**MARCH NEWSLETTER**

March 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to our March newsletter. Apologies – you are right – there was not a February one! It has been a little too busy. Sorry! 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 since the previous newsletter.*

***Friday 11th March –*** *Design an egg competition begins, British Science week begins*

***Monday 14th March –*** *Curriculum, Learning and Standards Governors’ meeting at 6:30pm*

***Tuesday 15th March –*** *Year 4 swimming*

***Friday 18th March –*** *Red Nose Day and Wear a hat day – see below for more details*

***Monday 21st March –*** *Big walk and wheel begins (try to come to school without using a car – or park and stride if you can’t, Year 1 trip to Woburn*

***Tuesday 22nd March –*** *Year 4 swimming*

***Thursday 24th March*** *– Condover meeting for Year 4 parents*

***Friday 25th March –*** *PTA spring discos*

***Sunday 27th March –*** *Mother’s Day*

***Monday 28th March –*** *Foundation Stage walk around Ampthill, Easter Assembly, Full Governors’ meeting at 6:30pm*

***Tuesday 29th March –*** *Year 4 swimming*

***Wednesday 30th March*** *– 7:30pm PTA Meeting*

***Friday 1st April*** *– Easter activity morning, Easter hunt (with PTA treat)*

**Easter holiday - 4/4 – 19/4/2022 – Premier Holiday Camp running on site**

***Wednesday 20th April –*** *Children back to school (Tuesday 19th is an INSET day – no school for children), Parent Helper Session at 2:45pm, Multicultural dance workshops*

***Thursday 21st April*** *– 9am Finance and Resources Governors’ Meeting, Multicultural dance workshops*

***Friday 22nd April*** *– Multicultural dance workshops*

***Monday 25th April*** *– Queens’ Platinum Jubilee Assembly with Roy Tebbutt*

***Tuesday 26th April*** *– Year 2 Rugby Festival for some children (TBC)*

***Wednesday 27th – Friday 29th April*** *– Condover Hall Residential for Year 4 children*

***Monday 2nd May*** *– Bank holiday Monday – no school*

***Tuesday 3rd May*** *– Sunflower Competition Begins (PTA)*

***Wednesday 4th May*** *– NHS Improving sleep workshop for parents*

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

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

**Covid Update:**

Thank you for your on-going support with our Covid measures.  We continue to see both staff and children affected with an increase in numbers again since half term.  For example, we currently have 5 teachers off with Covid (1/3 of the teaching team, and many of them feeling quite unwell with it too) and over 25 children.  This does continue to provide us with daily staffing challenges, so thank you for continuing to bear with us.

Below I have tried to summarise the main national changes and how it affects schools.  In short, although the legal duty to isolate has been removed for the rest of the population, the DfE are still asking that we **continue to self-isolate both children and staff if they test positive.**  This will hopefully limit the spread and impact on lost school days.

As always, we continue to aim to keep school as ‘normal’ as possible, and move to the minimum level of measures in order to keep the maximum number of staff and children in school, and well.

**Changes to self-isolation**

From Thursday 24 February, the Government removed the **legal** requirement to self-isolate following a positive test. However, the guidance [COVID-19: people with COVID-19 and their contacts](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDAsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjAyMjUuNTM5OTIwOTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5nb3YudWsvZ292ZXJubWVudC9wdWJsaWNhdGlvbnMvY292aWQtMTktcGVvcGxlLXdpdGgtY292aWQtMTktYW5kLXRoZWlyLWNvbnRhY3RzL2NvdmlkLTE5LXBlb3BsZS13aXRoLWNvdmlkLTE5LWFuZC10aGVpci1jb250YWN0cyJ9.c350ok3XakFJc8FpIgHVOQdZqRuw46gnv0BUtgeod50/s/900610115/br/127159737309-l), published 24 February 2022 clearly outlines that: **Children and young people and staff with COVID-19 should not attend their education setting while they are infectious. They may take an LFD test from 5 days after their symptoms started (or the day their test was taken if they did not have symptoms) followed by another one the next day (24 hours apart). If both these test results are negative, they should return to their educational setting (Day 6), as long as they feel well enough to do so and do not have a temperature.**

**\*If no negative test results are received prior to day 10, then self-isolation finishes at midnight on day 10\***

**Close contacts, isolation and daily testing of close contacts**

From 24th February 2022, fully vaccinated close contacts and those under the age of 18 (including siblings) are no longer required to test daily for 7 days. The legal requirement for close contacts who are not fully vaccinated to self-isolate has also been removed. If you have a case in your household and do have LFD test, we appreciate you continuing to try to identify cases. Thank you.

**DfE Contingency Framework**

The contingency framework describes the principles of managing local outbreaks of COVID-19 (including responding to variants of concern) in education and childcare settings. This document has been updated, 24th February 2022, and the thresholds used by settings as an indication for when to seek public health advice if they are concerned have been updated.

For most education and childcare settings, these include:

     a higher than previously experienced and/or rapidly increasing number of staff or student absences due to COVID-19 infection

     evidence of severe disease due to COVID-19, for example if a pupil, student, child or staff member is admitted to hospital due to COVID-19

   a cluster of cases where there are concerns about the health needs of vulnerable staff or students within the affected group

**Control Measures**

Schools continue to comply with the control measures set out in the [DfE Schools COVID-19 operational guidance](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDIsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjAyMjUuNTM5OTIwOTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL2Fzc2V0cy5wdWJsaXNoaW5nLnNlcnZpY2UuZ292LnVrL2dvdmVybm1lbnQvdXBsb2Fkcy9zeXN0ZW0vdXBsb2Fkcy9hdHRhY2htZW50X2RhdGEvZmlsZS8xMDU3MTA2LzIyMDIyNF9TY2hvb2xzX2d1aWRhbmNlLnBkZiJ9.NvDOidjzEcrHd8KHM_vMghiRqWBquK6VIX4wrR1De14/s/900610115/br/127159737309-l)

These include:

1.    Ensuring good hygiene for everyone

2.    Maintaining appropriate cleaning regimes

3.    Keeping occupied spaces well ventilated

4.    Following public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19

**Face Coverings**

While the cases amongst adults are so high in school, we will continue to ask for face coverings to be worn by both parents and staff (if they can) when they are in communal areas of the school. Thank you for your support.

**Bubbles and Mixing**

The [DfE Schools COVID-19 operational guidance](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDMsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjAyMjUuNTM5OTIwOTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL2Fzc2V0cy5wdWJsaXNoaW5nLnNlcnZpY2UuZ292LnVrL2dvdmVybm1lbnQvdXBsb2Fkcy9zeXN0ZW0vdXBsb2Fkcy9hdHRhY2htZW50X2RhdGEvZmlsZS8xMDU3MTA2LzIyMDIyNF9TY2hvb2xzX2d1aWRhbmNlLnBkZiJ9.EfgBe8HdBp0-xodWasK2CNOJ_FbjTDSlLD-IySE0kBE/s/900610115/br/127159737309-l) no longer outlines the requirement for bubbles or grouping pupils in cohorts; **however, this may have to be reviewed with the local public health team should there be an outbreak in school**as outlined in the [DfE Contingency Framework](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDQsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjAyMjUuNTM5OTIwOTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL2Fzc2V0cy5wdWJsaXNoaW5nLnNlcnZpY2UuZ292LnVrL2dvdmVybm1lbnQvdXBsb2Fkcy9zeXN0ZW0vdXBsb2Fkcy9hdHRhY2htZW50X2RhdGEvZmlsZS8xMDU3MTQxL0NvbnRpbmdlbmN5X2ZyYW1ld29ya19lZHVjYXRpb25fYW5kX2NoaWxkY2FyZV9zZXR0aW5nc19GZWJydWFyeV8yMDIyLnBkZiJ9.1SQrovgEBrPuFmNgJOKDFrigS_Yx9v-V_k59wXsfRJE/s/900610115/br/127159737309-l).

**Flowcharts**

To reflect the new information and guidance the CBC Education Settings Flowchart and Parents and Carers Flowchart have been updated and can be found on the website: <https://www.russell-lower.co.uk/website/coronavirus_updates_including_risk_assessment/457055>

**Information for parents and carers on COVID-19 vaccination for at risk 5 to 11 year olds**

Children aged 5 to 11 years **who are in a clinical risk group or who live with someone who is immunosuppressed can get the COVID-19 vaccine**, in line with advice set out by the [Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-30-december-2020/joint-committee-on-vaccination-and-immunisation-advice-on-priority-groups-for-covid-19-vaccination-30-december-2020?utm_source=8%20March%202022%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19). Eligible children include those with diabetes, immunosuppression, learning disabilities, and other conditions as outlined by the [UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) in the Green Book](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-the-green-book-chapter-14a?utm_source=8%20March%202022%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19).

Vaccinations help to increase protection against COVID-19, which is particularly important for those with underlying health conditions.

Further information is available in the [guide for parents of children aged 5 to 11 years](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-resources-for-children-aged-5-to-11-years/a-guide-for-parents-of-children-aged-5-to-11-years-of-age-at-high-risk?utm_source=8%20March%202022%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19) published by UKHSA. There are some [frequently asked questions](https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2022/02/11/vaccinations-for-clinically-vulnerable-children-and-young-people-your-questions-answered/?utm_source=8%20March%202022%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19) on the vaccination programme including information on eligibility, accessibility and advice for parents of children at high risk from COVID-19. Following [advice](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/jcvi-update-on-advice-for-covid-19-vaccination-of-children-aged-5-to-11/jcvi-statement-on-vaccination-of-children-aged-5-to-11-years-old?utm_source=8%20March%202022%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19) from the JCVI, healthy 5 to 11 year old children will also be offered two 10 microgram doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. The NHS will prepare to extend this non-urgent offer to all children during April.

**What Parents and Carers need to know about (DfE)**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=a735646b-1b59-4f49-8e2a-37242068576c&utm_content=daily>

As always, please do contact us if you have any questions or queries.  We will do our very best to answer them.  Thank you again.

**The news:**

Life continues to be very challenging and worrying, especially with the situation in Ukraine being all over the news.  If your children have been affected by seeing or hearing things in the media, please use this resource for support.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/13865002>

Please do let us know if you need any further support and we will do all we can to provide it, or signpost it.

**CHUMS:**

CHUMS is there to support mental health and improve lives in our local area. If you need some additional support please use the self-referral link : <http://chums.uk.com/refer/> and let us know that you have made a referral. We will support you in any way we can in the meantime.

**Red Nose Day and Wear a hat day – Friday 18th March 2022:**

On Friday 18th March we will be combining Comic Relief Red Nose Day and Brain Tumour Research Wear a Hat Day to raise funds within school for both of these worthy charities. We will be collecting suggested donations of £1.00 (but would love to give them more!) in the children’s classrooms so please do either send these in on the day or alternatively if you wish to make a donation to either charity online you can do so at: <https://donation.comicrelief.com/> and <https://www.braintumourresearch.org/donation/donate-now>

**Please note:** This will be **a** **normal uniform day** although the children are **invited to wear a red item: e.g. socks/tights/hair band etc or a hat (why not combine both and wear a red hat?!)**

**PLEASE CAN WE KEEP RED NOSES AT HOME THIS YEAR SO WE AVOID ANY POTENTIAL ISSUES WITH A CHILD PUTTING ON THE WRONG NOSE BY ACCIDENT/CROSS-CONTAMINATION? THANK YOU**

**Street Tag winners:**

Russell Lower School were crowned CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE Redborne Season 1 Champions 5,575,540 points! Thank you for all your support! It was an incredible achievement!

The second-place runner up was Etonbury Academy with 4,772,515 points.

The third-place runner up was Templefield Lower School with 1,288,560 points.

Congratulations to all the children, parents, and school staff that have been active.

Some milestones achieved in this season are 32 million steps, over 56k tags, and over 31,000 active miles!

**A plea:**

Please be aware that E-Scooters are not permitted to be used on the school site or any other public place. **E-scooters themselves are not illegal in the UK** and you can buy, sell and own one perfectly legally. However, it is illegal to use an e-scooter in public. Thank you for your support.

**Fancy a bit of Bake Off?**

**Junior Bake Off - Looking for star bakers!** Love Productions are seeking for budding bakers as applications are now open for the 8th series of Junior Bake Off on Channel 4. They are looking for young budding bakers between 9-12 years old. Filming would take place from July 2022, but our applications close on Sunday 13th March 2022. Interested bakers can apply online at - [www.applyforjuniorbakeoff.co.uk](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTIsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjAyMjIuNTM3OTAzMjEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3Byb3RlY3QtZXUubWltZWNhc3QuY29tL3MvUW9hOUNyOVJ5dEQ5Tk5MdXo0dFppP2RvbWFpbj1hcHBseWZvcmp1bmlvcmJha2VvZmYuY28udWsvIn0.EqIQXvocRnGs70SRxFPeuojHoZCv-yQHQdxTP0hv69w/s/900610115/br/126954788354-l)

**Annual Parent Survey:**

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete our annual parent survey. The detailed findings and your comments will go to the Governing Board this month, but these are summarised in the chart below:

**Parent survey 2022 – table of results (170 responses – Jan 22)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Question** | **%** | **Further Parents Response?** | **School Response?** |
| My child feels safe at school | 100 |  | That is so good to hear! |
| There is a good range of subjects at school | 100 |  | That is so good to hear! |
| My child is happy at school | 99 |  | That is so good to hear, but do let us know if your child is not happy – even 1% is too many! |
| School makes sure its pupils are well behaved | 99 |  | That is so good to hear. The Russell Rights, Emotion Coaching and Behaviour policy work really well together. Visitors always comment on how good this is! |
| Any bullying is dealt with quickly and effectively | 99 |  | That is so good to hear, but do let us know if your child is being bullied – even 1% is too many! |
| School makes me aware of what my child learns | 99 |  | That is so good to hear, but do let us know if you need any more information – even 1% is too many! We ensure theme webs go out at the beginning of each term and the website is also packed with information: <https://www.russell-lower.co.uk/website/curriculum/437827> |
| My child does well at this school | 98 |  | That is so good to hear, but do let us know when this isn’t the case – 2% is too many! |
| School has high expectations for my child | 98 |  | That is so good to hear, but do let us know when this isn’t the case – 2% is too many! |
| I would recommend this school to another parent | 98 |  | That is so good to hear, but do let us know when this isn’t the case – 2% is too many! |
| School supports my child’s wider development | 97 |  | That is so good to hear, but do let us know when this isn’t the case – 3% is too many! |
| My child is very happy (77%) or happy (20%) at this school | 97 | 2% were content  1% not that happy  0% were not happy at all | That is so good to hear, but do let us know if your child is not happy – even 1% is too many! |
| Concerns are dealt with properly | 96 |  | Please let us know if you have any concerns that are not addressed properly |
| My SEND child gets the support they need to succeed | 96 |  | Please let Mrs Knight know if your child is not able to succeed in school |
| My child has someone to talk to at school if they are upset | 95 |  | All children complete a network hand each half term so they have at least 5 people they can talk to if upset (usually 3 in school and 2 at home)  This is in addition to the class teacher and other adults, including Pastoral support |
| My child can take part in extra clubs and activities | 95 |  | Sorry – we know that some clubs fill up quickly. We try to run as many as we possibly can and constantly look to expand the offer. It is only physical space and time that stops us! |
| School lets me know how my child is doing | 94% |  | We have a parents’ evening in the autumn and spring terms. We send a short, written report in the spring and a longer report in the summer.  Tapestry, reading records, spelling results etc. and class email addresses can all be used to relay information |
| Do you know what mental health and well-being support is available to your child? | 58%  42% | Yes  No | Please see the Pastoral Support section of the school website and let us know if you need more information. The toolkits we have developed (see left hand side) are really helpful. Over the coming weeks, I will tell you more about what we do for all children as part of our normal classroom and school practice:  <https://www.russell-lower.co.uk/website/pastoral_support/367189> |

**REMINDER - Tesco Community Grants Scheme:**

Voting will continue until 31st March 2022. Thank you for all your support so far!  
  
**And finally**

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter, and for continuing to give us your support during these challenging times.

Have a lovely weekend.

Many thanks and kind regards,

Nicki Walker

Headteacher