**APRIL NEWSLETTER**

 April 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to our April 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.

**Tuesday 27th April –** Ampthill Early Years Network Meeting, Foundation Stage and Year 1 hearing screening,

**Wednesday 28th April –** Class Photographs, *PTA Sunflower Growing Competition money deadline*

**Monday 3rd May –** May Bank Holiday – school closed

**Tuesday 4th May –** Art Adventurers begins again, Year 4 Bikeability, *Alameda Friendship letters out this week*

**Wednesday 5th May –** Year 2 Scooterbility (2)

***Friday 7th May –*** *Year 2 Scooterbility (2)*

***Monday 10th May –*** *Year 4 permission to walk home after half term letters home*

**Tuesday 11th May to Thursday 13th May –** Whole School Bollywood Dance Sessions

**Monday 17th May – Walk to School week -** join us in finding active ways to travel to school

***Monday 17th May –*** *Zoom Assembly with Dominic Holroyd-Thomas from St Andrew’s Church, Inspiring Music continuing to work with Owl Class*

***Thursday 20th May –*** *National Outdoor Classroom Day*

***Thursday 27th May –*** *Foundation Stage Pirate Day*

**Friday 28th May –** *Sustainability Day with PTA, wear green and learn all about the Russell Eco Code,*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

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

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

**Covid update:**

We continue to have been exceptionally lucky not to have had to close any bubbles since returning on the 8th March. I would like to thank every single one of you for your continued vigilance and support. It is keeping us safe and in school – thank you!

Please find attached the latest CBC flowchart for parents

Please see ‘Self-isolation Q&A’ sheet attached

**The Big Ask:**

This is a national survey of children called ‘The Big Ask’.

The new Children’s Commissioner for England, Dame Rachel de Souza, has launched [The Big Ask](http://thebigask.uk/) – the largest ever consultation with children aged 4 to 17 in England. It aims to find out children’s concerns and aspirations about the future, so that we can put children at the heart of our country’s recovery from the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

All schools are being encouraged to support their pupils to [complete this survey](https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigask/). (We will be doing this in school). Parents are also invited [to complete the adult survey](https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigask/adults/) to share their views about the future for children and young people today, and what they think is holding young people back.

The results from this survey will help the Children’s Commissioner identify the barriers preventing children from reaching their potential, put forward solutions and set ambitious goals for the country to achieve. Please do make your views know.

**Other safety issues:**

* Please take a huge amount of care with the children when walking to and from school on our narrow, busy Ampthill roads. Last week, a child (not from Russell thankfully), was hit by a car very close to Russell. Please take extra care and ensure you have ‘practiced’ walking with the Year 4 children before half term. Thank you.
* Please do not arrive on the school site before 8:35am in the morning. The first bubbles go into class at 8:40am and we cannot safely accommodate children and parents on site before 8:35am. In addition, it is leading to children needing the toilet before the classrooms are open which is causing additional cleaning requirements. For all drop offs and pick-ups we request that you arrive ‘just in time’. If everyone does this, the system for getting 430+ children and parents on and off the site safely, with the shortest stagger period works incredibly well. Thank you for all your support.

**September 2021:**

Thank you for spreading the message about Russell Lower School in the local community. We are oversubscribed for September, with well over 90 applications for school places in our new Foundation Stage, and we even have a waiting list in 3 different year groups now! Thank you for your total support and commitment. We really appreciate it.

**Maypole Dancing:**

Last week we enjoyed maypole dance sessions in school for all of the children.

The focus of these sessions was for the children to:

* Have fun
* Experience a new ‘traditional’ physical activity
* Develop new skills
* Possibly seek pursuing this outside of school hours

These sessions are also designed to add to pupil’s ‘cultural capital’ via PE and is being funding through the Sports Premium. The weather was perfect! Do have a look at the photos on the website: <https://www.russell-lower.co.uk/website/maypole_dance_sessions/553503>

*The children had the following to say:*

*‘I loved it’*

*‘It was a great new thing to do that I haven’t done before’*

*‘The colours weaving around were fascinating,’*

**Inspiring Music offer:**

Would you like to give your child the opportunity to develop a lifelong talent and interest by taking up our music lessons in school? As well as being **GREAT FUN,** research shows that learning a musical instrument supports children in lots of ways.

**Where and When do Lessons Take Place?**

Most lessons take place during the school day, in school and typically last between 20 and 30 minutes.

**Do I have to Provide an Instrument?**

Inspiring Music can provide a number of instruments **FREE OF CHARGE** for the first year. If your child has their own suitable instrument, they are happy to teach them on this.

**What instruments do they teach?**

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If your child is in receipt of the Pupil Premium, we may be able to use it to fund lessons.

For more information please contact the school office, and see the attached flyer

**Staff update:**

You will be delighted to know that Miss Thompson has had a healthy little boy. We are all really excited and happy for Miss Thompson and can’t wait to meet her little boy, named Jude, very soon.

**The Big Pedal:**

Thank you for supporting us with our ‘Big Pedal’ over the last week and this. We are doing really well in ‘notching up’ active journeys which also helps our mission to support our Eco Code (written by the School Council, launched in assembly on Monday and developed during Sustainability Day on Friday 28th May when we will all be wearing green, well on the way to growing sunflowers and learning much more about our responsibilities on our planet. Please see our assembly here: <https://www.russell-lower.co.uk/website/eco_code_and_world_earth_day_2021/554567>

**PTA:**

A big thank you again goes to the PTA for organising some brilliant events in the Easter holiday again: the ‘Virtual Family Games Night’ on Saturday 10th April, and the super Scavenger Hunt. A lot of fun was had by everyone!

The PTA’s next project is to work with us towards our ‘Sustainability Day’ in May, when we will launch our Eco Code. To get this started, the PTA are running the Sunflower Growing Competition. It is not too late to get your £2 in for the growing kits. There is already a lot of competition amongst the staff, let alone the children! May the best sunflower win!

**Parents supporting parents: Charity walk:**

One of our parents was sadly diagnosed with Kidney cancer earlier this year and underwent an operation to remove her kidney last week. She is doing well, but has been in a lot of pain. We wish her a very speedy and full recovery. Several of her friends and other parents will be walking 21 miles for the kidney cancer charity on 15th May. They are doing it to support the charity and make people aware of this cause. The doctors and nurses at Bedford hospital have been phenomenal! If you would also like to support the cause please find the link below.  Thank you.

<https://kcuk.enthuse.com/pf/lynseykarenclairemichela-c533b-f1dc9>

**Tokyo Challenge:**

**As you know, Russell Lower School** has been taking part in Team GB and Paralympics GB's virtual **Travel to Tokyo challenge** and we're encouraging the entire school community to join in. You have all done an incredible job. We have already made it to Tokyo (which was supposed to take us until July!) and we are on our way round the world again! Let’s see how many ‘laps’ of the world we can do. Well done Russell – what an active community we are.

**CHUMS workshops:**

CHUMS Emotional Wellbeing Service and Family Wellbeing Team in Central Bedfordshire are offering the following workshops:

**Parent Sleep Workshop (Children aged 12 and under)**

Friday 30th April at 09:30-11:30

Wednesday 2nd June at 17:00-19:00

**0-5 Resiliency Workshop**

Monday 26th April at 17:00 – 19:00

Thursday 17th June at 09:30 – 11:30

**Primary Resiliency Workshop (Parent workshop for children aged 6-12) –**Explores the difference between mental health and mental illness, emotional regulation. Psychoeducation around anxiety and low mood, in addition to covering basic relaxation techniques

Monday 24th May at 09:30-11:30

For more information, or to book, please email:

fwteam@chums.uk.com

Thank you again for all your support. The return to school since the Easter holidays has been overwhelmingly positive after such a traumatic period. We are enjoying being back and getting on with learning.

During the May newsletter, I hope to be able to give you more information on events such as Sports Day as we will have even more information to go on by then. In the meantime, thank you for your patience.

Many thanks and kind regards,

Nicki Walker

Headteacher