**JULY NEWSLETTER**

JULY 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to our July newsletter; the final of the school year. 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.*

**Thursday 21st July –** last day of school – Break up for summer

**Friday 22nd July – Friday 2nd September – Summer holiday – Premier Sports Camps running much of the holiday (Thursday 1st and Friday 2nd September are INSET days)**

***Monday 5th September –*** *Year 1, 2, 3 and 4 children return to school, Home Visits for new foundation stage children begin*

***Wednesday 14th September*** *– Half of new foundation stage children start school*

***Thursday 15th September*** *– All foundation stage children in*

***Tuesday 20th September*** *– 2:30pm – Phonics workshop for Y1 and Y2 parents*

***Thursday 22nd September –*** *New Intake Meeting for Foundation Stage (2023), 9:30am*

***Tuesday 27th September -*** *New Intake Meeting for Foundation Stage (2023), 2pm*

***Friday30th September –*** *FS reading and writing workshop for Foundation Stage Parents with coffee ‘morning’ 9:15 – 10:30am*

***Monday 3rd October –*** *Harvest Assembly TBC*

***Monday 10th October*** *– Parents’ Evening 4:30pm to 7pm,*

***Tuesday 11th October*** *– Parents’ Evening 3:45pm to 6:30pm*

***Wednesday 12th October*** *– New Intake Meeting (FS 2023) at 9:30am*

***Monday 17th October*** *– Finance and Resources Governors’ Meeting, 6:30pm*

***Friday 21st October –*** *Break up for half term*

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

**Staffing changes/news:**

It is with an enormously heavy heart that we have to say goodbye to Mr Syrett soon. He has been an incredible Year 3 teacher, much loved by all. The good news is that we may see him around at Russell for a little while in September before his course and new role begins. We are so pleased it isn’t a total goodbye yet! Of course, when the time comes, we wish him the very best in his new role. Some other staff will be leaving Russell for a variety of reasons: many are students heading off to the next phase of their lives, and of course we wish them well too. Thank you and goodbye to Cat Byrne, Lynne Adkins, Denise Cook, Jonah Doohan and Ellis Halsey.

Equally, we will be saying hello some new staff to the wider Russell team: Mrs Armstrong-Hall, Mrs Hay, Miss Roberts-Mundy and Pip Wolf. We cannot wait to welcome them.

Please also be aware that Mrs Johnson has made a successful flexible working request and will not be in school on Fridays next year. The wonderful Ms Meyern who is already known to all the children and training to be a teacher will lead Greenfinch class on this day. She is amazing and the children’s learning or well-being will not be in any way compromised.

In addition, as the current Nightingale Class parents already know, Mrs Salih is currently undergoing treatment for breast cancer. Mrs Salih sends her enormous thanks to the parents and children of Nightingale Class for their generous and thoughtful hamper. She was absolutely overcome when we took it round for her. Sadly, this will mean that Mrs Salih will be absent from school for the time being. We are hoping that the fabulous Mr Syrett will be able to lead the class on Thursday and Fridays, at least through September, until we know when Mrs Salih can return to Russell. We will of course keep you updated and wish Mrs Salih all the very best with her on-going treatment.

We are immensely proud and grateful to all the staff at Russell. They have been an incredible team, so supportive and achieved some phenomenal results with the children, as you will have seen from the report letter. As you are aware, the teaching team for next academic year will be:

**Foundation Stage:**

Mrs Brown – Swan Class (FS lead)

Ms Leung – Swift Class

Miss Cranston – Dove Class

**Year 1:**

Mrs Milligan – Owl Class

Mrs Cox - Puffin Class

Mrs Jochacy (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday) Mrs Rogers (Thursday, Friday) – Wren Class

**Year 2:**

Miss Sensoy – Penguin Class

Mrs Johnson – Greenfinch Class (Monday to Thursday), Ms Meyern (Friday)

Mrs Hitchings – Robin Class (KS1 Lead)

**Year 3:**

Miss Walker – Goldfinch Class

Mrs Thompson (nee Miss Rawlings) – Blackbird Class

Mrs Nilletti (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday) and Mrs Salih (nee Miss Thompson) (Thursday, Friday) – Nightingale Class

**Year 4:**

Ms Lyons – Woodpecker Class

Mrs Moffat – Starling Class

Mrs Tuck – Kingfisher Class (KS2 Lead)

**Governor News:**

It is with much sadness that we will be saying goodbye to some incredible and long-serving governors this year:

Keith Redman-Henry – Safeguarding and Health and Safety Governor with 13 years of service

Nicolette Ford – Chair of Governors with 9 years of service

Paul Birley – Chair of Finance and Resources with 9 years of service

Catherine Norris – SEND Governor with 7 years of service

Nina Page with 4 years of service

They have been an enormous support through the very challenging times over the last 3 years particularly and I would like to thank them for all their selfless service to our community. Many of them have regularly gone above and beyond, not only supporting us at governor events, but also school events such as school balls, PTA events and much more! We will miss them and can’t thank them enough for their contribution to Russell. We wish them all the very best in the future.

Thankfully, the Russell community has once again stepped forward to support and challenge the school’s work. We look forward to the new team of Governors working together in September and welcome our new members to the Board:

Richard Gallagher – Chair of Governors/Sports Premium

Mariella Cook – Vice Chair of Governors

Graeme Armstrong

Chris Day – Chair of Finance and Resources

Francesca Crowther – PP and GDPR Governor

Katherine Milligan – Staff Governor

Dawn Clarke – SEND Governor

Jill Haig

Carrie Perrett

Hannah Leech – Safeguarding Governor

Katie Prowse

Dominic Holroyd-Thomas

Marian Murray - Clerk

**Sports Day:**

Firstly, a huge thank you for your support during our Sports Day.  The FS/KS1 event almost over-ran, so apologies we didn't have a chance to all get together at the end and we just had to send parents off site quickly - note to self to start at 9:15am next year!

The KS2 event was much calmer (only 6 classes compared to 9) and we were able to all get together at the end and even had a mums’, dads’ and teachers'/staff races!  Well done to Mr Syrett who was victorious! 🏆

The winners this year were:

**Winners - Green Sycamore - 222.5 points** (great as it was red oak last year and yellow willow in 2019)

Second - Blue Beech - 217 points

Third - Red Oak

Fourth - Yellow Willow

In addition, thank you for supporting the PTA refreshments. They raised a staggering £474.76! Quite amazing.

Thank you again.  It was a really lovely morning, enjoyed by all.

**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 again this year: regular reading, Learning Logs, Doodle Maths, Sight Words, Spellings, TTRS etc. We really appreciate it!

**Parent Pay:**

Can we please request that all parents clear any outstanding Parent Pay balance by the end of this term please? Thank you. Please see Mrs Appleby in the school office if you have any queries.

**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, Woodland or indeed to other schools. Year 4 have been a super year group, full of wonderful and caring children. 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 youngest child leaving Russell, and we realise we will be losing you too! Thank you for the huge contribution you have made: so many PTA events 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 Lindsay, Lynsey and the entire PTA for being absolutely brilliant this year. Anyone who attended the incredible Inflatable Fun Day will know exactly what I mean! It is not easy finding the time to support school in normal times, let alone now. I know they plan to continue the great work over the summer too (for example in Nathan’s Garden) - they have all been simply amazing. Thank you ALL so much for all you do!

**Parent Helpers:**

Thank you to all our regular parent helpers this year. It has been so difficult again with Covid but you braved coming in each week to support us with reading, spelling, handwriting etc. We really are so very grateful and know that you have had such a great impact too. Thank you! Please do help again next year; we would love to see you!

**Walking to and from school:**

Year 4 have done a brilliant job getting themselves to and from school safely this half term: a really important skill to learn before heading off to middle school. Please can you 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.

**Safety around the site:**

Please can I remind you that scooters are not allowed to be ridden around the school site/paths for safety reasons. Only last week, a parent had her foot ran over and it was extremely painful. I know this would have been a broken foot if it was a small child. Thank you for your support. Equally, can I please ask you not to park across our neighbours’ driveways? This really does cause them difficulty when trying to get out in a hurry, and creates really bad relations between us. Thank you again.

**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. Thank you.

**Smart Watches and Phones:**

Please note that Smart Watches and/or phones are not allowed at Russell. In the final half term of Year 4 the children may walk to and from school on their own and at this point they may bring these items into school but only if they are handed straight to the teacher on entry, and at your own risk. Thank you for your support.

**Ampthill Gala and parade:**

This year, we were by far the largest group taking part in the parade. Thank you to so many of you, your families and the children for supporting us. Although we didn’t win any prizes, so many people asked what we were all so happy about as we came across as the group having the most fun! I will take that every time! Thank you all again.

**Russell Raiders:**

Thank you to all the parents involved in Russell Raiders over the last year (and before that!). It is so lovely to hear about all their successes throughout the year, and this year has been a really successful one, culminating in a great tournament at the Rufus Centre on Sunday. Thank you to you all – the children learn so much about being a great sport and practise their Russell Rights and values in a new setting. We are always so proud to hear about their exploits, incredible footballing achievements and role-model-worthy attitudes. Thank you again for all your hard work. You perform an incredibly powerful, positive and influential role.

**Summer activities:**

Please find below (very end of this letter) and attached a range of activities that you may want to take part in with your children over the summer holidays:

**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. Alternatively, **please call CBC on 0300 300 8306 to check your child’s eligibilit**y. 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. Please note; school meals will be increasing to £2.02 from September, but I am sure you will agree, this still represents exceptional value for money and is well below the cost increases we are seeing in the supermarkets.

**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 and most recently, extreme heat! I would like to thank everyone for their incredible support again throughout the year. The whole Russell community (children, staff and parents) has yet again, been a true force to be reckoned with, and created such a great partnership for the children. I am already planning, and looking forward to, another great year next year in 2022/23, where, due to school’s continued and ever-growing popularity, we will be 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,

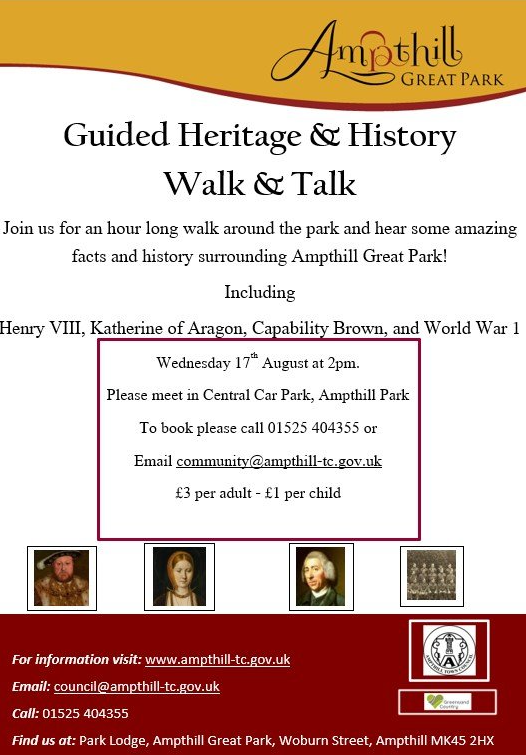
Nicki Walker

Headteacher



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