**MAY NEWSLETTER**

May 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to our May 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.*

**Saturday 20th May –** Russell Lower School Ball

***Tuesday 23rd May –*** *Foundation Stage Pirate Day, Year 1 walk and picnic in Ampthill*

**Wednesday 24th May –** Year 2 Marston visit (Penguin/Greenfinch)

**Thursday 25th May –** Year 2 Marston visit (Robin), *Open the Book Assembly (KS2)*

**Friday 26th May –** Full house theatre trip – whole school (am), PTA Ice lolly sale after school

**Half term holiday 29/05 – 2/06**

**Monday 5th June –** Children back to school – NO INSET DAY

***Wednesday 7th June –*** *9am -Inclusion Coffee morning on Transition, Alameda writing workshops (2 x Y4 classes), Quad Kids athletics*

***Thursday 8th June*** *– Class photographs, Alameda writing workshop (1 x Y4 class), PTA Meeting at 7:30pm at the Wingfield Club*

***Friday 9th June*** *– VW Inspire Day for all children – science, technology and environmental studies day – look out for some incredible vehicles on the school field*

***Thursday 15th June –*** *KS1 Open the Book Assembly, New Foundation Stage Intake Meeting 2023 in the main hall at 6:30pm*

***Monday 19th June -*** *Friendship**Letters out to Y2 classes (only year groups that will have the classes mixed as they move into the next year group from September)*

***Tuesday 20th June –*** *Redborne Athletics – Year 4*

***Thursday 22nd June –*** *Foundation Stage and Y1 (Owl and Puffin) wheelchair basketball sessions*

***Friday 23rd June –*** *Y2 friendship letter replies due back today*

***Monday 26th June -*** *National fieldwork fortnight (Geography – Environment theme), Ladybirds ‘stay and lunch’ sessions, Swift assembly from the Greensand Trust*

***Tuesday 27th June –*** *Ladybirds ‘stay and lunch’, Alameda dance team show to Y4*

***Wednesday 28th June –*** *Sports Day (am only) please see details sent out below and previously in an email from the office, Alameda school tours*

***Thursday 29th June –*** *Preschool ‘stay and lunch’ sessions, Open the Book Assembly (KS2)*

***Saturday 1st July –*** *PTA**Summer Fayre – more details to follow, more Alameda school tours*

***Monday 3rd July –*** *6:30pm Curriculum, Learning and Standards Governors’ Meeting*

***Wednesday 5th July –*** *School Council’s ‘no technology’ morning and litter picks*

***Thursday 6th July –*** *Letters home re new classes and teachers for September*

***Friday 7th July*** *– Class Swap Morning at Russell and Middle School Transition day, New Intake 2023 ‘stay and play’ sessions*

***Saturday 8th July –*** *Ladybirds’ summer fayre*

***Monday 10th July –*** *6:30pm – Full Governors’ Meeting*

***Tuesday 11th July*** *– 2:15pm and 6pm - Year 4 performances to parents (more details to follow)*

***Wednesday 12th July –*** *School council litter pick, Year 4 tennis festival*

***Friday 14th July –*** *End of Year Reports home to parents – all year groups*

***Saturday 16th July –*** *Ampthill Gala and parade – Russell Lower School does ‘Toy Story’ – ‘You’ve got a friend in us.’*

***Monday 17th July –*** *2:30pm – Open Afternoon – come in to see the children’s work and classrooms and then you are free to take the children home*

***Tuesday 18th July –*** *9:15 – Year 4 leavers’ Assembly to parents, 1:30 – 3:30pm – Leavers’ Party for Y4*

***Wednesday 19th July –*** *Violin assembly to school*

***Friday 21st July –*** *Last day of school****;*** *Break up for the summer*

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

**Getting ready for September:**

We are currently planning our staffing for September and this will be finalised soon. We will keep you posted! As you will see from the calendar, the children will spend a morning with their new class teacher on Friday 7th July. A letter will come home on Thursday 6th July, letting you know who this will be. We deliberately only send it the day before so that any possible anxiety and worry is minimised. If your child should come home concerned, please reassure them: all the teachers at Russell are lovely and they will soon ‘settle in’ and they will definitely be with some of their friends (even if they are in Year 2 who will be ‘mixed’ this year, as usual when the children move into KS2 at Russell). Thank you for your support. We do appreciate that transitions can be tricky times, so do attend the Transition Coffee morning with Mrs Knight (Inclusion Lead/SENDCo) on Wednesday 7th June at 9am if you would like some support (see calendar).



**End of Year Reports:**

We are committed to ensuring that all parents received full written reports regarding their children’s attainment and efforts each year. These will be coming home on Friday 14th July. The teachers are currently working really hard to get them all written – it is one of the biggest jobs of the year. All the reports are sampled by members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) too, but please be aware that SLT will be unable to individually comment on each report. It would simply mean that absolutely nothing else at school would get done for several weeks whilst we read and commented on 450 reports. Thank you in advance for your understanding.

**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:

**Summer 1** : Trust

**Summer 2** : Tolerance

**Food hygiene rating:**

I am delighted to inform you that the Food Standards Agency were in school on Tuesday 16th May and they awarded our kitchen a 5 - food hygiene rating. As I am sure you are aware, this is as high as you can possibly achieve. Congratulations and a big thank you to Liz and her incredible Caterlink team.

**Sports Day:**

Please see below information about our sports mornings that has already gone out in an email. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible!

**SPORTS DAY MORNING  -  WEDNESDAY 28th JUNE**

We would like to invite you along to our Sports Day on Wednesday 28th June (weather permitting)

This year the format will be as follows:

 Foundation and KS1 (Years R, 1 & 2)

Sports Events **9.30 am – 10.30 am**

KS2 (Years 3 & 4)

Sports Events **10.45 am – 11.45 am**

Refreshments will be available throughout the morning in the main hall

(Kindly provided by PTA)

 Once the scores are in, we will award the Sports Day Trophy to the house with the most points in an assembly

**Your child should come to school in their PE kit on the day please.**

Your child may either wear their purple PE top or a T Shirt in their house colour could be worn instead:

(Beech – Blue,  Oak – Red,  Sycamore – Green,  Willow – Yellow) We also have coloured bibs in school

As your child will be outside much of the morning,  please also provide a water bottle, sun hat and apply sun cream before school.

May we remind you that any photographs/videos taken must be for your own personal use only and NOT shared on any social media sites.  Thank you.

Parents: as you arrive, please go straight to the school field at the correct time.  A sign on the back of a chair will show you which ‘station’ the children will be starting at.  Please wait at your child’s class start point (around the long edges of the marked grid). The children will come out with their class teachers and rotate around all the stations (clockwise as you look at the field with your back to the school building), spending a few minutes at each.

Please **arrive via** the **main entrance** and **leave via the KS2 gate entrance**(A&F Motors end) promptly after the event.  Prolonged farewells only unsettle the children for the rest of the day.  Thank you.

We look forward to seeing you!  Fingers crossed for at least dry weather…

**Reminder - Being prepared for any weather:**

Can we please ask you to ensure that your child has a **named water bottle** and **a named raincoat in school every day?** Equally, if at all possible can you please apply sun cream to your child before they come to school as this will save an awful lot of difficulty for them as we cannot apply it for them? Thank you.

**Russell Choir:**

The choir recently performed at a music festival at St Andrew’s Church and they were truly spectacular! It is rare for me to be contacted by members of the public, but I had several very complimentary comments regarding the wonderful performance on 23rd April. A big thank you to all the children, parents, Mrs Milligan and Sadie from Inspiring Music – we were all so proud to belong to Russell that afternoon!

**A couple of pleas:**

**Road rage –** please can we remind parents to drive and park respectfully around the school site? As you will know, children hear and see everything and we need to be role models for them. Swearing and abuse is never acceptable in front of children. Please make the most of park and stride opportunities to take some of the stress out of dropping off and collecting from school. We do appreciate that this can be a difficult time of day and very much appreciate your support. Thank you in advance.

**Aviary Club** – as the weather is better, please can parents refrain from collecting their children from the field/playgrounds and report to the main hall to collect children? Equally, please drop children off at the hall doors, not on the path. The safety of our children remains paramount.

**Packed lunches** – please can you ensure that your child’s packed lunch is a healthy balance of foods? We have recently seen a marked increase in *multiple* packs of crisps/chocolate biscuits and cakes in lunchboxes. Please can we remind you that ‘sweets’ and ‘chocolate bars’ are not permitted in lunchboxes. Thank you for your support.

**School trips and sports festivals –** School trips and sports festivals are part of our curriculum at Russell, as such we expect all children to attend. Please can we request that you do not ask your child if they would like to go? There is no option to remain at school when the rest of their class are participating in curriculum enhancing experiences which will be referred to later in their lessons. As part of life’s experiences children need to learn that they won’t necessarily want to do/enjoy everything they do, but it has to be done. A very important life lesson! Please feel free to blame me and say ‘Mrs Walker says you have to go.’ Lots of parents do – and that’s fine! I will happily explain it to the children. Thank you so much for your support.

**PTA Eco Rock Stars and Easter Trail Challenge:**

We wanted to take a minute to thank everyone for their involvement in the **ECO ROCK STARS and EASTER TRAIL CHALLENGES** this year.

The participation has been better than ever before so we hope you enjoyed taking part.

**ECO ROCK STARS**

We are thrilled to announce that ***£250*** was raised this year and even more pleasing is that a whole host of ECO activities were completed by Russell children, keep up the great work!

Given their amazing achievements we have decided to crown two winners this year…

Our ***ECO ROCK STARS*** are **ALBUS**(Penguins) and **RUBY** (Goldfinch).

Albus and Ruby will now be awarded their ECO council badge and become ECO Advisors on the school council, well done to both of you!

Every child that took part received a treat too.

**Easter Trail – Long**

Well done to everyone that completed the long trail around Ampthill, we hope you enjoyed it.

Our overall winner is… **CHARLIE**(Kingfisher)

**Easter Trail – Short**

Well done to everyone who solved the Tooth Fairy clue.

Our overall winner is… **ROBYN** (Kingfisher)

 THANK YOU TO EVERYONE INVOLVED FOR YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT OF THE PTA.

**Children continuing their good work, even after they have left Russell! Would you like to help?**

Luke is a former pupil of Russell, and has challenged himself to raise money for CHUMS, a charity that is very close to our heart here at Russell.

He is going to hike a 154km trail carrying all the kit to be self-sufficient. This is no mean feat for a 12year old, so it would be great if you felt able to support his challenge so he can get as much sponsorship as possible for his worthy charity.

Below is his Justgiving site. Any donations would be amazing and really encourage Luke with his already rigorous training schedule.

You can donate to his JustGiving page by clicking here <https://www.justgiving.com/page/luke-saunders1682856206704?utm_source=Sharethis&utm_medium=one_page&utm_content=page/lukesaunders1682856206704&utm_campaign=pfpemail&utm_term=841eb645e5da425399189cbcd08b6a49>  
JustGiving sends your donation straight to Chums Charity and automatically reclaims Gift Aid if you are a UK taxpayer, so your donation is worth even more.  
Thank you for your support and a huge well done to Luke! It is so wonderful that we hear regularly from ex-students who have gone on to do some truly incredible things.

**Very busy summer term:**

As you will see from the calendar, the summer term is the busiest of the school year! Please bear with us as there will be an awful lot to communicate with you about! We try our best to do this in a timely manner, but apologise if we fall short on occasion. It is not for the want of trying! Thank you for your understanding.

**Uniform:**

Please can you ensure your child does not come to school wearing coloured trainers for a normal school day? All black footwear is required please. In addition, please can you ensure that your child is wearing the correct school uniform each day? We only have school cardigans/jumpers and PE tops as ‘logoed’, everything else can be generic/supermarket brought. We do not want standards to slip in any way at all as we approach the summer. Thank you.

**PE and festivals news:**

Over recent weeks some of year 2 and 4 have taken part in cricket festivals. All involved seem to have enjoyed themselves and were excellent sportspeople.

Year 4 have also had the opportunity to take part in some Level 1 Bikeability sessions. Level 1 takes place off-road, on the school playground which means the children can learn in a traffic-free environment. The aims of the session are to support them in maintaining their bike; controlling their bike including setting off, cruising, slowing down, braking and stopping; pedal without feeling wobbly or out of control and to be aware of their surroundings.

Our year 4s have also had the opportunity to attend a sports transition event at Alameda this half term which is in preparation for their move to middle school at the end of the year.

**We are also extremely proud to announce that we have been awarded the Platinum School Games mark again this year due to our continued dedication and commitment to this area. Thank you for all or your support in making our Russell community physically active!**

**Community Events:**

A message from the Ampthill Festival team:

Get ready to rock out with us Friday, July 14th at AmpRocks! We're bringing you an incredible line-up featuring Grammy award-winning Clean Bandit, along with Black Honey, Kula Shaker, and Jacob & Amelie.

It doesn't stop there as Saturday, July 15th we’re bringing you AmpProms, where the amazing Ampthill Concert Orchestra, Redborne Jazz Band, and Ampthill Town Band will be performing alongside some incredible special guests. Get ready for an unforgettable experience filled with timeless melodies and breath-taking fireworks.

Don't wait too long to grab your spot to avoid disappointment. Tickets are available at [www.ampthillfestival.com/tickets](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ampthillfestival.com%2Ftickets%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR27mGRLT-YELJX5e62RDQOKR8d5HW5Kwv92m_xJkHYwd-Emd2QwWWrjhoY&h=AT1QEJzvx4PObvw9oMGLDuBJUNBhBwx7Gufc_Y6EZJDSNNoZcJomszPmj2YLaCd37OWvyFPSZxuCYXeg2jYT_pqlZRGwPRNi7ChFXVeTbV_2B4FMxrhd3EsyNerEkHOq9Hby78hjm59bKcpVAiel6uHi8Q&__tn__=-UK-R&c%5b0%5d=AT3EFBvQc-0Lx71r8SqUUotGhhsA2l1Rcdp60_Tq93jB3v_yfpd5c_PkEqsFkY8DUaphd8rluN3KUjI-rI6Q39X3Zty6PNduQ_nqcXMdnbTToK1iDu1lZhfqVfy3CYeDQw3A6eZYJ0NejkzYMwyamdFGp92djUAMKLFZiOL-m0MDbCp8RAwtR0foueqnzCR7ftwOg_m1JAvs). (See poster below)

Please see the rest of the newsletter for community events/posters etc.

**And finally:**

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

Many thanks and kind regards,

Nicki Walker

Headteacher

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