**JULY NEWSLETTER**

July 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to our July newsletter – it is unbelievable to think we have now made it to the end 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 or amended since the previous newsletter.*

**Friday 21st July –** Last day of school**;** Break up for the summer

**Friday 21st July – Friday 1st September – Summer holiday – Premier Sports Camps running much of the holiday (Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th September are INSET days)**

***Wednesday 6th September –*** *Year 1, 2, 3 and 4 children return to school, Home Visits for new foundation stage children begin*

***Tuesday 12th September –*** *Samba drumming workshops for Year 4 children*

***Wednesday 13th September*** *– Half of new foundation stage children start school*

***Thursday 14th September*** *– All foundation stage children in school, Year 2 trip to Whipsnade*

***Tuesday 19th September*** *– 2:30pm – Phonics workshop for Y1 and Y2 parents,* ***–*** *Samba drumming workshops for Year 4 children*

***Wednesday 20th September*** *- 3pm – New parents volunteering sessions*

***Thursday 21st September –*** *New Intake Meeting for Foundation Stage (2024), 9:30am****,*** *PTA meeting at 7:30pm*

***Monday 25th September –*** *FS reading and writing workshop for Foundation Stage Parents with coffee ‘morning’ 9:15 – 10:30am*

***Tuesday 26th September*** *– New Intake 2024 meeting, 9:30am,* ***–*** *Samba drumming workshops for Year 4 children*

***Monday 2nd October –*** *Harvest Assembly TBC*

***Tuesday 3rd October*** *- year 2 visit to the Baptist Church TBC*

***Monday 9th October*** *– Parents’ Evening 3:45pm to 7pm,*

***Tuesday 10th October*** *– Parents’ Evening 3:45pm to 6:30pm,* ***–*** *Samba drumming workshops for Year 4 children*

***Wednesday 11th October*** *– New Intake Meeting (FS 2024) at 9:30am*

***Monday 16th October*** *– Finance and Resources Governors’ Meeting, 6:30pm*

***Tuesday 17th October - –*** *Samba drumming workshops for Year 4 children*

***Thursday 19th October –*** *PTA Halloween Discos (more details to follow)*

***Friday 20th October –*** *Break up for half term*

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

**End of Year Reports:**

Thank you for all the wonderful comments we have begun to receive 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:**

To parents in all year groups: 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.

**Cost of living crisis support:**

As a very key part of our local community, Waitrose have given school a small pot of money to support any families struggling due to the cost of living crisis. If you are struggling to pay for shoes, uniform, food, equipment or a school trip, it may be possible to support you and arrange a one-off payment. If you believe that we could help you, please contact (in the strictest of confidence) the school office on [office@russell-lower.co.uk](mailto:office@russell-lower.co.uk) or 01525 755664. We are very grateful to Waitrose for offering this support to our local schools.

**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, 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! You can see photos from all the year 4 leavers events on the website <https://www.russell-lower.co.uk/website/gallery/419>

**PTA:**

I would just like to take this opportunity to say an enormous thank you to Lindsay, Jo, Lynsey and the entire PTA for being absolutely brilliant this year. Anyone who attended the incredible GlamourRuss ball will know exactly what I mean! It is not easy finding the time to support school - 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. 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! If you haven’t volunteered in school before, but would like to, we would love to see you at our next volunteer information session coming up in September (***Wednesday 20th September*** *- 3pm – New parents volunteering sessions)*

– please contact the school office to let them know you would like to reserve a place. Thank you in advance.

**Walking to and from school:**

Year 4 have (mostly!) 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.

**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.

**Free training and courses – for parents too:**

# **FREE Short, Online Qualifications suitable For Parents And Carers- Bedfordshire Employment and Skills Academy** Are you interested in any of the below topics and want to learn more?

* [Autism](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTIsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vZXVyMDIuc2FmZWxpbmtzLnByb3RlY3Rpb24ub3V0bG9vay5jb20vYXAvYi01OTU4NGU4My8_.G6uTtrGrVpVrfygA7nMC5MwG1zH-Gi5eXh_lNpwu9kM/s/900610115/br/222767007946-l)
* [Challenging behaviour](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTMsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vZXVyMDIuc2FmZWxpbmtzLnByb3RlY3Rpb24ub3V0bG9vay5jb20vYXAvYi01OTU4NGU4My8_.DLb6uAJvyfIHYcvx-c7JM6tFtLc8KfRS3sDxEObWebM/s/900610115/br/222767007946-l)
* [Early brain development in babies and children](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTQsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vZXVyMDIuc2FmZWxpbmtzLnByb3RlY3Rpb24ub3V0bG9vay5jb20vYXAvYi01OTU4NGU4My8_.NQlgnFqPA0U6pnlO5J_FGngrtbaO9Olady7uC5aoTic/s/900610115/br/222767007946-l)
* [Mental Health First Aid](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTUsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vZXVyMDIuc2FmZWxpbmtzLnByb3RlY3Rpb24ub3V0bG9vay5jb20vYXAvYi01OTU4NGU4My8_.2CkWrcpBzROF_0Uj4c59NU_69ev0Ozr5sdXFjKp9SNw/s/900610115/br/222767007946-l)
* [Safeguarding and Prevent](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTYsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vZXVyMDIuc2FmZWxpbmtzLnByb3RlY3Rpb24ub3V0bG9vay5jb20vYXAvYi01OTU4NGU4My8_.Oeoz4Rjv5UtXDz-_0B4pei6x9DaJ1NJZkd9zODSs88E/s/900610115/br/222767007946-l)

You can complete a short, online Level 2 qualification in any of these subjects in just 3 months – for free\*! You don’t need to be working in a relevant job role as these are knowledge-only qualifications, **suitable for anyone with an interest**. You’ll complete assessment questions based on the knowledge you’ll gain from the online course units. There’s no face-to-face assessment required, however your assessor is on hand for support. Your assignments will be assessed remotely, and feedback provided.  \*Each qualification is **worth £811**, currently offered for **FREE** to anyone 19+, living in Central Bedfordshire. Find out more about each qualification by clicking on the relevant topic above, or [get in touch](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTcsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHA6Ly93d3cuY2VudHJhbGJlZGZvcmRzaGlyZS5nb3YudWsvYmVzYS1jb250YWN0LXVzIiwiYnVsbGV0aW5faWQiOiIyMDIzMDcxNy43OTc1MzYzMSJ9.NSyUB0ePT6SQAIi1gdXghyfMzFNXfiIFwR0WAosTtVM/s/900610115/br/222767007946-l) with Bedfordshire Employment and Skills Academy if you have any questions or would like to enroll.

**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. We really enjoyed the atmosphere and the community spirit (as well as all those costumes!) It was a bonus to win 2nd place. Thank you for all your support again. Photos can be found on the website <https://www.russell-lower.co.uk/website/july_2023/658263>

**Russell Raiders:**

Thank you to all the parents involved in Russell Raiders over the last year. 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 win recently. 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.

**Music Lessons:**

There are spaces to learn the violin in school from September, if you would like information about these or any other music lessons please contact Inspiring Music: <https://www.inspiringmusic.co.uk/lessons-schools/overview> , or speak to the office for more details. Thank you.

**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 eligibility**. 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.

**Governor News:**

It is with much sadness that we will be saying goodbye to a great governor this year, Chris Day. We would like to take this opportunity to thank him for all his hard work on the Board:

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: Amy Beeken and Sally Whiteside. They are already having an excellent impact!

**Swift Assembly with the Greensand Trust:**

Recently, the Greensand Trust organisation (on behalf of the Bedfordshire Swift Group)came in and gave a ‘Swift’ talk to the children. We learnt all about these incredible birds. As they left, they mentioned that the children were so attentive and knowledgeable they wondered if between us we knew of some children who could be eligible for nomination as Greensand Champions. See the following link for more information. There are also some fabulous leaflets in the office foyer carousel if you would like to take one.

<https://www.greensandtrust.org/greensand-champions>

**Russell Lower School Values:**

Each half term, we teach the children about a different value. We then have a weekly ‘values’ assembly where we celebrate the demonstration of this value. The values this term are:

**Summer 1** : Trust

**Summer 2** : Tolerance

**Reminder – Please keep reading and Doodling over the summer - Summer Reading Challenge 2023/Doodle Maths Summer Challenge (see previous email):**

The annual Summer Reading Challenge, organised by The Reading Agency and delivered by public libraries, has a sports and games theme this year: **Ready, Get Set, Read**.

Ampthill and Flitwick libraries are keen to support schools and families, in encouraging children to keep reading throughout the summer.

The Summer Reading Challenge runs Friday 21st July to Saturday 9th September 2023 and aims to keep children’s minds and bodies active over the summer break. Children are encouraged to read whatever they like for the challenge, recognising the importance of reading for pleasure in increasing empathy and improving well-being, as well as in children’s educational success.

**The Challenge:**

Children must be members of the library service

Join the library using the link in the flyer in the June Newsletter, or go to your local library

The challenge invites children to read any six library books or more during the summer holidays

Children can borrow books or read e-books, magazines and audiobooks available from the Virtual Library

Families can sign up for the challenge at any library, at any stage in the summer from Friday 21st July

Children are awarded a certificate and a medal for reading 6 books (they love the medal!)

Children completing the challenge (6 books) will be entered into a lucky dip at their library for the chance to win a £50 Lego voucher

See the flyer (June) for more details and please keep reading over the summer – it will make all the difference when we return to school in September. Thank you.

**PE and festivals news:**

This year has been another fantastic year for physical activity and sport at Russell. Please visit the school website to read the review of our sports premium spend to see where the money has gone and the impact it has had <https://www.russell-lower.co.uk/website/sports_premium/520526> Thank you for your amazing support in this area through completing various questionnaires and providing your valuable feedback, we have received some lovely comment this year which we are very grateful for. If you have any ideas or suggestions on future use of the sports premium (years 1 to 4) please contact the school office who will pass your ideas on to Mrs Bunney.

**Family First Magazine:**

Please see the following online magazine for family-friendly ideas this summer

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Helping millions of families stay bored-free this summer**  **It’s 100% FREE for all parents- Enjoy!**  [**CLICK HERE**](http://track.smtpsendemail.com/9092826/c?p=p5l3Zp74T4r6z9rQ1_i7JvRqO8cCL8cHEPIt-MCmXZ6Ek4ghH8Al1BbZhB6pQVghcvwu-4ZKaoJO6FZzGwLlpsiUxRPYOgmg000FC4b0P_6hwS5wgyeOa6KAXhgWFdPCUr6zQkCfvMj_9ek6oOk4OoDr-a19UC5H0qgYl_GAiIKOqlnC0ReWFV7x3Lmqx6qd3qXclph218foIpLZViq9WvzQiKfHye1iIhg8CczF2pVHJSI6LXRxJ99jJdQF8CMUiTjTRkszA4qcC1kqaKqhNpTcsWxD6Cypu4b0fiJCHekcnbb8xWMW3Bv5EZjE4ojWujrSptyFyPy05Ame29CMXVcj6omEoCQ3XQXDqMeHrMs-ogkcl1ukYIuqGBG3-GGH) | |
| **Free Family Days Out https://ci3.googleusercontent.com/proxy/ba7fRSCC3eObCBSdTaqhPZXlnpHmiHVS8MISiTan2heK0ChJSfIlbAEdfqxvrXUDOppb6KW8n-lURYIFACGLWw70nMUgVbXppcR2hvLEFirKgTvoXWFxew6YQAc=s0-d-e1-ft#https://schools.familyfirst.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Picture2.jpg Family Travelhttps://ci3.googleusercontent.com/proxy/ba7fRSCC3eObCBSdTaqhPZXlnpHmiHVS8MISiTan2heK0ChJSfIlbAEdfqxvrXUDOppb6KW8n-lURYIFACGLWw70nMUgVbXppcR2hvLEFirKgTvoXWFxew6YQAc=s0-d-e1-ft#https://schools.familyfirst.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Picture2.jpg The Great Outdoors https://ci3.googleusercontent.com/proxy/ba7fRSCC3eObCBSdTaqhPZXlnpHmiHVS8MISiTan2heK0ChJSfIlbAEdfqxvrXUDOppb6KW8n-lURYIFACGLWw70nMUgVbXppcR2hvLEFirKgTvoXWFxew6YQAc=s0-d-e1-ft#https://schools.familyfirst.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Picture2.jpg What’s On This Summer https://ci3.googleusercontent.com/proxy/ba7fRSCC3eObCBSdTaqhPZXlnpHmiHVS8MISiTan2heK0ChJSfIlbAEdfqxvrXUDOppb6KW8n-lURYIFACGLWw70nMUgVbXppcR2hvLEFirKgTvoXWFxew6YQAc=s0-d-e1-ft#https://schools.familyfirst.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Picture2.jpg Parenting Hacks https://ci3.googleusercontent.com/proxy/ba7fRSCC3eObCBSdTaqhPZXlnpHmiHVS8MISiTan2heK0ChJSfIlbAEdfqxvrXUDOppb6KW8n-lURYIFACGLWw70nMUgVbXppcR2hvLEFirKgTvoXWFxew6YQAc=s0-d-e1-ft#https://schools.familyfirst.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Picture2.jpg Children’s Fashion https://ci3.googleusercontent.com/proxy/ba7fRSCC3eObCBSdTaqhPZXlnpHmiHVS8MISiTan2heK0ChJSfIlbAEdfqxvrXUDOppb6KW8n-lURYIFACGLWw70nMUgVbXppcR2hvLEFirKgTvoXWFxew6YQAc=s0-d-e1-ft#https://schools.familyfirst.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Picture2.jpg Healthy Recipes https://ci3.googleusercontent.com/proxy/ba7fRSCC3eObCBSdTaqhPZXlnpHmiHVS8MISiTan2heK0ChJSfIlbAEdfqxvrXUDOppb6KW8n-lURYIFACGLWw70nMUgVbXppcR2hvLEFirKgTvoXWFxew6YQAc=s0-d-e1-ft#https://schools.familyfirst.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Picture2.jpg Toys & Games https://ci3.googleusercontent.com/proxy/ba7fRSCC3eObCBSdTaqhPZXlnpHmiHVS8MISiTan2heK0ChJSfIlbAEdfqxvrXUDOppb6KW8n-lURYIFACGLWw70nMUgVbXppcR2hvLEFirKgTvoXWFxew6YQAc=s0-d-e1-ft#https://schools.familyfirst.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Picture2.jpg Children’s Sport https://ci3.googleusercontent.com/proxy/ba7fRSCC3eObCBSdTaqhPZXlnpHmiHVS8MISiTan2heK0ChJSfIlbAEdfqxvrXUDOppb6KW8n-lURYIFACGLWw70nMUgVbXppcR2hvLEFirKgTvoXWFxew6YQAc=s0-d-e1-ft#https://schools.familyfirst.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Picture2.jpg** | https://ci4.googleusercontent.com/proxy/1-NMuIvKoYvBvFF7Hhx0GBbxlGENFqVRj12OTdH8NkbyRCm1MGaItQwVdLAN4Sq0Ms0nb6B5PPEg1i9Zz9p48hFWZCy3_mdbFCM8Z565emoic6IAN2k=s0-d-e1-ft#https://schools.familyfirst.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/ff.png |

**And finally:**

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this newsletter, **all** your support this year and all the wonderful summer gifts, messages and even pizza(!) myself and the staff have been so generously and thoughtfully given over the last week. It has been another incredibly busy year, but incredibly successful too. I would like to thank everyone for their incredible support again throughout the year: from our brilliant OFSTED to the GlamourRuss Ball, and everything in between. The whole Russell community (children, staff and parents) has yet again, been truly phenomenal, and created such a great partnership for the children. I am already planning, and looking forward to, another great year next year in 2023/24 (maybe with a bit of a rest first!).

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 to you all!

Many thanks and kind regards,

Nicki Walker

Headteacher