**MAY NEWSLETTER**

 May 2021

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.

We will be continuing to take each half term at a time. Please note events that are *underlined and in italics* are new since the previous newsletter.

***Wednesday 26thMay –*** *Greenfinch Class to Marston Vale Country Park, Year 4 Road Safety talks (am)*

**Thursday 27th May –** Foundation Stage Pirate Day, *Year 3 Day Dreamers*

**Friday 28th May –** Sustainability Day with PTA, wear non-uniform green, blue or brown (Earth colours) with a donation of £1, and learn all about the Russell Eco Code *(see more information below*),Break up for half term

**May Half term – 31/5 to 4/6 – Premier Sport Holiday Club every day (except Bank Holiday)**

**Monday 7th June –** Children return to school – NO INSET DAY

***Wednesday 9th June –*** *8pm PTA Meeting via Zoom*

***Tuesday 15th June –*** *Letter out to all new FS 2021 starters regarding the New Intake*

*Meeting*

***Thursday 17th June –*** *Redborne Schools Partnership – Intra-schools’ competition*

***Friday 18th June*** *– Year 4 Bikeability sessions*

***Thursday 24th June*** *– New Intake Meeting for new FS 2021 parents, 6:30pm, 7pm and 7:30pm*

***Monday 28th June*** *– SEND and Vulnerable visit to Alameda 10:30 – 12noon, non-Ladybirds stay and lunch sessions 10:30 – 12:15*

***Tuesday 29th June – Sports Day with PTA refreshments and uniform sale –*** *TBC* ***if*** *we can hold this and in what format*

***Wednesday 30th June, Thursday 1st July –*** *Ladybirds stay and lunch sessions, 10:30 – 12:15pm*

***Monday 5th July –*** *Curriculum, Learning and Standards Governors’ meeting, 6:30pm, Foundation Stage Visit by Herrings Green Farm*

***Thursday 8th July –*** *Reports home for Y4, Letters out re: new classes/teachers, Year 4 Assembly (if possible)*

***Friday 9th July –***  *Reports home for FS,Y1, Y2, Y3, Middle School Transition Day, Class swap day at Russell, Stay and Play sessions for New Intake 2021*

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

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

**Covid update:**

I would like to thank every single one of you for your continued vigilance and support over the last week. It has been a really challenging time with the emergence of the new variant and the closure of bubbles as a result. As you know, we have been working tirelessly with PHE (Public Health England), the DfE (Department for Education) and CBC (Central Bedfordshire Council) to ensure we are taking every conceivable precaution and measure and acting in accordance with all the latest public health advice.

Currently, the situation is changing daily and as I have said in previous correspondence, throughout the pandemic it has been my policy to communicate with you fully, honestly and in a timely manner. This will continue as I believe it is only with full information that we can all act to keep ourselves, our loved ones and our community safe.

CBC report that the new variant is causing difficulties for many local nurseries, lower and primary schools, and secondary schools alike. Please do let us continue working together effectively to keep our community safe and continue learning.

Thank you for continuing to be vigilant with all our safety measures.

**Other safety issues:**

* Congregating – please do not congregate in groups on or around the school site. We must be much more cautious at the moment
* Sunglasses – please do not send your child into school with sunglasses on. These are dangerous if a child wears them out to play and falls. A peaked cap is much safer and also shields the eyes. Thank you
* Nut and nut product free school – please be reminded that we are a nut and nut product free school. We have children and staff with severe nut allergies who could go into anaphylactic shock. Please do not send ANY products at all into school that contain nuts – even if in a sealed packet.
* Dogs – please be reminded that dogs cannot come onto the school site at all (even in an adult’s arms). Please leave all dogs at the gates.

**Sustainability Day – This Friday 28th May:**

The PTA’s next project is to work with us towards our ‘Sustainability Day’ on Friday, when we will launch our school Eco Code (attached), which was designed by the School Council. Children are invited to wear non-uniform in ‘Earth colours’ (greens, blues, browns etc.) to celebrate Sustainability Day, which builds on Earth Day (April 2021). Children will be learning about the school’s Eco Code, be encouraged to follow the code in school when they can, grow their own tomato plant outside their classroom (plants, soil and grow bag given to us by the PTA) and report back on how their sunflower growing is going. Children who are self-isolating in Owls/Art Adventurers bubble and Robin bubble are invited to join in virtually too! We would appreciate a donation of £1 for this non-uniform day, with all proceeds going straight to the PTA and therefore back into resources for the children.

**Wheelbarrow Competition for schools:**

The Swiss Garden at Shuttleworth, has been newly accredited with Royal Horticultural Society partner garden status, and is thrilled to be launching its Wheelbarrow Garden Competition for local lower and primary schools in Central Bedfordshire. The competition, to be held over the May Bank holiday weekend, is sponsored by Poplars Garden Centre, who have kindly donated wheelbarrows, compost and a 20% discount on plants purchased from Poplars for the competition. Bedfordshire Gardens Trust, will be donating the prizes.

Russell Lower School’s Gardening Club and Mrs Moffat, have entered our design, which will be seen by visitors to the garden who will be asked to vote for their favourite. The top three will win a prize. Why not use it as an excuse to get ‘out and about’ and pop along to The Swiss Garden and vote for the Russell entry?

**Bollywood Dancing:**

Recently, we enjoyed Bollywood dance sessions in school for all of the children.

The focus of these sessions was for the children to:

* Have fun
* Experience a new ‘culturally diverse’ physical activity
* Develop new skills

These sessions are also designed to add to pupil’s ‘cultural capital’ via PE and is being funding through the Sports Premium. Do have a look at the school website for more information and pictures: <https://www.russell-lower.co.uk/website/bollywood_dancing/559105>

**Staff update:**

We are looking forward being joined by two new members of staff after half term. Miss Emma Henly and Mrs Helen Kelly. These are both experienced Learning Support Assistants who will support the recovery curriculum at Russell.

**Class email addresses:**

Communicating effectively with parents is really important to us – whether it be a big or small thing, we want to work together. Covid has made face to face communication more challenging and we introduced the class email system. Thank you to everyone who is using this proportionately and appropriately – we really do appreciate it. To support our teacher’s well-being, can we please ask that you limit your emails to a maximum of 2 emails per week, per child and to ‘working day hours’ of 8am to 6pm, if at all possible? Most email systems have a ‘delayed send function’ which will allow you to write your email during the evening (if this suits your work-life balance better), but then ‘sends’ the email at a prescribed time i.e. 8am the following morning. Of course, if your email is ‘urgent’ or linked to a positive Covid test, want to hear from you night or day! Teachers, along with many other professionals have been working non-stop through the pandemic and we need to support their mental well-being too. Thank you SO much in advance. That will make a huge difference.

**Oak National Academy and remote learning/holiday learning:**

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 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
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**Pop it fidget toys:**

Please be aware that these fidget toys are not allowed at Russell Lower School. In almost all children they create distraction from their learning. Not ideal in a school! If your child has SEND and you feel needs these, please speak to the class teacher or Mrs Knight our SENDCo for special permission. Thank you.

**CHUMS workshops:**

CHUMS Emotional Wellbeing Service and Family Wellbeing Team in Central Bedfordshire are offering various workshops. For more information, or to book, please email:

fwteam@chums.uk.com

Please also see the attached leaflet about services and workshops available via CHUMS.

**Parent Workshops:**

Would you like to know more about the following topics, and find out how you can help yourselves and children? Please see the attached leaflet (Parenting Insight) for how to sign up.

* Bereavement and loss 27/5/21
* Autism in Bedfordshire 24/6/21
* On-line risks and safety 15/7/21

**Bedfordshire and Luton Children’s Community Health Hub:**

Please see below a message from CBC:

The ‘Bedfordshire and Luton Children’s Community Health HUB’ is the new name for our Single Point of Access (SPA) service and over the coming weeks and months we will be eventually bringing together all our children’s services under one new email address and one contact number across Luton and Bedfordshire.
 **From 1 June 2021:**

**Across Bedfordshire:**

·         A new email address for our Health Visiting and School Nursing 0-19 teams.

·         The phone number will remain the same, but the opening hours will change to 9am - 5pm (Mon-Fri)

·         A new contact number for our Looked after Children services.

Our trained HUB administrators will be at the end of the phone to help and advise, and to signpost to the correct services.

For more information, please see the attached health hub poster and new health hub team – key facts

**And finally:**

Thank you again for all your support. This has quickly become one of the most challenging periods of the pandemic for us in school. As there are any developments, I will of course let you know. In the meantime, thank you so much for your patience and on-going support. It is really very much appreciated. Half term has come at a good time. Please do continue to take all the appropriate precautions you can over this holiday, so that we all come back to school on 7th June fit and well.

Have a well-earned break over half term, and do stay safe.

Many thanks and kind regards,

Nicki Walker

Headteacher