**OCTOBER NEWSLETTER**

 October 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to our October newsletter. 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.

**Saturday 16th October –** PTA Community Litter Pick – more details to follow

**Monday 18th October** – *Start of Street Tag initiative,* 6:30pm Finance and Resources Governors’ Meeting

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

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

***Monday 1st November – INSET Day – school closed to all children***

***Tuesday 2nd November –*** *All children back to school, Y2 multi skills festival at Alameda*

*Friday 5th November – Year 1 trip to House on the Hill Toy Museum*

*Monday 8th November – Open the book assembly, Governor safeguarding training 6:30 – 8:30pm*

*Wednesday 10th November – Year 4 WW1 Ampthill trail, 8pm PTA meeting*

*Thursday 11th November – 2 minutes silence observed in school*

*Sunday 14th November – Remembrance Service starting at St Andrew’s at 10am, finishing at the Cenotaph*

*Monday 15th November – Road Safety week, Anti-bullying week (Odd sock day to celebrate ‘One Kind World), Rotary Shoebox appeal assembly, 6:30pm Curriculum, Learning and Standards Governors’ meeting*

*Wednesday 17th November – Year 4, Year 3 and Foundation Stage Hinduism Workshops, 9:30am – New Intake Meeting (5)*

*Monday 22nd November – possible flu immunistations – TBC*

*Tuesday 23rd November – Year 2 and 3 dance festival at Redborne*

*Wednesday 24th November – Foundation Stage Maths Workshop for parents 9:15 – 10am, KS1 and KS2 Maths Workshop for parents 2:30 – 3:15pm, (save the date, more information to follow)*

*Saturday 27th November – Possible Christmas Fayre - (save the date, more information to follow)*

*Monday 29th November – Santa Challenge begins in school, Full Governors’ meeting at 6:30pm*

*Wednesday 1st December – Year 4 Archery festival, Foundation Stage Nativity to nursery children and Swan Class parents* *(more details to follow)*

*Thursday 2nd December – 9:30 – New Intake Meeting (4) at 9:30am*

*Saturday 4th December – possible Ladybirds Christmas Fayre, all weekend - St Andrew’s Christmas Tree Festival*

*Monday 6th December – 9:30am – Foundation Stage Nativity to Dove parents (more details to follow), Open the book assembly*

*Tuesday 7th December – 2:45pm – Foundation Stage Nativity to Swift parents (more details to follow)*

*Wednesday 8th December – 9:30am Year 2 Performance to Greenfinch parents, Christmas Lunch Day*

*Thursday 9th December - 9:30am Year 2 Performance to Penguin parents, 2:30pm Year 2 Performance to Robin parents*

*Friday 10th December – Christmas Jumper Day and Activity Morning*

*Monday 13th December – Year 2 Theatre trip (morning)*

*Thursday 15th December – Year 1 Theatre trip (am), Foundation Stage Theatre trip (pm)*

*Friday 16th December – Year 3 Theatre trip (am) and Year 4 Theatre Trip (pm)*

***CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY MONDAY 20TH DECEMBER – MONDAY 3RD JANUARY 2022***

*Tuesday 4th January 2022 – All children return to school – NO INSET Day, Ice skating event in school (more information to follow)*

*Wednesday 5th January 2022 – Ice skating event continues (more information to follow)*

*Thursday 6th January – 9am and 2:45pm – Parent Volunteers in School Induction sessions, Year 3 swimming (more information to follow)*

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

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

**A busy half-term!**

Thank you for all your support over this first half term of the academic year. We have got an awfully long way back to ‘normal’ and are busier than ever! Thank you for all your support with the HUGE number of ‘events’ we have already ‘notched up’ between us. Just to mention a few:

* FS reading and writing workshops
* Phonics workshops
* Volunteer helper induction sessions
* Sunflower Competition winner announcement (well done to Oscar (first place), Rosie (second place) and Helena (third place)
* Superhero Mindfulness Workshops for Foundation Stage, Year 1, 2, 3 and 4
* Year 4 Sports Leader training
* Open the book assembly
* Rotakids Polio assembly
* PTA Quiz Night at the White Hart
* Two ‘in person’ parents’ evenings
* PTA Halloween Disco
* Race for Kids 1km+ run – thank you SO much for all your support – we raised almost £300 for GOSH in just the first hour we went live and currently have raised over £900!
* PTA and Ampthill Climate Change Group Litter Pick
* Stone Age Day in Year 3
* WW1 day in Year 4
* Climate talk and pollution measuring in Year 4
* Samba Drumming Workshops every Thursday in Year 4
* PTA Krispy Kreme Sale

And we still have lots to look forward to over half term too**. Look out for the PTA Pumpkin Trail and Rotary Teddy Trail for half term!**

**Covid update**

Thank you for all your continued support with managing the Covid-19 risk in the community. We have had a great first half term back, with only two cases of Covid and really hope it continues!

I will continue to update you if anything changes locally. Simply, a huge thank you!

**School Meal Census Day**

You will remember that a few Thursdays ago we asked you to encourage your child to have a school dinner so we had the highest possible number of school meals taken for our census. You all did an absolutely amazing job and a **staggering 89%** of children has a school dinner that day. Thank you so much for your support. This will mean we get the maximum funding possible from the government – thank you!

**School dinner money and Parent Pay**

Thank you to all our parents for using Parent Pay to pay for so many school items now. We appreciate that almost all parents pay in a timely fashion. Thank you. Can we please ask that you check you Parent Pay account and always aim to keep it in credit? It is only ever as a last resort that we would withdraw anything from a child, for example: school dinners or use of our before and after school club. Thank you.

**Childcare vouchers**

Please be aware that Childcare Vouchers can **only** be used for Aviary Club and not school dinners, milk money or trips – sorry!

**Snack and water bottle policy**

Please can we politely remind all parents that, in the interest of healthy eating and dental care, children are allowed to bring **one** snack a day into school to eat during the afternoon, but this should ONLY be fruit, chopped vegetables or cheese. **Cereal bars, chocolate bars, chocolate biscuits, sweets, crackers and crisps are not allowed. Please do not send any snacks containing nuts as we have children in school who have nut allergies (Anaphylaxis).**

For the same reasons, children’s water bottles should only contain tap water. Thank you for your support.

**Class email addresses**

Communicating effectively with parents is really important to us – 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. Please also be aware that **teachers are unable to check these addresses during the school day, so anything related to collection arrangements, sickness etc. MUST all go via the** **office@russell-lower.co.uk****.**  Thank you.

**Fidelity Christmas Card Designs**

For years now, children have designed Christmas cards that have been then printed and sold to parents by Fidelity to raise funds for the school. This is a lovely thing to do, but raises relatively minimal funds and takes an exorbitant amount of school lesson time to achieve. For this reason, this year we are trialling only doing this with our new children and parents in Foundation Stage. Thank you in advance for your understanding.

**Inspiring music update**

Please see below for an update from Inspiring Music:

We are thrilled to be reopening our music centres for in-person music sessions!

From Saturday 25 September 2021, the three music centres across Central Bedfordshire in [Ampthill](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTEsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTA5MjEuNDYyMzQ1NDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5pbnNwaXJpbmdtdXNpYy5jby51ay9jZW50cmVzL2FtcHRoaWxsIn0.EBwVERZSN132e-ot1KyhbRU_mi8BQ3gBMjTcf9ub4_M/s/900610115/br/112656234724-l), [Biggleswade](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTIsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTA5MjEuNDYyMzQ1NDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5pbnNwaXJpbmdtdXNpYy5jby51ay9jZW50cmVzL2JpZ2dsZXN3YWRlIn0.AnKCMVUjIL4GQR6LDxibisLsCqdWKw0VU8Pwo5e1G8s/s/900610115/br/112656234724-l%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) and [Leighton-Linslade](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTMsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTA5MjEuNDYyMzQ1NDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5pbnNwaXJpbmdtdXNpYy5jby51ay9jZW50cmVzL2xlaWdodG9uLWxpbnNsYWRlIn0.qCvJ9ynor2rYcR9C6qOk5__8DEv6LAaFDTeZxu47ouo/s/900610115/br/112656234724-l) will throw open their doors to welcome students – both new and old - catering for all ages and instruments, including early years and beginners.

If your child is interested in learning how to make, play and perform music, there is a session for them.

[Register today](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTQsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTA5MjEuNDYyMzQ1NDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5pbnNwaXJpbmdtdXNpYy5jby51ay9jZW50cmVzL2Vucm9sLWF0LWEtbXVzaWMtY2VudHJlIn0.xrYUqmd28BgHnVQ11bwOUNTnvmzpcZ39BVMT_sD5ny8/s/900610115/br/112656234724-l) and receive 25% off the first term, for anyone aged between 5 and 18. Music sessions are also available for adults.

**Parent Line**

Parent Line is a confidential text messaging advice and support line for Bedfordshire parents and carers of children aged 0-19.

It offers parents/carers advice and support on a range of issues such as emotional health, speech, behaviour, diet and exercise and much more.  It is also a great mechanism to find out how to access other local services.

**Simply text 07507 331456 with your question to start the conversation**. Their team will be there to answer your queries from 9am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays).

**Autism Bedfordshire**

Please see the link below for an Autism Bedfordshire workshop for parents and carers.

[The first steps to supporting a child with Autism Spectrum Conditions](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTYsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTA5MjEuNDYyMzQ1NDEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL2NlbnRyYWxiZWRmb3Jkc2hpcmUuYm94LmNvbS9zLzZ3YnZkYmRkYm9lYW9zbzE5eHA5MnVuMzN3YTlzZXJ5In0.T6e1lX2npfoolYQYZ4_wxgi8Iug1LdS4kRZnzWiGwSU/s/900610115/br/112656234724-l)

**Supporting learning at home:**

Thank you for reading regularly at home with your children. There is nothing more important that you could do for your child’s education at this age. Reading is the foundation skill for all our learning and we simply cannot develop your child’s skills sufficiently without ‘little and often’ regular practice at home too. We ask parents to read at home with their children at least four times a week. Please can you do everything you possibly can to do this, even if it is the only thing you can do at home? This is such an essential and valuable skill, it has to be a top priority. Please do not hesitate to speak to your child’s class teacher if you would like any more guidance or support with reading. Thank you for all you do – it makes a huge difference!

**School admissions to Foundation Stage in September 2022 and Middle Schools:**

We have been incredibly popular again this year, and have had to add a FIFTH open day to our schedule this year due to demand. Please do make your application if you have a child due to start lower school or middle school in September. Thank you.

It’s that time of year again!

**Children born between 01/09/17 and 31/08/18 are due to start school in September 2022.**

Parents/ carers need to make an application to CBC by 15 January 2022, even if their child attends a nursery/pre-school on the school site.

All the information you will need regarding your Starting School 2022 application is available on the CBC website.

Please bear in mind that applications for Middle School are also needed within the same timescales i.e before 15th January 2022.

[School admissions | Central Bedfordshire Council](https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/5/school_admissions)

**Community events**

Please see a message below from Ampthill Rotary Club

**Rotary - World Polio Day 24th October**
Every year we celebrate how far the world has come in eradicating Polio. Rotary has been working with many organisations to eradicate it completely since 1985.

To raise awareness, Ampthill Park Flexi Rotary Club are having a Teddy trail round Ampthill during half term. There will be 24 teddies in Ampthill shop windows. Children find the bears who have a letter attached to them & write the letters on a form which they can collect from school before half term. When they have all 24 letters, these will make a sentence. Completed forms are then placed in the box in Ampthill library by the end of October. Spare forms can also be found there. Entry is free. A winner will be picked at random to win a prize. We hope lots of children will participate. Do ask them why the teddies wear purple, we gave them the answer in assembly!

***Many thanks to Russell Lower School*** for agreeing to hold a Bake Sale to raise funds for the campaign. The Bill & Melissa Gates foundation are trebling any money we raise.

**And finally**

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter, and for making the first half term go so well – and so quickly!

Enjoy a wonderful rest and hopefully some autumn sunshine over half term, when it arrives.

Many thanks and kind regards,

Nicki Walker

Headteacher