzMTAyMC44NDM1MDc0MSJ9.SlZnJxZPdmEz_MfDTGNwqAo22ghdUxMe-NSHZSy7xMw/s/900610115/br/228645074516-l)

In addition, very kindly, a parent of ours who works in the industry, has given us lots of links and updates of information for parents regarding ‘gaming’, including setting parental controls on different ‘platforms’ or consoles. We know we all want to create ‘fun, safe spaces’ for our young people online at home. Please do take a look at the new information on the website (scroll down): <https://www.russell-lower.co.uk/website/online_safety/319332>

**A couple of pleas:**

* Can we please ensure that all hair bands are ‘flat’ during the school day? Pointy cat ear headbands/hairbands and the like are quite dangerous out in the playground so we would prefer these were kept for special weekend wear only. Thank you.
* Do you have any spare, clean, washed pants and socks at home? Could they please be donated to the school office for ‘accidents’? Equally, if your child is sent home with spare pants and socks, could you please wash and return them too? Thank you.
* Dogs and puppies - I am really sorry but our school is a ‘no dogs’ site. This is the case between 7:45am and 6pm. Please do not bring any dogs onto the school grounds between these times, even if carried in your arms. Thank you very much for your support.

**Other types of accident in school:**

Please be aware that if your child has a visible mark or significant injury as a result of a slip, trip or some sort of accident at school we will always try our very best to get a medical note emailed out to you on that day. Slips, trips etc. that do not result in visible marks or significant injury will not result in notification by medical note/email, simply as at this time of year (with slippery leaves etc.) we would never get around to any teaching. If you ever have any concerns about an injury that you feel was acquired at school, please do not hesitate to contact us and it will be fully investigated to ensure our procedures have been correctly followed. Thank you for your support.

**School admissions to Foundation Stage in September 2024 and Middle Schools**

It’s that time of year again! Even though the children have only just started in their new year group, you need to make your applications now:

**Children born between 01/09/19 and 31/08/20 are due to start school in September 2024.**

Parents/carers need to make an application to CBC **by 15 January 2024**, even if their child attends a nursery/pre-school on the school site. All the information you will need regarding your Starting School 2024 application is available on the CBC website (see hyperlink below) and in the ‘Starting School Leaflet’ attached to September’s newsletter.

Year 4 parents, please bear in mind that applications for **Middle School are also needed within the same timescales i.e. before 15th January 2024. Please note: this will not just happen automatically.**

For more information, please see information on the CBC website:

[School admissions | Central Bedfordshire Council](https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/5/school_admissions)

**Maths Workshops for parents:**

Maths is not taught how it used to be! Would you like to come and hear how we teach it and how you can further support your children at home? If so, please sign up using these simple Google Forms:

Foundation Stage Maths Workshop for parents – 9:15am – 10am, Wednesday 22nd November <https://forms.gle/72EdCqsc4ertYj5r6>

KS1 and KS2 Maths Workshops for parents – 2:30pm – 3:15pm, Wednesday 22nd November

<https://forms.gle/yapfG1omWr4psRnTA>

**Inclusion Workshop for parents:**

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**Please sign up using the link below (so that we can make sure there are sufficient tea, coffee and biscuits!)**

[**https://forms.gle/5LkGaTZY1TTfwLvG6**](https://forms.gle/5LkGaTZY1TTfwLvG6)

**Russell Lower School Values:**

Each half term, we teach the children about a different value. We then have a weekly ‘values’ assembly where we celebrate the demonstration of this value. The values this term are:

**Autumn 1**: Respect

**Autumn 2**: Thoughtfulness

**PE and festivals news:**

This half term some of Year 4 children have attended a tag rugby festival and some of year 3 are due to attend boccia/kurling before the end of the year.

If your child is chosen to take part in one of the up-coming festivals you will be notified and additional information will be given.

We have also completed our sports premium document for this year outlining how we intend to spend the money. Please take a look to see what we plan to spend the money on to further improve PE and sport across Russell Lower:

<https://russell-lower.eschools.co.uk/website/sports_premium/520526>

**And finally:**

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter and all your on-going support.

Many thanks and kind regards,

Nicki Walker

Headteacher