

St Giles School News

November 2025

**CELEBRATING
100 YEARS
1925—2025**



Specialist School for Physical and Sensory

‘Be the best you can be’

www.st-gilesschool.co.uk

Dear Parents, Carers and Friends of St. Giles’,

As we continue through this vibrant and inspiring autumn term, we are reminded daily of our school motto: **“Be the best you can be.”** We see this lived out in every classroom, every activity and every smile that fills our corridors. Thank you for being part of a community that lifts, supports and celebrates our incredible students.

A Wild and Wonderful Visit – 18th November 2025

What a magical day we had when an array of exotic animals visited St. Giles’! It was wonderful to see how engaged, curious and confident everyone was as they interacted with these amazing creatures. Truly a day full of awe, wonder and learning!

Children in Need – 14th November 2025

A huge thank you to everyone for helping us raise **£155.00** for Children in Need. Your generosity supports vital work for vulnerable children across the UK, helping ensure they have safe, happy and hopeful futures.

Mr. Hehir especially enjoyed seeing the fantastic Children in Need costumes and the wonderfully cosy pyjamas worn by so many. He was also *particularly delighted* to wear a **wonderful Arsenal top**, kindly donated by one of our students—thank you for this thoughtful and joyful contribution! It added even more fun and spirit to the day.

We would also like to celebrate the brilliant participation in **Odd Socks Day**, with students and staff proudly supporting this national anti-bullying initiative. It serves as an important reminder that kindness, inclusion and celebrating difference matters every single day.

Armistice Day – 11th November 2025

St. Giles’ honoured Armistice Day with a respectful two-minute silence as we remembered the brave men and women from the UK and the Commonwealth who sacrificed their lives. Our students showed great maturity during this moment of reflection, helping us keep alive the message of peace and gratitude.

“We Remember” Assembly – 21st November 2025

On this special day, our school community came together to remember and celebrate the lives of St. Giles’ students who are no longer with us. Through songs, words, sounds, bubbles and quiet moments, our current pupils beautifully reflected on their memories and connections. Thank you to all staff and students who helped make this assembly such a meaningful and heartfelt tribute.

Thank You to Our Wonderful Families

We are incredibly grateful to all the parents and carers who attended our WOW events this term—from Halloween celebrations to sensory storytelling sessions. Your enthusiasm and support help bring our community together and enrich the experiences of all our students.

Upcoming Events – Save the Dates!

We have a fantastic festive season ahead:

- **Winter Wonderland** – Monday 8th to Wednesday 10th December 2025 – *further details will follow about this from your Heads of Department shortly.*
- **Christmas Dinner for Students and Staff** – Wednesday 17th December 2025
- **Christmas parties with a visit from Father Christmas** - Thursday 18th December 2025
- **Christmas Jumper Day** – Friday 19th December 2025 (*Final day of Autumn Term!*)

We look forward to celebrating these joyful events with our whole school community.

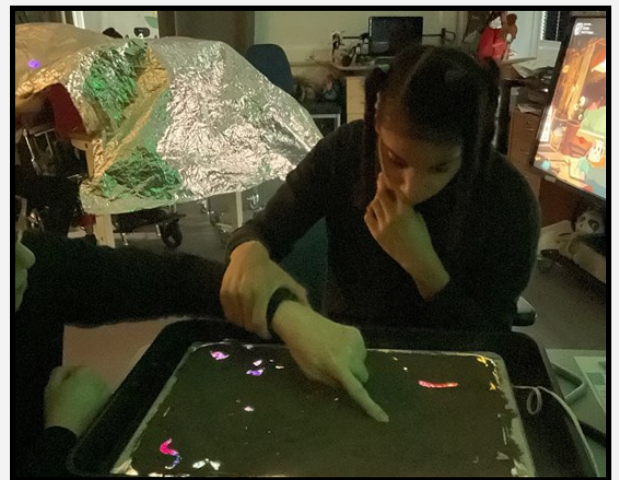
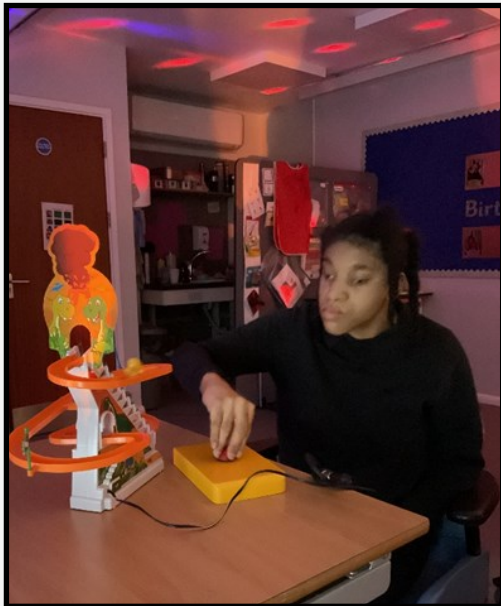
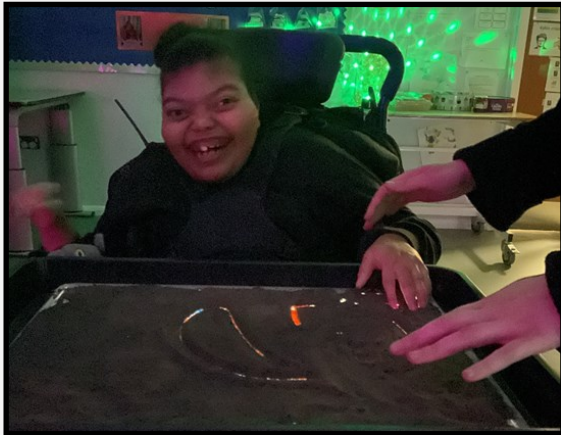
Thank you, as always, for your ongoing support, positivity and partnership. Together we continue to help every child at St. Giles’ **“be the best they can be.”**

Warmest wishes,
Stephen Hehir
Headteacher



Kahlo Class

Kahlo class have been exploring sensory lights and switch toys. We have explored the black sands and discovered lights under the sand. We have been submerged into a wintery Northern lights experience with mirrors to see yourself in different ways. The Dinosaur Slide works only when you hold down the switch.



Attendance and Absences

Regular attendance is vital to your child's success at school. We aim to ensure that every child reaches their full potential, and attending school consistently plays a significant role in this. If your child is unwell or unable to attend school for any reason, it is crucial that you inform the school office by 8:00 AM on the day of the absence with the reason and date of return to school if you know this. You can do this by emailing and/or calling the school office on

absence@st-giles.croydon.sch.uk /0208 680 2141

We also encourage you to avoid scheduling holidays during term time, as this can have a negative impact on your child's learning and overall progress.

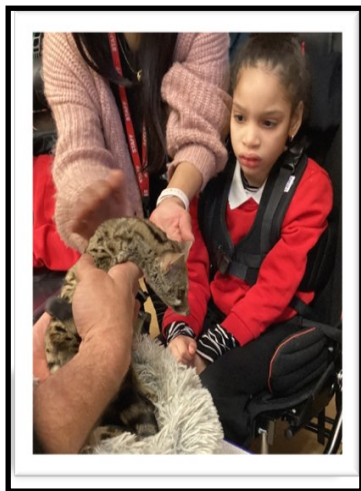
A Wild and Wonderful Visit – 18th November 2025

Our learners were treated to an exciting Animal Experience visit — and the feedback from every class has been incredible! The children (and staff!) absolutely loved the sessions and were mesmerised by the wide range of animals they were able to see up close.

During the visit, learners met a python, genets, a lizard, a skunk, barn owls, a kookaburra, and an African pygmy hedgehog. The presenter shared fascinating facts about each animal, and the children were fully engaged throughout.

Staff described it as a fantastic experience for everyone, and it was wonderful to see so many learners excited, curious, and confident during the sessions.

A big thank you to DWAEC for providing such an engaging and memorable experience for our school.



LOOKING AHEAD—Dates for the Diary

November 2025

Fri 28th—Inset day School closed

December 2025

Christmas holidays — Mon 22nd Dec—Fri 2nd Jan

January 2026

Mon 5th—Return to school

My name is Stacey McDougall and I teach in Indigo Class. I have the privilege of being Head of Lower Department as well as Mathematics Lead here at St Giles'. I began my teaching career in 2013 after completing my QTS and being awarded a BA in Primary Education. Over the years, I've taught across Nursery, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 4 in mainstream schools, which has given me a real appreciation for how children learn and grow at different stages. Teaching in the Early Years has always been where I've felt most at home and where I've found the greatest joy in teaching, so I'm really pleased to be back working with some of our youngest learners in the Lower School. I joined the wonderful community at St Giles' in April 2022, teaching in Simmonds Class in the Upper School before moving to Indigo Class in the Lower School this year. I had some previous experience working with children with SEND, and my first year at St Giles' taught me a lot. St Giles' is a phenomenal place — the care that the staff have for the students is unmatched — and I was so pleased to be part of this special community.



My passion for working with children with SEND comes from my nephew, Louie, who had severe physical disabilities. Having Louie in my life showed me the challenges faced by children with additional needs and their families, but also the incredible joy and pride that come with every achievement. He continues to inspire me every day to help children reach their potential and to celebrate every milestone, no matter how small. I've always loved the performing arts — especially singing and dancing — and I enjoy bringing these into school life for both learners and colleagues. I believe that creativity and joy are at the heart of great learning, and I'm excited to continue building that sense of energy and expression within the Lower Department at St Giles'.

Festive Event - Quiet Grotto 2025 -Dobbies Garden Centre -4a Woodmansterne Lane, Wallington, SM6 0SU

We are delighted to offer one of our most popular experiences at Dobbies, to children who may have some additional needs.
Friday 5 Dec* | £14 per child

These sessions can only be pre-booked, with no queuing on the day and a reduced number of families attending in each slot.

During your visit, we'll make sure:

- All music is off.
- Twinkling lights are removed or switched off.
- You can choose to have your child's gift wrapped or not.
- Prior to your visit, we'll email you photos of the grotto so you can prepare children for what they will see on the day. You'll receive a warm welcome from the elves before you take part in our North Pole adventure, children will get to experience snowy scenes, ice fish with the penguins, help the polar bears improve their ice hockey skills, shoot some snowball hoops, see where Santa's reindeer live, all before getting the chance to meet Santa himself.

Event highlights:

- **Magical adventure:** our elves have been working hard to create a theatrical experience for your little ones involving ice sport games and a reindeer stable where you can make your own reindeer food. Please note there are no real reindeers involved in the experience.
- **Fun activities:** ice fishing, snowball shootout, reindeer food making and more.
- **Meet Santa:** individual time with Santa where your children can share their Christmas wishes.
- **Photo opportunities:** capture the moment with a professional printed photo with Santa with reduced rates at time of booking.
- **Gift from Santa:** every child will receive a wrapped gift from Santa.

For more info : www.events.dobbies.com

Starting from 1st December and running until Christmas Eve, families can revel in the joy of roller skating in a Neon Street Art style pop-up rink, suitable for skaters aged 5 and over, making it the perfect activity for families to enjoy together.

Skating sessions will be held daily from 12pm to 5pm from Monday to Saturday, and from 12pm to 4pm on Sundays. Additionally, special **SEND** sessions will be available on weekdays at 12pm, ensuring that everyone can participate and enjoy the event.

The roller rink has been transformed into a breathtaking street art haven by talented Croydon artist Alec Saunders. Each twist and turn of the rink reveals a burst of creativity and colour, to fully immerse skaters.

But the fun doesn't stop there! In addition to the roller rink, there will also be a Doodle wall where little ones can unleash their creativity by colouring in their own unique way.

What makes this event even more special is that it's in partnership with the Reedham Children's Trust. Croydon Roller encourages attendees to donate whatever they can afford to support the trust's important work. QR codes will be available at the event, making it easy for visitors to contribute. Donations can also be made

here: <https://www.reedhamchildrenstrust.org.uk/Appeal/roller-christmas>.

Croydon Roller is a free event open to everyone, offering a wonderful opportunity for families to come together, have fun, and experience the magic of the holiday season. As this event promises to be immensely popular, we advise booking your skating session in advance to avoid disappointment. You can secure your spot by visiting

Event Details: Date: From 1st December to Christmas Eve / Location: Centrale Shopping Centre, Croydon

Time: 12pm - 5pm (Monday to Saturday), 12pm - 4pm (Sundays), SEND sessions at 12pm on weekdays.

About Reedham Children's Trust:

Reedham Children's Trust is a charitable organization dedicated to supporting vulnerable children and young people. By joining Croydon Roller and making a donation, you can contribute to their important work and help make a positive difference in the lives of children in need.

<https://www.centraleandwhitgift.co.uk/events/croydon-roller>. Walk-ins will also be available.



Croydon is bursting with exciting Christmas events this year to make your holiday season unforgettable!

[Elf on the Shelf®](#)

From Friday 29th November to Christmas Eve, a 15-foot-tall Scout Elf®, wearing its iconic red suit, white mittens, and hat, will be popping up across Croydon town centre until Christmas Eve. Don't forget to share your merry photos with @CheckoutCroydon on social media!

[Santa's Christmas Skyride](#)

Step into the magical elevator soar through the skies to Santa's cozy grotto at Centrale Shopping Centre! Tickets cost £6.50 and include a cuddly reindeer, there will be opportunities to buy photos and mementos on the day. Open from 27th November to 24th December.

[Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs](#)

Croydon's very own and Eastenders star Kellie Shirley stars as the Wicked Witch in this year's magical panto at Fairfield Halls, running from 13th December to 3rd January. Expect catchy songs, stunning dance routines and plenty of laughter, in a jolly treat for all the family!

[Whitgift Christmas Market](#)

The Christmas market at Whitgift Square (14th-24th December) brings together a collection of local makers, with handmade cards, vegan cakes, art pieces, and more! Plus enjoy a series of free daily workshops offering hands-on fun for all the family.

What do people say about our service?

Here is what some of our families have said about the support we have provided them:

I feel listened to

The team are incredibly supportive and spent time getting to know me and my child to support us in the best way for us.

The team are non-judgemental and easy to talk to

They travel the journey with us

Workshops have given me the opportunity to meet other families in similar positions as me - I don't feel alone

Bespoke resources have helped me to better understand my child

We regularly evaluate and review the service we provide to ensure it meets the needs of those who access it

Any Questions?

If you have any questions please get in touch.

 ch-tr.ldbehavioursupportcns@nhs.net

 020 8680 4810

 tulipneurodisabilityteam

 Tulip Paediatric Nursing Service

Who are we?

Our team is made up of:

- a Learning Disability and Behaviour Support Clinical Nurse Specialist,
- an Assistant Practitioner in Learning Disability



What does the service provide?

Initially you will be invited to the Together in Behaviour workshop. This is a compulsory parent workshop for families to attend in order to be able to access our additional services. Following attendance at this workshop and submission of behaviour diaries you will be offered other workshops relevant to your child or young person's behavioural needs for more in-depth strategies around specific behavioural issues.



TULIP Learning Disability and Behaviour Support Service



Helping families of children and young people with a Learning Disability build positive routines and relationships.

To access the service children must be:

- aged between 4-18 years of age
- have a diagnosis of learning disability
- be registered with a Croydon GP
- displaying behaviours that challenge at home

Following attendance at workshops you may be offered bespoke resources and strategies for management of behaviours that challenge. These may include targeted 1:1 work at home or in the community or co-production of a positive behaviour support plan. This will be decided upon following assessment by our Clinical Nurse Specialist. Any support given works within the Positive Behaviour Support Framework.

What is Positive Behaviour Support?



The overall aim of Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) is to improve the quality of a person's life and that of the people around them.

PBS provides the right support for a person, their family and friends to help people lead a meaningful life and learn new skills without unnecessary restrictions. It is not simply about getting rid of problematic behaviour.

CROYDON SENDIAS SERVICE SEND DROP-IN SESSIONS Time: 4 PM to 5 PM

Where: Legacy, Croydon Youth Zone
125 Whitehorse Road, Croydon,
CR0 2LG

- Come and have a chat with us about :**
- Requesting EHC needs assessment,
 - Understanding the EHCP process,
 - Annual EHCP review process,
 - Appealing LA's decisions,
 - Discussions and meetings with the school/Local Authority on SEND matters.

For more information, contact:
Email: Croydon@kids.org.uk
Phone: +44 20 8152 4558
Website: www.kids.org.uk
Facebook: Croydon SENDIASS

Dates of the following sessions

- 19th November 2025
- 17th December 2025
- 21st January 2026
- 25th February 2026
- 18th March 2026



Join our project to help children and young people with movement difficulties

Who can take part



- Children and young people:
- ✓ up to the age of 18
 - ✓ who are happy to take part in an interview (with support from a parent or carer)
 - ✓ who experience movement difficulties as a result of cerebral palsy or brain injury (including those who don't use words to communicate)

Why take part ?

Sometimes children with movement difficulties don't get the right help quickly. Your views can help us to improve services for children and young people.

What will happen

A 1 hour interview online or in a place where you feel comfortable. We'll ask about the support and services you have had for your movement difficulties.

Meet Sammy, the therapist looking after this project.

For more information:

- email samantha.randall3@nhs.net
- scan the QR code
- visit <https://stp.n.uk/the-ony-hudgell-rehabilitation-programme/>



Help us improve care for children and young people with movement difficulties

Who can take part

Parents and carers of children and young people who:

- ✓ are under 18 years old
- ✓ have a condition that causes movement difficulties (for example: cerebral palsy or other neurological movement disorders or neuro-disabilities)

Why take part

You know your child best, and can tell us what is working and what is not.

Your views can help us to improve services for children and young people with movement difficulties.

How to take part

Complete a confidential online survey (this will take about 20 minutes) by **scanning the QR code** or visiting <https://forms.gle/pYtX62CKUj2pWN1cA>



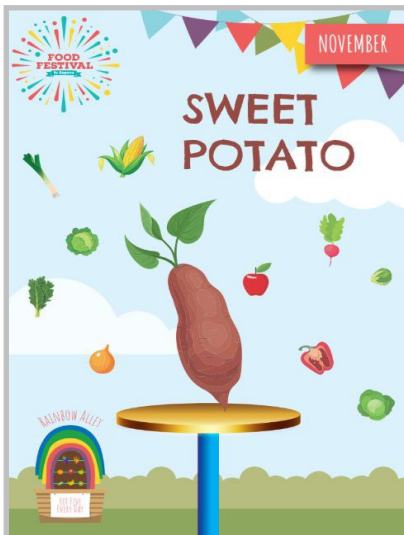
Contact us

Email: samantha.randall3@nhs.net



FOOD FESTIVAL

By Aspens



FOOD FESTIVAL

SWEET POTATO FUN FACTS

1. SWEET POTATOES GROW UNDERGROUND. THE PART WE EAT IS THE ROOT OF THE PLANT, AND IT'S FULL OF YUMMY NUTRIENTS.
2. SWEET POTATOES CAN BE ORANGE, YELLOW, PURPLE, OR EVEN WHITE! THEY COME IN DIFFERENT COLOURS LIKE A BOX OF CRAYONS.
3. SWEET POTATO PLANTS GROW LONG VINES WITH HEART-SHAPED LEAVES. IT'S LIKE A SECRET HIDEOUT FOR ANIMALS LIKE RABBITS TO EXPLORE!
4. THE "SWEET" IN SWEET POTATOES COMES FROM NATURAL SUGARS THEY HAVE. BUT THEY'RE A HEALTHIER KIND OF SWEET, LIKE A TREAT FROM NATURE.
5. SWEET POTATOES ARE SUPER HEALTHY. THEY'RE FULL OF VITAMINS AND FIBRE, WHICH HELP OUR BODIES GROW STRONG AND KEEP US FEELING GOOD.

Did you know?
INTERNATIONAL FACT
In America, sweet potatoes are a special part of Thanksgiving. They traditionally serve a sweet potato casserole with marshmallows.

Cost of Living!



What is the "Cost of Living"?

Imagine all the things your family needs to buy every single week to live comfortably. The "Cost of Living" is simply how much money it takes to buy all those important things.

FOOD: All the meals and snacks your family eats.

A PLACE TO LIVE: Paying for your house or apartment.

CLOTHES: Buying new clothes and shoes as you grow.

TRAVEL: Money for buses, trains, or petrol for a car.

OTHER NEEDS: Electricity, water and school supplies.

The prices of these things can change and even go up. When this happens, it can be tricky for families to afford everything they need. This is what we call a "cost of living crisis."

School meals can be a big help because they're more convenient way to get a healthy meal compared to making packed lunches or cooking every meal at home.

Inflation is when the prices of things we buy (like toys, food, or clothes) go up over time, so your money doesn't buy as much as it used to.

More Than Just a Meal!

School meals aren't just about fuelling students; they play a huge role in your overall wellbeing and health. Eating a balanced diet sets you up for a healthier future. That's why at Aspens we serve fresh food and cooked right here in our kitchens. **It's about fuelling your body and mind so you can perform your best, both in and out of the classroom.**

Serving Up Solutions



ASPENS

Even if your school meal is free for you, it still costs money to make! Just like everything else, the cost of making school meals goes up with inflation. Let's think about what's needed...

INGREDIENTS: Fresh food costs money.

KITCHEN TEAM: The people who cook and serve your meals need to be paid for their work.

KITCHEN ENERGY: Ovens, fridges and lights use electricity and gas, which costs money.

EQUIPMENT & CLEANING: Plates, cutlery and keeping the kitchen clean all have a cost.

Therefore school meals typically provide better value compared to packed lunches, particularly when considering the overall cost and convenience. Check out the cost comparison table below:

Cost Comparison Table by School Health UK

Type	Per Day (avg)	Weekly Cost	Annual Cost
School Meals (Primary)	£2.80	£14.00	£546.00
School Meals (Secondary)	£2.50	£12.50	£487.50
Packed Lunch (Primary)	£3.50	£17.50	£682.50
Packed Lunch (Secondary)	£4.00	£20.00	£780.00