St. Giles CE Primary School
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Wednesday 4th October 2023

October newsletter

Dear parents,

We hope our October newsletter finds you safe and well. Somehow, we find ourselves in early October already, after a (very) busy and (very) happy start to the new school year.

The vision for St. Giles CE Primary: serving our community

Thank you to those who have taken the time to review and consider the logo designs which we shared last month. After much consideration, we have settled on the image below for our school.

Whilst our logo hasn't changed, we are really pleased to have added our agreed motto and vision.

The motto of our school is:

Achieving *through* ***kindness***, ***compassion*** *and* ***perseverance***.

This comes from our agreed Christian vision:

Let us run the race that is before us and never give up (Hebrews 12:1)

Everyone, at every level in the school, carries this *inclusive* vision with them and it *guides* how we work; it encourages self-belief to help achieve personal goals whether they're big or small and shapes the way we interact with each other.

Our vision underpins who we are as a whole school family. You can find out more on our website: www.stgilesceprimarymatlock.co.uk/vision-and-values/

Exciting start to the new school year!

Phew! It has been a busy and happy start to the school year. It has been wonderful to pause and spend time looking back at our first month, recognising and celebrating the many exciting events here at St. Giles. These include:

- **Welcoming all children, every day**! It has been great to see all of our children in school, day in, day out. Thank you for your continued support with attendance.

- **Welcome to all staff**: we've welcomed Miss. Ashin, Reverend Delafield and also Miss. Simpson to come and work with our children. Welcome 😊



Forest Schools: The children and staff have loved the start of their weekly, teacher-led Forest School sessions.

All of our children will take part in Forest Schools during the course of the school year, with each year group spending one morning, for half a term, in our Forest School site. This was improved significantly last year, with governors supporting over £8,000 of much needed improvements to the site.

This now means all of the children across our happy partnership of schools take part in teacher-led Forest Schools every week.

Little Smiles: it has been wonderful to welcome younger children into our caring school as part of our weekly parents' and toddler sessions. We've spent over £5,000 on brand-new resources for younger children to play with (plus experienced staff!)





Our application for our teacher-led nursery is now with the Department for Education and we'll keep you updated with news of

www.stgilesceprimarymatlock.co.uk/parents-forum/

It has been lovely to continue with the school's Parent Forum. This is an important partnership between parents and school. It is a valuable way to share ideas, views and to make suggestions for improvement. I have enjoyed welcoming in a few parents but the staff and I would like to extend this offer wider – we want to hear from all!

After listening to feedback from parents, we have scheduled our next meeting to take place on *Friday 10th November*. We'll run two meetings to help enable as many parents as possible to take part:

- Straight after drop off: 9 a.m.
- Just before collection: 2:45 p.m.

We're continuing to focus on homework but would also like to gather your views on the wider trips which we offer for the children.

Speaking of homework…

Homework – what are your thoughts and views?

Staff and leaders are keen to explore how we can further improve home learning. We have explored this at our Parents' Forum and we want to make sure that we capture as many views as possible.



We have created a short, anonymous survey and would very much welcome the views from all parents as we review our practice. You can access our survey via the following link: https://forms.office.com/e/XCbMuLZME9

Please can we trouble you *all* to complete the short survey. We will then share the outcomes and next, planned steps. Many thanks.

School Council: www.stgilesceprimarymatlock.co.uk/school-council/

A new school year = hustings in each class across school and a brand-new School Council to work with! It is important to have strong pupil voice and, rest assured, they provide this in spades! Hopefully you can see our capable group of councillors below. They all get my vote!



Miss. Simpson and I have worked with the School Council over the past few weeks to explore areas which we want to further consider and improve including:

- Use of our school houses.
- Equipment to improve our playground (Thank you to our PTA who have agreed to spend £3,000 on improving our playground provision!)
- Our behaviour system: making sure practice reflects our agreed principles.

Sports and keeping active

Sports provision continues to go from strength to strength here at St. Giles.

Our older children are continuing to enjoy taking part in the popular Matlock and Dales Primary Football league. We played our first game of the season last week and drew 3 – 3 against All Saints'.

We had 21 children (a quarter of the school!) take part in trials and training last night. Well done to all children and staff!

But… what about our *younger* children in Years 1 and 2?

Fear not. We have plans for all of our younger children to take part in a variety of well organised activities alongside their peers in the Matlock and Dales Primary Partnership.

All of our Key Stage 1 children (those in Years 1 and 2) will be taking part in a series of different events, throughout the year, alongside their Key Stage 1 peers from across the partnership. Details of the dates and events are set out below. Further details will follow.

DDAT Key Stage 1 Sporting Events Programme 2023-24

Events organised by Qualitas Sports

Invasion Games – Tuesday 24th October 2023 (Reserve date Tuesday 7th November)

Small-sided games – Including tag games, capture the flag etc.

Fun Run – Tuesday 5th March 2024 (Reserve date Tuesday 12th March)

Running activities.

Multi-Skills Festival – Tuesday 30th April (Reserve date Wednesday 8th May)

Archery, Fencing, throwing, and catching games, relay races.

Dance – Tuesday 18th June (Reserve date Tuesday 25th June)

Zumba, Cheer leading, Street Dance and Contemporary Dance.

Sports Day – Tuesday 16th July (Reserve date Friday 19th July)

Track and Field Events – javelin, hurdles, shot putt, speed bounce, running activities.

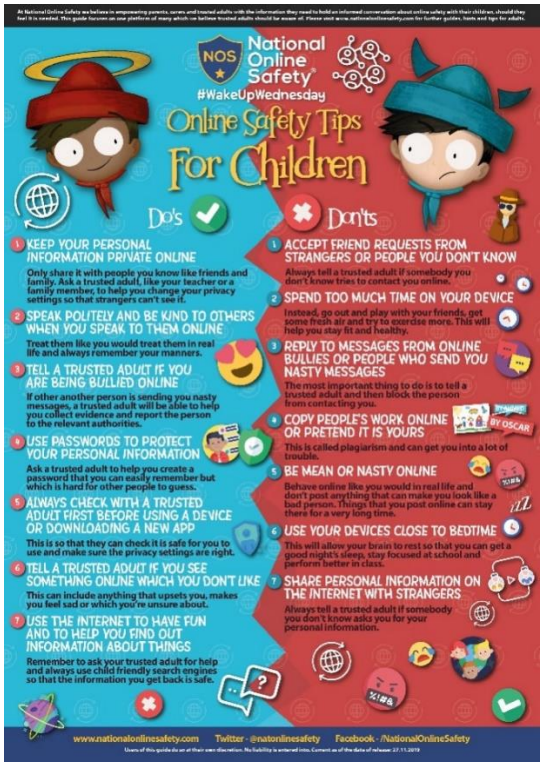
A reserve date has been allocated for each date due to the weather.

All events to be hosted at All Saints Primary School, Matlock.

All events with take place 9:30am until 11:30am.

But what about our *very* youngest children? Our children in Early Years will continue to take part in trained Balanceability (thank you Mrs. Rodgers) and will also benefit from our daily lunchtime clubs, led by trained sports coaches.

Online safety: www.stgilesceprimarymatlock.co.uk/online-safety/



You may have spotted the latest news about mobiles phones this week, with the government advising schools that they can ban phone use within schools.

Whilst we don't allow phones in school, we know that many of our children have access to them at home. We want our children to know how to stay safe when online.

Please find attached guidance which we hope supports you at home. You can find more advice on our website.

Please remember: if you have concerns about safety online then please contact school. We're here to help.

Car parking

We are very lucky to have an accessible car park at St. Giles (something which is not available at any other school within the partnership).

We leave the gates open in the morning so that parents can access the reserved parking bay at the top of the drive.

Unfortunately, we've noticed an increase in parents using the car park and so would like to remind everyone that the carpark is for staff and visitors only unless permission has been given to use it during drop off and collection times.

Please can parents also be considerate when using the car park for collection from after school clubs. We have noticed that the reserved parking bay can often be restricted. We would like this to be available for those who require assistance at all times.

Communication: www.stgilesceprimarymatlock.co.uk

Finally, thank you for the positive feedback from the community regarding our website, blogs and Facebook posts. We hope that these keep you informed about the work we're undertaking here at St. Giles along with our recent class newsletters, Meet the Teacher sessions and parent sessions on phonics.

We're also excited to share that we're introducing a *weekly Friday update*, starting this week. Our office team will provide a short, useful summary of the week ahead. We hope that this weekly update, combined with our website, provides you with all you need to keep up to date!

Please keep your eyes peeled for information about parents' evening which should be with you later this week.

Thank you for your continued support.





Ben O'Connell

Headteacher

Bethany Simpson

Senior Teacher

Autumn Term Dates

- Thursday 5th October – Swimming for Year 3 and 4
- Thursday 5th October – Little Smiles at St Giles
- Friday 6th October – Forest School Y5
- Thursday 12th October – Swimming for Year 3 and 4
- Thursday 12th October – Little Smiles at St Giles
- Friday 13th October – Forest School Y5
- Monday 16th October – Individual School Photographs
- Monday 16th October – Parent Evenings this week
- Tuesday 17th October – Class 4 trip to Eyam
- Tuesday 17th October – New starters 2024 Opening Afternoon 1:30pm
- Thursday 19th October – Swimming for Year 3 and 4
- Thursday 19th October - Little Smiles at St Giles
- Friday 20th October – Forest School Y5
- Monday 23rd October – Pupil flu immunisations
- Thursday 26th October – Swimming for Year 3 and 4
- Thursday 26th October - Little Smiles at St Giles
- Thursday 26th October - New starters 2024 Opening Afternoon 4:30pm
- Friday 27th October – Forest School Y5
- Friday 27th October – Break up for half term

November

- Monday 6th November – INSET DAY – school closed to pupils
- Tuesday 7th November – Back to school
- Thursday 9th November – Swimming for Year 3 and 4
- Thursday 9th November - Little Smiles at St Giles
- Friday 10th November – Forest School Y4
- Thursday 16th November – Swimming for Year 3 and 4
- Thursday 16th November - Little Smiles at St Giles
- Friday 17th November – Forest School Y4
- Thursday 23rd November – Swimming for Year 3 and 4
- Thursday 23rd November - Little Smiles at St Giles
- Friday 24th November – Forest School Y4
- Thursday 30th November – last swimming for Year 3 and 4 until 18th Jan 2024
- Thursday 30th November - Little Smiles at St Giles

December

- Friday 1st December – Forest School Y4
- Thursday 7th December – Aladdin at the Winding Wheel for EYFS and Year 1
- Friday 8th December – Forest School Y4
- Wednesday 13th December – INFANT NATIVITY PLAY – Class 1 and Class 2

- Friday 15th December – Mother Goose at Derby Arena for Years 2 – 6
- Friday 22nd December – Break up for Christmas