



## JANUARY NEWSLETTER

January 2025

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to our January 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 January** - SEND parents' coffee morning, 9 - 10am (run by parents)

**Thursday 23rd January** - Year 3 swimming (am), School Council Meeting at 1:20pm, 7:30pm PTA Meeting at the Wingfield Club

**Friday 24th January** - Year 1 Blue Cross Animal experience day, Parents' Evening Slots open at 7am

**Monday 27th January** - Keith Hatton author visit to school, Year 4 work/assembly and book sale/signing after school (KS2 playground - books suitable from YR to Y4)

**Wednesday 29th January** - Parents' evening slots close at 6pm

**Thursday 30th January** - Key Stage 1 Open the Book assembly, Year 3 swimming (am), Year 4 sports hall athletics festival for some children(pm - you will be notified if this involves your child nearer the time)

**Monday 3rd February** - CHUMS 'shine bright' week, Governors' meeting 6:30pm

**Thursday 6th February** - Key Stage 2 Open the Book assembly, Year 3 swimming (am)

**Friday 7th February** - Shine Bright CHUMS non-uniform day (more information to follow), Mid-Year Reports out to parents today

**Monday 10th February and Tuesday 11th February** - Parents' Evenings from 3:45pm onwards. (See previous email), Rotary Polio Appeal assembly, Year 3 Royal Parks Visit

**Thursday 13th February** - Year 3 swimming (am), Year 4 Tag Rugby festival for some children(am - you will be notified if this involves your child nearer the time)

**Friday 14th February** - Year 4 Bikeability and break up for half term

### Half term 17/02 - 21/02 with Premier Sport running a holiday camp

**Monday 24th February** - Children back to school - NO INSET DAY

**Wednesday 26th February** - Book Fair at Russell (more information to follow)

**Thursday 27th February** - Key Stage 1 Open the Book Assembly

**Tuesday 4th March** - Kidditch sessions for the whole school, Last day of Book Fair

**Wednesday 5th March** - Kidditch sessions for the whole school

**Thursday 6th March** - World Book Day - children and staff come to school dressed as their favourite book characters - get ready for lots of fun!



**Friday 7th March - Russell's 65th Birthday - David Powell (ex-Head) Assembly for all children, 6:30 - 8:30pm - Birthday Cheese and Wine Night (provided by the PTA) for former Russell pupils (who are now adults) and staff - (more information to follow), Year 4 girls Football Festival for some children (am - you will be notified if this involves your child nearer the time)**

**Monday 10th March - Big Walk and Wheel week and British Science week begins, Governors' Meeting at 6:30pm**

**Wednesday 12th March - Year 4 trip to Verulamium**

**Thursday 13th March - Key Stage 2 Open the Book assembly**

**Tuesday 18th March - Year 3 Hockey festival for some children (am - you will be notified if this involves your child nearer the time)**

**Wednesday 19th March - Inclusion Coffee Morning at 9am - more details to follow**

**Thursday 20th March - PTA AGM, 7:30pm at the Wingfield Club - everyone welcome!**

**Friday 21st March - Design an Egg Competition Begins, Comic Relief 'Red Nose' non-uniform Day**

**Monday 24th March - Big Walk and Wheel week, Easter Assembly with Ampthill Baptist Church, 6:30pm Governors' Meeting**

**Tuesday 25th March - Year 1 Woburn Trip**

**Thursday 27th March - Year 3 Easter in a Box session x 1**

**Friday 28th March - Year 3 Easter in a Box session x1**

**Monday 31st March - Year 3 Easter in a Box session x1, Governors' Meeting at 6:30pm**

**Wednesday 2nd April - Condoover Meeting for Year 4 parents at 9am, Egg Competition Judging**

**Thursday 3rd April - Easter Activity Morning - from 9am to 10am come and join your children in class having 'crafty Easter fun', PTA Eco Challenge begins**

**Friday 4th April - Break up for Easter today**

**Easter Holiday - 7th April - 21st April 2025, with Premier Holiday Camps**

**Monday 21st April - BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY - SCHOOL CLOSED**

**Tuesday 22nd April - Summer term begins for all children - everyone back to school - NO INSET DAY**

**\*\*\*SAVE THE DATE\*\*\* 21st June 2025 -Russell Lower School PTA Summer Solstice Ball at the Cross Keys in Pulloxhill**

**\*\*\*SAVE THE DATE\*\*\* Ampthill's Big Tent Weekend - 11th/12th/ 13th July - lots more information to follow**

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

### **Attendance and winter bugs:**

Please be aware that it has been made clear to us by the DfE and CBC that schools should continue maintaining high attendance expectations and refer parents to NHS [guidance](#) to know when a child is too ill for school. Pupils should not miss school on a precautionary basis and can normally attend school with a cough or cold, unless they have a fever or diarrhoea/vomiting. Thank you for your support with our attendance policy.



## **Pharmacy First:**

Think 'Pharmacy First' for Earache (children aged 1-17), Sore throat (over 5s), Infected insect bites (over 1s), Impetigo (over 1s). GP practices are busy and it can be difficult to get a same-day GP appointment. When your child is off sick from school with any of the above conditions, by going straight to your local pharmacy you can have a consultation with a trained clinical professional and receive advice and even medication if it is needed, meaning they could be on the road to recovery and back at school as soon as possible.

For more information, speak with your local community pharmacy. To find your nearest pharmacy, see: [Find a pharmacy - NHS](#)

## **School Meals Census:**

Thank you for your support in our recent school meals census. We had 88% of children eat a hot meal on this day which will have a hugely positive impact on our budget for all children - thank you for your support!

## **Climate Action Plan:**

You will know that Russell is passionate about the climate and environment and was one of the first local schools to get the 'Green Flag Eco Schools' award (in fact we are already reapplying for this now as we've already had it for so long). We have also just won another prestigious award (but we aren't allowed to make that public yet - watch this space!) If you are keen to see what we are up to (especially the School Council), do have a look at our ever evolving Climate Action Plan, here: <https://www.russell-lower.co.uk/climate-action-plan>

## **Smart Watches:**

Please support us by ensuring that your child does not come to school wearing a 'smartwatch' - even one which has had 'school mode' enabled. Smart watches are not allowed at Russell due to their value and potential capabilities. Even in special restricted modes, they cause a huge distraction to learning, create unnecessary 'peer pressure' and teachers have to spend valuable time checking that these are safe and can comply with our safeguarding policy. Thank you for your support.

## **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:

**Spring 1:** Courage

**Spring 2:** Happiness

## **PE and festivals news:**

This half term year 3 have begun their school swimming lessons, these will move into year 4 next half term. We hope they have fun and develop lots of new skills!

We are also super excited to start seeing lots of new sports and PE equipment coming into school following our successful Great Athletes fundraising event in the Autumn. We have spent around £3500 so far on equipment such as gymnastic mats, football goals and a whole range of



equipment to support the children in being active across the school and look forward to spending the remaining balance later in the year.

We also have some very exciting news linked to Flitwick Leisure Centre and Everyone Active. They have chosen to 'adopt' our school for the month of February (including the half term break!). This means all children who attend Russell can swim for free for the month of February and employees and parents/carers can receive a two-week complimentary gym, classes and swim membership. More information to follow at the end of the month.

### **Online Safety/E-Safety update:**

**Please download our E-Safety poster this month (attached to the email) - it's about Fortnite. So many children re-enact this at school we know they play it and it is not supporting effective, safe play or behaviours at school.**

**Fortnite is a certificate 12 - for good reason - it is highly competitive, player v's player combat with the aim of shooting and 'eliminating' other players with machine guns, shotguns and various other weapons.**

As part of our Online Safety Policy and procedures, we aim to reinforce the importance of children being safe online, both at school and out of school. In each newsletter we will be using one page poster guides from National Online Safety to highlight areas that we think are relevant to our children and families, helping you to keep up-to-date with what's going on in the world of online safety. We hope that this will help you gain the confidence and skills to have age-appropriate, informed discussions with children to keep them safe, healthy and resilient to life beyond the school gates.

**January - Fortnite (see poster attached to the email)**

### **School Admissions for Reception September 2025:**

Thank you for your support with getting your applications in on time for Reception Places for 2025. We have again been hugely popular and are significantly oversubscribed, with applications from far and wide too.

### **CBC Consultations:**

[Read about the proposed changes to services and Council Tax on our website and give your feedback](#)

We want to hear from you – your voice matters. Over 1,000 people have already taken part, so don't miss out! The **consultation closes on Tuesday 4 February**.

Elected councillors will consider your feedback before setting a final budget at the end of February.

To read about and respond to CBC's Children and Young Persons Plan, please see here:

Visit: [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations). The consultation on 17 February 2025.

### **Community information and events:**

Please see the posters and information below



**And finally:**

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter and for all your on-going support - we really appreciate working in partnership with you.

Many thanks and kind regards,

Nicki Walker  
Headteacher

# Russell Lower School

Challenge • Enjoy • Respect • Succeed



## Community information and events:

### Gaming and Gambling awareness sessions for parents and carers:

**Date:** 6th Feb 2025

Ygam are working with Safeguarding Bedfordshire to offer an online information session to help develop your understanding of gaming and gambling harms, enabling you to have open conversations with your children.

**Time:** 6pm - 7.15pm

**Venue:** Online

Please see this [flyer](#) for more information, including how to book

**WHO WANTS TO TRY RUGBY?**

**UNDER 10 GIRLS**

**OPEN TO GIRLS IN YEAR 4 & 5!**

**FROM 26TH FEBRUARY**

**EVERY WEDNESDAY 6PM-7PM**

**AT AMPHILL RUGBY CLUB**

**HAVE FUN & MAKE NEW FRIENDS!**

• AMPHILL RUGBY CLUB, WOBURN STREET, MK45 2HX  
WWW.AMPHILLRUGBY.COM/TEAMS  
@AMPHILL\_RUGBY

Headteacher: Nicki Walker BA(Hons), PGCE, NPQH  
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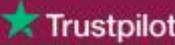
**FEBRUARY  
HALF-TERM**

## **PREMIER HOLIDAY CAMPS**

 Premier Education | **INSPIRING  
ACTIVITY**

### **BEDFORD**

 **SCAN HERE FOR  
MORE INFORMATION**  
or visit [premier-education.com/holiday-camps](https://premier-education.com/holiday-camps)

 **Trustpilot**  
  
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## VENUES

- Russell Lower School

## TIMINGS & PRICES:

- 8:00am - 5:30pm (£44.00)
- 9:00am - 3:30pm (£36.00)

## DATES

- 17th February - 21st February

**15%  
SIBLING  
DISCOUNT**

Mix it up this half term with our multi-activity holiday camps!

These camps are a perfect blend of activities for all ages, combining different sports with a variety of team games.

Every day is different, with a mix of fun activities that children may not have tried before - from archery - arts and crafts.

**Book now** for a half-term full of fun!



**SCAN HERE FOR  
MORE INFORMATION**

or visit [premier-education.com/holiday-camps](http://premier-education.com/holiday-camps)

**Ofsted**  
Registered

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everyone **ACTIVE**

**CLAIM A FREE 6 MONTH**  **WHEN YOU ENROL ON SWIMMING LESSONS\***

**AND SAVE UP TO 40% OFF\*\* CINEMA TICKETS**



\*Terms apply \*\*Terms apply

Do you have any coats or ski clothing that are no longer required?

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**Wrap Up UK** is a project that Ampthill and District Rotary Club are supporting. If you are able to donate a Winter Coat or Ski Clothing in good condition to help the homeless, please bring it to school and place it in the receptacle in the office foyer. Thank you.

**WRAP UP**  
WARM A HEART, GIVE A COAT

Rotary  
Greater Bedfordshire & Luton

Working with  
Hands On  
Luton

**WE NEED UNWANTED WARM COATS**  
Coats you no longer need can make a real difference to people in need during winter time. Donating a coat for a person in need will not only keep them warm, it will also unlock a huge opportunity for a charity to connect with someone who may not otherwise ask for help.

**WE NEED CHILDREN'S WARM COATS AND SNOW SUITS**  
There are more charities supporting children and babies at risk involved in Wrap Up each year, and demand is increasing. All-in-one snowsuits have been specifically requested for young children and infants.

**WE ONLY ACCEPT COATS, SO DON'T DONATE OTHER ITEMS**  
While we really appreciate the good intentions, please don't send us any other clothing items. We can only accept coats.

**PLEASE RESPECT PEOPLE AT RISK**  
Only send coats you would be happy to receive. Dirty coats with buttons missing and a broken zip aren't nice for anyone - especially someone currently living in crisis.

[www.wrapupuk.org](http://www.wrapupuk.org)