**JULY NEWSLETTER**

July 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to our July newsletter. These newsletters are sent out on a monthly basis to keep you informed about what is happening in school.

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

**Monday 19th July to Wednesday 21st July –** Full House Theatre workshops for every child

**Tuesday 20th July –** Year 4 Leavers’ Party

**Wednesday 21st July –** Last day of term

**Summer holiday – Thursday 22nd July – 5th September 2021 – Premier Sport Holiday Club running**

**Monday 6th September – School begins again for Y1, Y2, Y3 and Y4 children (INSET days for staff on 2/9 and 3/9)**

***Monday 6th September –*** *Year 1, 2, 3 and 4 children return to school, Home Visits for new foundation stage children begin*

***Wednesday 15th September*** *– Half of new foundation stage children start school*

***Thursday 16th September*** *– All foundation stage children in*

***Tuesday 21st September*** *– 2:30pm – Phonics coffee afternoon for Y1 and Y2*

***Thursday 23rd September –*** *New Intake Meeting for Foundation Stage (2022), 9:30am*

***Monday 27th September to Wednesday 29th******Septembe****r – Mindfulness Superhero Workshops for all*

***Thursday 30th September –*** *FS reading and writing workshop for Foundation Stage Parents with coffee ‘morning’ 9:15 – 10:30am, New Intake Meeting for Foundation Stage (2022) at 2pm*

***Monday 4th October –*** *Harvest Assembly TBC*

***Monday 11th October*** *– Parents’ Evening 4:30pm to 7pm,*

***Tuesday 12th October*** *– Parents’ Evening 3:45pm to 6:30pm*

***Wednesday 13th October*** *– New Intake Meeting (FS 2022) at 9:30am*

***Monday 18th October*** *– Finance and Resources Governors’ Meeting TBC*

***Friday 22nd October –*** *Break up for half term*

***HALF TERM MONDAY 25th OCTOBER – FRIDAY 29th OCTOBER***

**Please see the school website for more dates beyond this**

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

**Covid update:**

As you will know, the Prime Minister has announced that the country will move to step 4 of the road map on Monday 19th July. ***However, he has said that schools are likely to continue with the measures they have had in place until the end of the term. CBC has confirmed that its schools (which includes Russell) are also expected to continue to use all the existing measure and restrictions for children until the end of the summer term, due to the very high number of local cases.*** We are really struggling to keep bubbles open due to the scale of infections now. Thank you for continuing to be vigilant with all our safety measures. It is keeping the vast majority of us in school at this difficult time and we really appreciate that.

**Measures until the end of the term will include:** all the usual safety measures and bubble arrangements, and the continued use of face coverings around site. **Please note: the responsibility for contact tracing has now moved (19th July) to NHS Track and Trace so you may be contacted by them if your child tests positive. Please continue to inform us if your child does test positive (just in case the NHS system ‘fails’) and see an email later today, specifically about how this will work. Thank you.**

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| Full House Theatre Workshops | Monday 19th – Wednesday 21st July (in school time) | Stay in class bubbles for all workshops  Covid risk assessment for all activities |  |
| Year 4 Leavers’ Party | Tuesday 20th July  Bubble Inflatable and games sessions:  11 – 12 noon  Woodpeckers  1 – 2pm  Starlings  2:15 – 3:15pm  Kingfisher | Class bubbles have their own session times on the field with inflatables  Social distancing and hygiene in place  Clean equipment between bubbles | Children may come to school in their own clothes (suitable for bouncing on inflatables!) |

**Initial plans for September**

As I said in my last newsletter, September will see many changes around school to reflect the changes to national laws and restrictions. Hopefully, we will be able to make school far more ‘normal’ than it has been for several years.

**Proposed start and end of day arrangements from September 2021**

* There will be no staggered starts and finishes
* Parents in all classes can drop their child off between 8:40 and 8:53am
* The register is taken promptly at 8:55am, marking the official start of the school day
* School ends at 3:30pm
* Further guidance on specific drop-off and collection arrangements will follow shortly

**The table below summarises some of the main changes:**

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| **Principle** | **Change in September** | **What this means** |
| Staggered starts and finishes | Go | Back to 8:40 – 8:53 arrive and 3:30pm leave for all |
| Bubbles | Go | Back to being able to mix when we want to |
| Having playground ‘zones’ | Go | Children can play anywhere when outside |
| Table layout in classrooms | Sitting in rows will go  Back to groups |  |
| Assemblies | Back to in person assemblies instead of Zoom |  |
| Handwashing  Catch it kill it bin it | Keep when children arrive/go to the toilet/before they eat/after they have been outside, but not excessive handwashing  Keep it | |
| Class email addresses | Keep them as an alternative form of communication that parents tell us they value | |
| Library | Back in full use | |
| Face coverings | Not required in any part of the school | |
| Social distancing | No longer needed | |
| Educational visits | Can go ahead fully | |
| Ventilation | We will keep what we can as it has been very healthy | |
| Visitors | Back to allowing parents helpers once DBS checked and children have settled back into school following the summer break | |
| Additional cleaning during the school day (roving cleaner) | Stays for the autumn term at least | |
| Lateral Flow Tests | Staff will still test twice a week in September | |
| Extra-curricular clubs | Not restricted to a single year group, back to being widely available | |

Please be aware, that is of course subject to change should anything happen over the summer, and the government make any further announcements – please not! More information will follow in due course.

**Staffing changes/news:**

It is with an enormously heavy heart that we have to say goodbye to Mrs Summerfield at the end of this academic year. Sue has been at Russell in various roles for an incredible 24 years, but it is as the Office Manager we will truly miss her. She is the face, voice and words (via email) of Russell via the professional and supportive Office correspondence. Our school’s warm, friendly, welcoming and professional nature is often commented upon by visitors and those who make enquiries. It is Sue who has so often provided this to our children, staff and families. We are going to miss Sue enormously and wish her and her husband Gary (who also served as governor and Chair of Governors at Russell) all the very best for the future. We look forward to bumping into them around Ampthill looking a whole lot more relaxed! Thank you for everything Sue. You will be sorely missed.

We will also lose Mrs Lewin as she comes to the end of another period of cover for us in Nightingale Class. I think we can all agree that she has been magnificent for the class and she will again be really missed by us all. Thank you, Tracey. Your hard work is greatly appreciated and we love having you on the team. I am busy thinking up the next reason to welcome her back to Russell!

In addition, Miss Leece has found it incredibly hard to juggle working life and her young family, so she has made the difficult decision to ‘step back’ for a while, until the time is right to return. Again, I would like to thank Miss Leece for her hard work and dedication. We are already looking forward to you coming back.

Now for some really happy news! Mrs Bunney is expecting a baby in December. We couldn’t be more delighted for her and Steve. We have all joked that we will only be letting her take 2 weeks’ maternity leave as we will miss her too much! She didn’t look very impressed!

We also are looking forward to welcoming a new Learning Support Assistant, Mrs Denise Cook, into Foundation Stage in September. Denise joins us with lots of fantastic experience and will again strengthen the Russell team.

**Changes to the Office:**

From September, we will be welcoming Colette Davies to the office team. We are very excited to be working with Colette and the many skills and rich experience she brings.

The staff structure in the office will be:

Office Manager: Mrs Sarah Bremner

Finance Manager: Mrs Karen Appleby

Office Administrator: Mrs Colette Davies

**Changes to Pastoral Support:**

The global pandemic has taken its toll on us all, but none more so than our Pastoral Team: Mrs Halsey and Mrs Hunt. Thankfully, they are both staying with us on the staffing team, but will both be stepping away from Pastoral Support to ‘regroup’. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for ALL their invaluable work with our children and families during the pandemic – they have been incredible! Mrs Sarah Knight will continue to lead our Pastoral Team in September, when she will be joined by the very able and experienced Mrs Alaine Clark.

**Changes to the Aviary Club:**

Tracey Baker has run a very successful Aviary (before and after school club) for many years now. Due to personal circumstances, she is now unable to work until 6pm in the evening and will be only working in the core day at Russell from September. I would like to thank Tracey for her leadership of the club, which has been fantastic. Mrs Alison Line, who has already been working in the Aviary for many years, will take on the leadership role from September. We wish Alison every success in this new role – we know she will be fabulous!

**End of Year Reports**

Thank you for all the wonderful comments we have received back in school on your feedback form. They have been a delight to read and have made all the hard work most definitely worth it. Thank you for all your enormous contributions to your child’s learning, through remote learning, regular reading, Learning Logs, Doodle Maths, Sight Words, Spellings, TTRS etc. – we really appreciate it!

**Russell Leavers:**

As the academic year comes to an end it is always sad to say goodbye to the Year 4s as they move on to Alameda, or indeed to other schools. Year 4 have been a super year group (and enormous, being rammed full at 90!). As I said in the Leavers’ Assemblies, I am really going to miss them. The children have been fantastic Russell Rights role models all year, and I wish them all the very best in the future. Come back and see us – we would love to know how you get on! I would also like to take this opportunity to say goodbye to some of our Year 4 parents, some of whom have their eldest child leaving Russell, and we realise we will be losing you too! Thank you for the huge contribution you have made: Google Classroom learning, many a PTA event and fundraising, classroom support, helping on trips etc. Simply, thank you: we are really going to miss your incredible support!

**PTA:**

I would just like to take this opportunity to say an enormous thank you to Grace, Sarah and the entire PTA for being absolutely brilliant this year. It is not easy finding the time to support school in normal times, let alone having to be creative around all the Covid restrictions. They have been simply amazing and introduced us to many fantastic new phenomena such as Skittleman, Sustainability Day and growing sunflowers! Thank you ALL so much!

**Walking to and from school:**

Year 4 have done a brilliant job getting themselves to and from school safely this term: a really important skill to learn before heading off to Alameda. Please remind all the children about taking care when walking to and from school in September and indeed when they are around and about in Ampthill over the summer holidays. Thank you.

**Medication:**

All medication and inhalers will be sent home on the last day of term.  Please return any necessary medication to the office in September and complete a new consent form.

**Summer activities:**

Please find below and attached:

1. Musical opportunities:

Throughout the holidays, Central Bedfordshire Council’s Music Service (Inspiring Music) is running a series of **free workshops for children aged 7-13 who receive free school meals.**

From learning the trombone and ukulele to writing songs for videos games and singing, there is a wide range of sessions available.  All sessions aim to develop participants’ musical skills, while they have fun.

See what’s available and when via [https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/directory/81/a\_to\_z/I](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTMsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTA3MTUuNDMyMzUxMzEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5jZW50cmFsYmVkZm9yZHNoaXJlLmdvdi51ay9kaXJlY3RvcnkvODEvYV90b196L0kifQ.-zwHVnathidavcmnKgEwQ5AdrZ7GUPiXRAV_QnT3Usw/s/900610115/br/109348023673-l)

1. Learn to ride your bike opportunities (attached)
2. Summer reading challenge (attached)

**Reminder from last newsletter - Oak National Academy and remote learning/holiday learning:**

Please can we ask for your support with keeping children reading over the summer? Little and often (about 4 x a week) will be sufficient, and will really get children off to a flying start in September. Thank you.

If you feel you want to keep other learning ‘ticking over’ during the summer then please do dip into these great resources. As you will remember from our previous remote learning, Oak National Academy (see hyperlink below) provides 10,000+ free, high-quality editable and adaptable lessons via their website, each featuring teacher-led videos to aid independent study across 35 subjects from early years foundation stage (EYFS) to key stage 4.

**Oak Academy Summer School**

<https://classroom.thenational.academy/summer-learning-support>

[Oak National Academy](https://www.thenational.academy/?utm_source=12%20May%202021%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19) is extending its support to across summer 2021.

Oak’s Summer Classroom will provide resources and lessons for summer remote-learning, should you feel you need it at any time, or as ‘extra’.

Their summer learning support offer includes:

* core priority units and lessons identified to prepare pupils for the next academic year
* newly designed unit quizzes as a formative tool to help identify gaps in knowledge
* creative, active and mental health resources from a range of partner organisations, signposting pupils to vital wellbeing support
* a full package of detailed guidance for parents and pupils

**Free School Meals:**

As you are aware, under the government ‘Universal Infant Free School Meals’ programme all children up to the end of Year 2 are entitled to free school meals should they choose to take them. Once children are in Year 3 this stops and meals are only available as free school meals to children in receipt of the Pupil Premium. If you think you may be entitled to Pupil Premium and free school meals for your child, please do come and speak to one of us in the school office and we can advise you. There are many benefits to claiming Pupil Premium. If you think you may be eligible, please do come and let us know and we will give you more information about how to go about claiming it. Regrettably, we cannot do this for you and the request must come from you. Do come and see us.

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| **Family First Magazine**  Here is your free e-copy of the Family First magazine, packed full of information to help keep your children busy and entertained during the school summer holidays - Enjoy!  **Please click on the link:** [https://issuu.com/sevenstarmedia/docs/ff\_issue\_8\_final010721](https://familyfirst.us18.list-manage.com/track/click?u=78d2652349ab3e1cddffc01a0&id=0fd08ee212&e=2c497c8d23) |

**And finally:**

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this (long!) newsletter and for **all** your support this year. It has been another incredibly busy one with all the many challenges of Covid. I would like to thank everyone for their incredible support again throughout the year. The whole Russell community (children, staff and parents) has again been a force to be reckoned with, and created such a great partnership for the children. I am already planning, and looking forward to, another fantastic year next year in 2021/22, where, due to school’s continued and ever-growing popularity, we are heading towards being totally full!

I hope you and your family have a wonderfully restful and safe summer holiday and I look forward to seeing (nearly) everyone again in September. Happy holidays – when we get there!

Many thanks and kind regards,

Nicki Walker

Headteacher