St. Giles CE Primary School and Nursery
Starkholmes Road
Matlock
DE4 3DD

Email: enquiries@st-giles-matlock.derbyshire.sch.uk
Phone: 01629 56813

Head of School: Bethany Simpson

Dear Parents and Carers,

It's been a wonderful start to the school year, and as we begin the second half of the autumn term, it feels like the perfect moment to look back on what we've achieved so far — and look ahead to the exciting events still to come.

All the children have settled back brilliantly after the half-term break, and it's been fantastic to see their enthusiasm for learning. We've especially loved watching our Early Years children flourish as they begin their journey with us. We hope you enjoyed meeting your child's teacher and seeing their work during our recent parents' meetings. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to get in touch — we're always here to help.

Looking Back on a Busy and Joyful First Half Term



🥕🌾 **Harvest Service 2025** 🌾🥕

Our Harvest Service was a truly special occasion. The children sang beautifully, read with confidence, and showed such enthusiasm and thoughtfulness throughout. We were especially proud of our youngest nursery children, who joined us for the very first time — they were wonderful!

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to our harvest donations. Your kindness has made a real difference, with all items being taken to Jigsaw to help support local families in need. It was a lovely celebration of community, thankfulness and care for others.

💛 **Our Collective Worship Team Visits Jigsaw Food Bank** 💛

Following our Harvest Service, our Collective Worship Team visited Jigsaw Food Bank to deliver the donations and learn more about how they support families in our community.

The children listened carefully, asked thoughtful questions and worked together to help sort and pack items. They also learned about the wider range of donations Jigsaw receives, including clothing and toys. The visit inspired some lovely reflections back in school about gratitude and helping others.

We were so proud of the children's maturity, compassion, and enthusiasm — it was a true demonstration of our school vision: *achieving through kindness, compassion and perseverance*.

This year, our Worship Team is also focusing on **courageous advocacy**, and they already have plenty of wonderful ideas for how we can make a difference in our community.





💜🌟 Celebrating 10 Years of DDAT 🌟💜





Earlier this term, a group of our pupils represented St Giles at a special service in Derby Cathedral, celebrating the 10th anniversary of DDAT. Each school in the Trust created a unique patch to form a beautiful quilt representing our shared community.

The children travelled with friends from our partner schools and were excited to spot our St Giles design amongst the many colourful creations. They represented our school with enthusiasm and respect throughout the day, and we were so proud of them.

⚽ Sporting Highlights ⛹️

In other exciting events, our sporting activities have been back in full swing this term! ⚽✨

The football league resumed, and our team played **four fantastic matches** against other local schools, showing brilliant teamwork, determination, and sportsmanship throughout. 🌟👏
The league now takes a short winter break but will kick off again in the spring — we can't wait to see the team back in action! 💪⚽

Class 2 also had the opportunity to visit **All Saints Junior School** for an *invasion games* session. The children represented St Giles beautifully — working together, trying their best, and having lots of fun while developing their skills. 🏅😊

🏃 Cross Country at Cavendish Fields 🏃



Earlier this term, **twenty-three of our children** took part in the Cross Country event at **Cavendish Field**. The 2km course was a real challenge, but our runners showed incredible **determination, resilience, and encouragement** for one another all the way round. 💛

We had teams representing **Year 3/4 boys, Year 3/4 girls, Year 5/6 boys, and Year 5/6 girls** — and every single child gave their absolute best. Their teamwork, enthusiasm, and positive attitudes made us all incredibly proud. 🌟🙌

Well done to everyone who took part — you were brilliant ambassadors for St Giles! 🥳👏🏅

🎉 Happy 1st Birthday to Our Nursery! 🎉

This term, we were thrilled to celebrate **our nursery's first birthday!** It's hard to believe how quickly the year has flown by since we first opened our doors.

From those first settling-in sessions to watching our nursery children confidently take part in school life, we couldn't be prouder of how our youngest learners have grown. Their curiosity, kindness, and energy bring so much joy to our school community every day.

To mark the occasion, the children enjoyed a small birthday celebration with songs, balloons, and a special cake! We'd like to say a huge thank you to all our nursery families for your continued support — and to everyone who has helped spread the word about St Giles Nursery. Your encouragement has helped our setting go from strength to strength, and we're so excited for its future. 🎂💛





Looking Ahead

This half term is always a busy one (though we're not sure we've ever had a quiet one!) as we begin the countdown to Christmas.

💙 Anti-Bullying Week 2025

From **Monday 10th to Friday 14th November**, we'll be taking part in **Anti-Bullying Week 2025**. This year's theme, *"Power for Good"*, encourages everyone to use their voice and actions to make positive choices and stand up for what's right.

We'll be kicking off the week with **Odd Socks Day** on **Monday 10th November** — a fun way for children to celebrate what makes us all unique. No donations are needed; it's just about celebrating individuality and kindness.

Throughout the week, pupils will take part in assemblies, class discussions and creative activities designed to help them understand how they can use their power for good every day.

💛 Children in Need – Friday 14th November

We're really looking forward to supporting **Children in Need** on **Friday 14th November**.

Miss Bridges and our School Council have been busy planning some exciting fundraising ideas for the day:

- 🍰 **Cake Sale after school** – donations of homemade or shop-bought cakes are very welcome.
- 😴 **Wear your pyjamas to school for a small donation** – a cosy, comfy and fun way to take part (no uniform needed!).
- ⚽ **Penalty Shoot-Out against the Teachers and other outdoor games** – always a big hit!
- 💛 **Loom Bands for Sale** – made and sold by our creative School Council members.

We're so proud of the children's ideas and enthusiasm for helping others. Thank you, as always, for your generosity and support in making days like this so special.



🎄 Christmas Events

As we move into December, our festive calendar fills up fast! Please check our **Friday Flyers**, **Arbor messages**, and the **school website calendar** for the most up-to-date information.

Highlights include:

- **New Starters 2026 Christmas Crafts:** Wednesday 10th December at 3:30 pm
- **Whole School Pantomime (Buxton):** Thursday 11th December
- **Christmas Craft Afternoon:** Friday 12th December – children can wear Christmas jumpers and hats
- **EYFS and KS1 Nativity:** Wednesday 17th December at 2:00 pm and Thursday 18th December at 5:00 pm

- **Little Smile at St Giles Toddler Christmas Party –** Thursday 17th December at 9:00am – 10:30am in the school hall
- **Christingle Service:** Friday 19th December at 2:30 pm at St Giles Church – all welcome

Please remember, the **last day of term is Friday 19th December there will be no afterschool club on this day**.





📈 Attendance and Punctuality

Our whole-school attendance so far this year is **98.1%**, which is above national figures (thank you 😊) Let's aim for 100%!

The school gates open at **8:40 am** and closes at **8:55 am**. The school registration closes at 9am, after 9am children will be marked as late. Arriving on time helps children start their day calmly, take part in morning activities, and settle quickly into learning.

If you have any concerns about attendance or would like support, please speak to us — we're always happy to help.

🌅 Wraparound Care – Dawn to Dusk

A reminder to **book all places via Arbor** for breakfast and after-school club. Unfortunately, we're unable to take children who haven't been booked in advance as we must maintain correct staffing ratios. Of course, we'll always do our best to support in genuine emergencies.

We're also exploring **teacher-led after-school clubs** in the new year, so keep an eye out for more information soon!

🏫 Admissions for September 2026

It's been lovely to meet so many new families during our Autumn Open Days. If you or someone you know is considering joining St Giles next September, applications to **Derbyshire County Council** close on **15th January**.

We have don't have any more open sessions planned just yet, but we're happy to arrange individual visits at any time.

Our **"Little Smiles at St Giles"** parent and toddler group is also a lovely way to get to know our school. It runs every **Thursday during term time, from 9:00–10:30 am**, with fun activities, healthy snacks for the children, and tea, coffee and biscuits for the grown-ups.





🙏 Collective Worship

This half term, our school value focus is **trust**. Through daily worship and classroom reflections, children are exploring what trust means — in themselves and in others. At the end of term, we'll come together to share their thoughts and celebrate their learning as a whole school.

🏆 Celebration Worship

As the colder weather arrives, **our Friday Celebration Worship will now take place in the school hall.** You'll still receive a message the week before if your child will be receiving a certificate, and families are warmly invited to join us — though attendance is optional.

Worship begins at **2:45 pm** and finishes at the end of the school day. Please collect your child from their usual pick-up point to help us keep everyone safe.

And Finally...

It's been such a positive and exciting start to the year. We've already achieved so much, and it's only November! Thank you for your continued support, encouragement and partnership — it makes such a difference to our school community.

Don't forget, our **weekly Friday updates**, **class newsletters**, **school Facebook page**, and **website** are the best places to stay up to date with all the wonderful things happening here at St Giles.

Just a gentle reminder that school will be closed on **Monday 24th November** for an **INSET day**.

With best wishes,

Miss Simpson and the St Giles Team