



December 2025

Dear Parents/ Carers,

I would like to take this opportunity to say how proud myself and all the staff at St Katherine's are of all our children with special education needs. From September, when they all had to adapt to new teachers and classrooms to the last couple of weeks when tiredness and the excitement of Christmas can make life more challenging. The children have worked hard and demonstrated the school values.



Christmas with SEND

Although this is an exiting time of year, it can be challenging for children who are autistic or have ADHD. The slight changes in routines and the anticipation of presents and family days out, alongside the stimulation of lights and music wherever they go, can at times be too much. We want children to be excited and have lots of fun. Extended family members may find it hard to understand why some children are not enjoying the festivities at all times.



Here is some advice from the National Autistic Society,

- 1) Create themed activities, but allow for regular activities to help maintain a routine.
- 2) Make sure there are ways children can get away from it all if they need to.
- 3) Go at your own pace and try not to put pressure on yourself or others.
- 4) Don't decorate everywhere, and have quiet spaces if needed.
- 5) Observe and listen to autistic children to understand what they need.
- 6) Be aware that it's not a happy time of year for everyone.
- 7) Provide reassurance and communicate about changes in the run-up, especially bigger changes.
- 8) Small changes to the environment can add up – be aware of people's triggers.
- 9) Added expectations and pressure can increase challenges in the run-up to celebrations – give children time and space to express themselves without expectations.



Things to look out for over the festive period

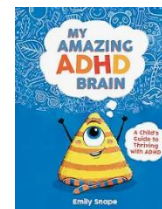
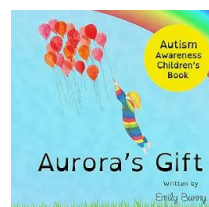
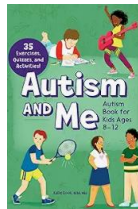
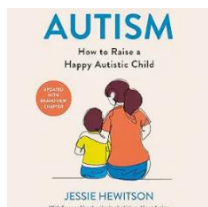
- 1) Look for non-verbal cues about how a child is feeling and be aware of what they like and don't like.
- 2) Don't be offended if an autistic child doesn't want to get involved or needs some space.

- 3) Have a plan, but expect unexpected things to happen – and plan for these too!
- 4) Give autistic children choices.
- 5) Whatever people do for the holidays is up to them – don't follow the norm.
- 6) Work with the autistic child and be open.
- 7) Try to find little moments of normality to maintain a routine.
- 8) Forget the expectations of other people – don't judge yourself by their standards and focus on what makes you happy.



Parents Library

In the new year I am planning to set up a library for parents of children with SEND. I am in the process of buying a range of stories that help children understand different needs. These will be available for parents to borrow and share with children at home. If you have any recommendations I would love to hear them.



Emotional Wellbeing Team

A few of our children and families have already been supported by Megan from the Emotional Wellbeing Team. Next term she will be coming in to work with me and run a workshop for parents to come along and find out about the support they can offer children and families. Megan will also be in 'The Hive' on Tuesday mornings, feel free to say hello and ask any questions.



I hope you all have a restful Christmas break.

C. Loveland

Mrs Loveland

SENCO and Assistant Head