**SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER**

September 2025

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to our first newsletter of the new academic year – I hope you all had wonderful summer holidays. Everyone has already settled really well and we are already working hard in our new classes - I have a feeling the children will be feeling tired already!

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.*

**Wednesday 10th Septembe**r – Half of new foundation stage children start school

**Thursday 11th September** – All foundation stage children in school

**Wednesday 17th September** – Mental Health support team working with Year 1, Parents Evening letter out

**Thursday 18th September** – 9:30am New Intake Meeting for Foundation Stage (2026), *7:30pm PTA Meeting*

**Friday 19th September** - 9:15- 10am, Swan, Swift and Dove Class reading/Phonics and writing workshop for parents - join us for coffee! Flu immunisations

***Sunday 21st September*** *- International Peace Day*

**Monday 22nd September** – Harvest Assembly TBC *for Foodbank*

**Tuesday 23rd September** - New Intake Meeting (FS 2026) at 9:30am

**Thursday 25th September -** Y2 Trip to Whipsnade, *Headteacher interview day 1*

**Friday 26th September** - Anxiety around school attendance - parent workshop 9 - 10am, Mental Health Schools Team (main hall), *Headteacher interview day 2*

***Thursday 2nd October*** *- School Census Day*

**Monday 6th October** – Parents’ Evening 3:45pm to 7pm, *Walktober Week*

**Tuesday 7th October** – Parents’ Evening 3:45pm to 6:30pm

**Wednesday 8th October** – New Intake Meeting (FS 2026) at 9:30am

***Friday 17th October -*** *Learn to ride a bike sessions for some children - TBC*

**Monday 20th October** – *School Council Assembly,* Finance and Resources Governors’ Meeting, 6:30pm

***Thursday 23rd October*** *- PTA Discos - more details to follow*

**Friday 24th October** – Break up for half term

***Premier Holiday Camp over October Half Term***

***Monday 3rd November - INSET DAY - NO CHILDREN AT SCHOOL - STAFF TRAINING***

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

**Foundation Stage Phonics (reading) and writing workshop with coffee – Friday 19th September, 9:15 – 10:30am**

This workshop is for our new Foundation Stage (Doves, Swifts and Swan Class) parents to find out more about how we teach reading and writing at Russell Lower School, along with how you can support us from home. ***Please do come*** and meet Mrs Brown in the main hall so you know how you can support your child in this vital NEW area. Coffee will be provided! **Please complete this very short form to let us know that you are coming:** <https://forms.gle/o7ACjSri5qL3SLMG8>

**Free School Meals ‘Census’ Day**

You will be aware that school budgets are getting increasingly ‘squeezed’ by the government, and one way we can maintain our budget is by making sure we are using what the government currently provides. Universal Infant Free School Meals are currently made available to children in FS, Y1 and Y2. From Y3, parents are asked to pay for school meals. In order to keep this free lunch facility, we have a ‘Census Day’ to check our use. This day is **Thursday 2rd October.** If our percentage of meals eaten on that day is high it results in more money coming into the school budget. This is crucial in maintaining current standards. **Please support us by encouraging your child to have a school dinner on that Thursday** (we have changed the menu to make it as attractive as possible to as many as possible and Mrs Bremner will be sending you a separate letter to give you this information). With your support we can make sure Russell continues to receive the highest possible percentage of the available money so the children continue to benefit. Thank you.

**Collection of children:**

The school day finishes at 3:30pm. Do not worry, if you have several children to collect, we will always keep them safely with us until you arrive. If your child is collected by anyone other than their parents, could you please ensure that your child’s new Class Teacher is made aware of this. ***Any changes to the normal collection arrangement of your child should also be notified to the school office please (not the class email address* as this cannot be checked regularly during the day).** As your child’s wellbeing and safety is paramount, no child will be released without prior parental consent of any changes or if anyone under the age of 16 comes to collect them. Should your child need to be collected during the course of the school day please can you ensure your

child is signed out at the school office? For all appointments such as doctors, dentists, hospitals etc. medical evidence will be required and requested. Thank you.

**An important safety plea** - Please **do not let your children climb any trees** on the school site. This is absolutely not safe and will result in a nasty accident. Please leave the school site quickly at the end of the school day as we want to get clubs underway quickly and cannot do this until the site is clear due to safeguarding. Thank you for your support.

**Supporting learning at home:**

Thank you for your support with the numerous ways you enable your child’s learning at home. Your time and effort are invaluable and make a HUGE difference.

Over the next few days (or already) we will be providing you with some information that we hope you will find useful:

* **Theme webs** for each year group to show you what children will be learning this term.
* **Home learning letters and Learning Logs** to explain what ‘homework’ children will be asked to complete in each class and other ways you can support learning from home. This will also detail when it is due in. Thank you for your support with this.

In addition, please don’t forget that each class teacher can be contacted via the class email in the format [XXXXXclass@russell-lower.co.uk](mailto:XXXXXclass@russell-lower.co.uk) . For example: [robinclass@russell-lower.co.uk](mailto:robinclass@russell-lower.co.uk) These are for general enquiries only **NOT reporting absence, discussing changes in collection arrangements** etc. as the email addresses ARE NOT ROUTINELY MONITORED DURING THE SCHOOL DAY AS TEACHERS ARE BUSY TEACHING CHILDREN.

**Reminder: Pupil absence**: we have a **dedicated email address** for reporting pupil absence, this is: [pupilabsence@russell-lower.co.uk](mailto:pupilabsence@russell-lower.co.uk) Please use this to report pupil absence, if you can. Thank you for your support. Please be aware that staff are not expected to check any emails during holidays, weekends or in the evenings. Thank you for your support.

**School Safety:**

Please can we ask all parents who come and go through the main Queens Road entrance path gate during the school day to ensure they close **not only the latch on the gate, but also then CLOSE THE HOOK too**. In addition, **if you are collecting your child from Aviary Club**, can you please **ensure our gate** (at the start of the school field, near the office and Head’s office) is also **closed behind you please**? This ensures all our children are as safe as possible.

**To parents of Greenfinch and Wren Class** – Please be aware that we do request that pushchairs are not brought inside school for Health and Safety reasons, as the corridors are too narrow.

Thank you for your support. Can you please also make sure that you are not walking siblings through the school to their classrooms, but come via the outside again please? Thank you. Delivering Greenfinch and Wren children directly to their internal classroom door keeps them as safe as possible. We know it isn’t easy (especially in the early, busy weeks) and thank you in advance for your support.

**Headteacher Recruitment update:**

The advert for the Headteacher position has now been out for some time and we have begun showing prospective candidates around school. The advert closes on 15th September and interviews take place on 25th and 26th of September. Of course, we will continue to keep you updated. Thank you to the enormous numbers of parents (and children) who have asked Mrs Bunney (full of hope!) if she would like to apply for the job. Sadly (for us), Mrs Bunney currently has a very young family and the time isn’t quite right for her, personally - she will not be applying for the Headship. Maybe one day in the future! Do keep asking her though - she will make the best Headteacher when she decides the time is right.

**We’ve done it again!**

A big well done to the whole school community, but especially Mrs Salih and the school councillors last year on achieving Eco Schools accreditation again over the summer holidays. It was a gruelling application process, requiring a robust Climate Action Plan, and we passed with flying colours - well done, everyone!



**Support for Young People:**

Starting a new school, going back into a new year group, or moving to further education is a time of change, transition and adjustment, which can often feel overwhelming for young people.

[Everything Ok?](https://news.updates.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/55C6E0C67018D285E7CF04953C76B4383DFD59AD5DC48E3D77A8631C871ED38F/037642054B65497A872250F5123DF6F0/LE35) [Link](https://news.updates.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/55C6E0C67018D285E7CF04953C76B4383DFD59AD5DC48E3D77A8631C871ED38F/037642054B65497A872250F5123DF6F0/LE35) is a comprehensive website developed by Central Bedfordshire, with, and for young people, helping to connect them to the right support and offering resources and signposting to local and national support.

You may have seen this website promoted across the local authority, on social media, and on bus stops and billboards.

**School admissions to Foundation Stage in September 2026 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 01/09/21 and 31/08/22 are due to start school in September 2026.**

Parents/ carers need to make an application to CBC **by 15 January 2026**, **even if their child attends a nursery/pre-school on the school site.** All the information you will need regarding your Starting School 2026 application is available on the CBC website (see hyperlink below).

**Year 4 parents,** please bear in mind that applications for **Middle School are also needed within the same timescales i.e. before 15th January 2026. Please note: this will not just happen automatically.**

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

**Free training for parents:**

Does your child suffer from anxiety? Is it sometimes about coming to school? Come to this! **Please just turn up in the main hall at 9am on Friday 26th September 2025.**



**Reminder - Term dates 2025/2026:**

Please find on the website: <https://www.russell-lower.co.uk/term_dates> our agreed term dates for 2025/26. These have been agreed with all lower and middle schools in Ampthill, Flitwick and Maulden.

**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 half term is:

**Autumn 1:** Respect

**Autumn 2:** Thoughtfulness

**PE and festivals news:**

We are very much looking forward to the year ahead and have lots of exciting opportunities planned such as many sports festivals across the year. Yet again, new equipment has been purchased in order to support both children's physical education as well as physical activity outside of lessons as well as planning things like scoot sessions, bike sessions and additional swimming sessions to name but a few.

If your child is selected for an upcoming festival you will be contacted closer to the time. We understand that some allocations will not always be a child's first choice however in order for everyone to be able to attend we need to allocate the places rather than the children having a choice (we would never be able to please everyone!). If your child is showing some reluctance/worry around attending please reassure them and encourage them to attend, it is part of our curriculum offer. Many of the festivals are of a fun, inclusive nature not resulting in scoring and are all based around values - there is so much more to be learnt at these events than the sport/activity themselves - resilience, teamwork, respect to name but a few. Thank you for your support in advance.

**Could you help the community?**

**Join Home-Start Bedfordshire** - Right now, a family with young children in your community struggles alone with sickness, disability, mental ill-health, isolation, bereavement, and more. You can make a lasting difference in their lives. You don't need any special qualifications, just real-life experience caring for children. You just need a couple of hours available on a weekday, once a week. The time is flexible to suit you.

Our local volunteers are parents, grandparents, and caregivers from all walks of life who want to help others. Join us today because childhood can’t wait. Visit [www.home-startbedfordshire.org.uk](http://www.home-startbedfordshire.org.uk/) and get in touch. We would love to speak to you!

**Community events:**

Please see below

**And finally:**

Thank you for taking the time to read this (very long – sorry) first newsletter, and for making the first week back run so smoothly. We look forward to another exciting, busy and productive year at Russell.

Many thanks and kind regards,

Nicki Walker

Headteacher





****