

NEWSLETTER

Compass
Special
Schools



We are over halfway through the first half term of the year. Autumn is a lovely long term with so much opportunity to establish great learning habits, and we really enjoy this time of year. Over the last few weeks, we have been able to see the impact of positive relationships and routines on our children and young people and school feels very calm and settled.

This half term we are making some changes to our arts curriculum, placing additional emphasis on music, art, drama and dance and providing training for our staff teams so that we can teach area specific skills and ensure that all children and young people have a breadth of experience in these areas. Music tutoring has started at Oakmere Road and we are looking forward to seeing the progress these children make during the rest of the term.

Thank you to everybody who attended the SEND transport coffee morning. The transport team have given feedback that they found it really useful to listen to everyone's experiences and perspectives. As a result, they have already started to plan for January when we will have another cohort of new starters. They have also committed to meeting regularly throughout the rest of this year.



This week sixth form businesses have reopened. Our original and popular four businesses are back. The Compost Crew: horticulture group, Willow's Delish: café, Forever Friends: pet products and Creations: handmade gifts have new members and they are already planning their next steps including Willow's Delish expanding to table service in the corridor and Forever Friends making links with the reptile shop in Welling to talk tortoises. Our new fifth business is a DIY business and we are waiting excitedly to hear what they will be called.

We were excited to have a visit from Lynne, our Beekeeper who has delivered a gift of a box of Willow Dene honey. Last winter was a difficult one for bees because of the weather, so we are very grateful that we now have five colonies preparing for the colder weather. We are currently designing some labels for this year's honey yield and will have more information about our honey and jams made from fruit from our orchard soon.

Every year we take part in a Christmas card project where children design their own Christmas cards and which raises money for school. This year we will be doing things slightly differently by linking our Christmas card designs to some of our art learning and to the story "Under and Over the Snow". Even though it seems extremely early our art projects are underway, and we hope you like the finished results.

Last week was our first Local School Committee meeting with our Governors. This half term the focus was Willow Dene and next half term it will be Rowan Wood. Governors enjoyed reading our case studies which capture the progress that children make during an academic year and several of them are keen to visit classes to meet the children themselves. Our Governor monitoring morning for this term will take place after half term and will focus on Creative Arts which is a shared core priority.



Later in this newsletter you will see the term dates for Willow Dene 2025 / 2026, which have been slightly altered to move the Inset day later in the school year than originally planned. In 2026 we are also expecting a polling day which will affect Swingate Lane and Oakmere Road. We will send a letter with further details about this as soon as we have them. The amended Rowan Wood term dates 2025 / 2026 will be published shortly when we have some further detail from Greenwich and Galliford Try about the build.

In the last two weeks we have taken part in some mutual visits to Eko Trust, who are the Trust that Compass proposes to merge with in the future. We hope to bring you more news about this shortly, but in the meantime have started sharing information and building relationships. I visited Pathways and Horizons which are Eko Trust special schools last week. I enjoyed meeting Tom, Emma and Adam who are the Leaders and meeting children and young people whilst touring the schools. Although Eko special schools have a very different cohort to Willow Dene special schools, we had lots in common and lots to learn from each other and are excited to work together in the future. On Monday 13th October, Rebekah Iiyambo, CEO of Eko Trust is visiting Willow Dene and Rowan Wood for the first time. We are looking forward to a full tour and sharing our pride and passion for our school.

I hope you all have a lovely weekend, **Rachel**

News from Rowan Wood

At Rowan Wood, in science we have been exploring combining two materials to make a mixture. We then moved on to thinking about how we can separate these mixtures using sieves, tweezers, spoons and filtering. Our topic is War and Conflict; we have been enjoying learning about soldiers' life in the trenches - role playing being in a trench and experiencing what the wet muddy ground felt like. This week we learnt about evacuation and packed our own bags full of essential items. We have enjoyed sharing different stories in English, we are currently working on 'The Marvellous Moon Map'. We have created our own moon maps and describing the planets we saw on the way.

Ross

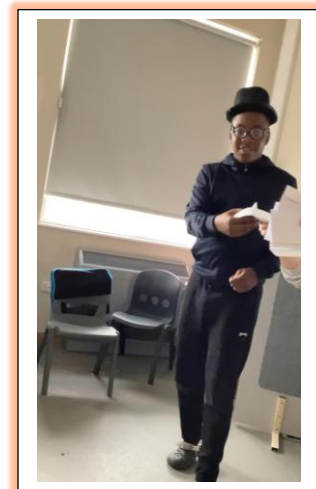
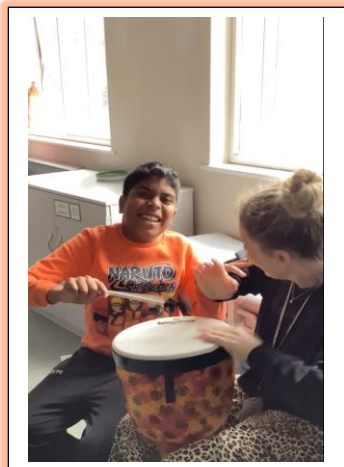
We have been setting up our sensory circuit for the children to explore their own regulation needs and what equipment and resources help them feel grounded and regulated ready for learning. The children are loving soft play and their swim session on a Wednesday, all of which are supporting them in understanding their body better and what it needs to stay regulated.

Claire

As Creative Arts Lead, I'm excited to share that we're continuing to grow and celebrate creativity here at Rowan Wood. In the last few weeks, we've been introducing music tutoring sessions for children and young people who show an interest in learning a musical instrument, which is giving them a wonderful opportunity to build confidence, develop new skills, and explore their love of music. We're also continuing to deliver music and drama sessions for Peacock and Monarch classes, helping to support communication skills, spark creative thinking, and deepen our young people's enjoyment of the creative arts

Charlie

BADGER CLASS



Badger Class have had a fun and busy start to the Autumn term! We have been focusing on building new relationships within our class, and everyone has settled in brilliantly.

We've taken part in a range of activities to help us get to know one another engaging in group work and turn-taking games to learn more about each other's likes, dislikes, and interests. This has helped us share experiences and build positive connections as a class.

One of our highlights has been our literacy work based on Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. We've embraced our inner Willy Wonka through role play, dressing up, and exploring different elements of the factory. The popping candy has definitely been a firm favourite in Badger Class! We've also been busy writing our own storybooks inspired by Willy Wonka, developing our fine motor skills, symbol use, and communication through AAC devices, as well as practising letter formation with a variety of tools such as pencils and pens.

In our creative lessons, specially Design and Technology, we have been exploring the theme "Hammer, Nail, Screw, and Saw." We loved using flowers and hammers to print colourful petal patterns onto paper". It was fascinating to see the designs we created and to explore the textures and scents of the flowers.

COMPASS COUNCIL

Compass Council had their first meeting of the academic year this half term, with both Willow Dene and Rowan Wood being represented alongside other schools within the Trust. Our council representatives were given a brief relating to online safety content to be shared on all Trust school websites and then set some time to research a variety of websites. Their task was to make decisions on which websites should be shared more widely for both children and young people, as well as parents and carers.

Miracle represented Willow Dene and identified three websites which she felt 'gave good information to help everyone to stay safe online'. These were:

- UK Safer Internet
- Keeping Children Safe Online: NSPCC
- Cool.Org

Rowan Wood was represented by Suleyman who thoroughly researched one website in particular, Get Safe Online, sharing useful information as to why this website should not be included on the school websites to promote online safety. Suleyman felt the website he explored included 'too much writing, that it all looked the same and that there was no animation to interest the audience.'

This feedback was shared with all members of the Compass Council and our representatives listened carefully to recommendations from other schools too.

Following this meeting, representatives will take the website shortlist to their school council and bring their outcomes to the next Compass Council meeting, where results will be tallied and a website agreed.

If you are interested in providing feedback on our shortlisted websites, we would love to hear your perspective! Please take a look at our Online Safety Shortlist below.

Online Safety Shortlist

- UK Safer Internet
- Keeping Children Safe Online: NSPCC
- Be Internet Awesome

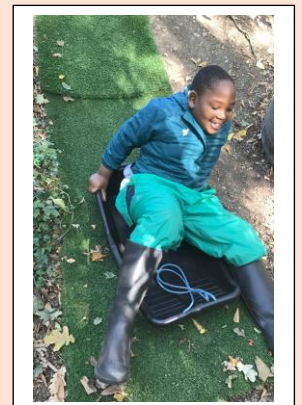
Kelly Welch

Magpie Class

This term we had a wonderful time in Magpie Class exploring the treasures of autumn. We discovered different seasonal plants such as chestnuts, acorns, and a variety of forest fruits. We enjoyed matching these natural finds with different colours, learning through play and observation. Surrounded by nature and fresh air, it was a lovely way to connect with the season.

It was also lovely to see the children interacting with each other — playing together, taking turns, having fun on the swings, hammocks and slides, balancing, and listening to the sounds of nature.

A truly great start to this school year!



SQUIRREL CLASS

Squirrel Class arrived back after the summer holidays with great enthusiasm and readiness to learn. Squirrel class has changed with two new students, and everyone is getting use to the new dynamics and making new friends.

In Literacy we have been exploring the sensory story, 'My First Day at School' which tied in nicely with the start of a new school year. In Maths we have been focusing on our individual targets and enjoying the story 'The Crayons' Book of Numbers' looking at counting, our colours and most importantly finding all the crayons!

PE has got Squirrel class using their bodies to make shapes in gymnastics and we have also enjoyed playing sports with Charlton Athletic and resuming our offsite swimming at Crook Log which has been tremendous fun.

In TPPC we have been looking at how World War Two affected children. We took it in turns to be an air raid warden. We have made blackout lanterns, reenacted an air raid and looked at evacuation and made our own evacuee labels to wear on our 'train ride' to the countryside.

In Art we have been exploring photography and looked at the photographer James Van Der Zee. We dressed up in some old-fashioned hats and tried to create some photographs like the ones James took of his subjects in the early part of the 20th century.

DT has seen us look at the use of tools. We have foraged some sticks from the outside play area and are using tools (saws, sandpaper etc.) to transform them into a set of windchimes.

Finally in Science we have been looking at some amazing materials and ingredients from the kitchen and looking at how they mix and react with each other. We have looked at dissolving, making lemonade and look forward to making lava lamps and hot chocolate!



IMPORTANT DATES

Last day of autumn term

Friday 24th October 2025

First day of autumn term 2

Monday 1st November 2025

WILLOW DENE TERM DATES 2025/2026

Autumn term 2025	September	Mon 1 st	INSET Day – School closed to children
		Tues 2 nd	INSET Day – School closed to children
		Wed 3 rd	INSET Day – School closed to children
		Thu 4 th	First day of autumn term
	October	Fri 24 th	Last day of 1 st half of autumn term
		Mon 27 th	Half-term holiday begins
	November	Mon 3 rd	First day of 2 nd half of autumn term
	December	Fri 19 th	Last day of 2 nd half of autumn term
Mon 22 nd		Christmas holiday begins	
Spring term 2026	January	Mon 5 th	First day of 1 st half of spring term
	February	Fri 13 th	Last day of 1 st half of spring term
		Mon 16 th	Half-term holiday begins
		Mon 23 rd	First day of 2 nd half of spring term
	March	Thurs 26 th	Last day of 2 nd half of spring term
		Fri 27 th	INSET Day – School closed to children
		Mon 30 th	Easter holiday begins
Summer term 2026	April	Mon 13 th	First day of 1 st half of summer term
	May	Mon 4 th	Bank Holiday
		Fri 22 nd	Last day of 1 st half of summer term
		Mon 25 th	Half-term holiday begins
	June	Mon 1 st	First day of 2 nd half of summer term
	July	Fri 17 th	Last day of 2 nd half of summer term
Mon 20 th		INSET Day – School closed to children	

ADMIN NEWS

Important numbers

School telephone number	020 8854 9841
Willow Dene contact email	willowdene@compassps.uk
Rowan Wood contact email	rowanwood@compassps.uk
Willow Dene School website	Willow Dene School - Home www.willowdene.compassps.uk
Rowan Wood School website	Rowan Wood School - Home www.rowanwood.compassps.uk
School Instagram	@WillowDeneSch

My Child At School

Did you know that you can contact the school administrative team via your child's MCAS account by clicking on the envelope icon in the top left-hand corner of the app.

School Office Hours

Opening hours:
8.00am – 4.30pm
Monday to Friday

Royal Borough of Greenwich travel application

[Application for home to school travel assistance | Instructions](#)

Change of details

If you are moving, change your mobile number or have a new place or work please remember to update the school with your new details.

Illness

If your child or young person has vomited and or has diarrhoea, they should remain off from school for 48 hours after their last episode.

Peeps
Together over breakfast
Join us for food at Giraffe!



Southbank Centre, Riverside Level 1, Central London, SE1 8XX

Friday 26th September 10:30am-12:30pm

For families registered with Peeps

Spaces must be booked in advance so we can arrange a table and pre-order

Children are welcome! Changing Places in the Southbank Centre



THE BRIDGE SE10
FOR THE COMMUNITY NOT FOR PROFIT

BBC CHILDREN IN NEED
TIPTOES & TAPPERS

ACTIVE PLAY
SATURDAYS 2.30 - 4.30PM
(term time only)

Indoor & outdoor activities for children with SEND and their families (suitable for 0 - 10 year olds)
All disabilities/abilities welcome
FREE TO ATTEND

The Bridge SE10, East Greenwich Pleasaunce, SE10 0LB
bridgesendplay@gmail.com
www.thebridgese10.co.uk/SEND
please register for regular updates



BRING YOUR LITTLE MONSTERS TO CROSSNESS PUMPKIN STATION
THIS HALLOWEEN FRIDAY 31ST OCTOBER 2025 11AM-3PM

CREEY STORYTELLING!
GHOST TRAIN!
SPOOKEMASTER BUS!
FORTUNE TELLING!
PUMPKIN PHOTO OP!
MUMMY UNWRAPPING!
APPLE BOBBING!

BOOK TICKETS AT CROSSNESS.ORG.UK

LISTEN TO THE TALE OF THE RAT OF CROSSNESS IN THE SPOOKY BEAM ENGINE HOUSE, THEN GO EXPLORING IF YOU DARE!
LEARN HOW THE VICTORIANS CELEBRATED HALLOWEEN
TAKE A RIDE ON THE GHOST TRAIN
TRAVEL ON THE SPOOKEMASTER SHUTTLE BUS
DISCOVER WHAT MONSTERS LURK IN LONDON'S SEWERS TODAY

NHS
South London Children and Young People's Community Immunisation Service

Missed your flu vaccine?

Live or attend school in the borough of Greenwich? Aged 4 - 16?

Come down to a flu catch-up clinic and protect yourself!

Saturday 4 October, 10:00 - 14:00
Clockhouse Community Centre, SE18 5QL

Monday 6 October, 15:00 - 16:15
Waterways Children's Centre, SE28 8EZ

Thursday 16 October, 15:00 - 16:15
Charlton Family Centre, SE7 7EL

Call 020 3903 3345 or scan the QR code for more information or to book an appointment



ROYAL MARITIME GREENWICH

Sensory Workshops

Suitable for children under 13

Come as you are, stay as long as you'd like.

Tickets: Free, pre-booking required

Please note, if no tickets are showing then the session is fully booked. Tickets are released one month before the session.

Location: Group Space, National Maritime Museum.

SENSory Sailors

Come along and enjoy this brand new sensory play session for children with special educational needs

Ticketed

Essential Information

Type
Family fun

Location
[National Maritime Museum](#)

Date and Times
Once a month on Saturdays | 11am-12.30pm

Prices
Free | Pre-booking required

October tickets

November tickets

Upcoming dates

Date	Tickets on sale
11 October	Now
8 November	11 October
13 December	8 November

Please check back for more dates and please note some dates may change nearer the time.

NHS
South London Children and Young People's Community Immunisation Service

Missed your flu vaccine?

Live or attend school in the borough of Greenwich? Aged 4 - 16?

Come down to a flu catch-up clinic and protect yourself!

Tuesday 28 October, 10:30 - 14:30
Greenwich West Community Centre, SE10 8JL

Thursday 30 October, 10:30 - 14:30
New Eltham Library, SE9 3QT

Friday 31 October, 09:30 - 13:45
Clockhouse Community Centre, SE18 5QL

Call 020 3903 3345 or scan the QR code for more information or to book an appointment



Do you have a loved one supportive of the far-right? You Are Not Alone



Actogram used in the image is stylized.

Extreme Right Wing (ERW) extremism is growing, and more and more families are struggling. Looking to help, this leaflet provides information on some of the signs and behaviour changes to look out for. Written by people who know, families who have had a loved one involved we provide various educational items to help families understand what extremism is and provide non-judgmental support.

Never alone support is out there, and we have listed ACT Early's contact details on the back page if you need help. *Stay strong, you can do this.*

Signs to look out for

Changes in attitude or behaviour.

Changes in behaviour can be caused by several factors, however this can be a strong and early indication that something is wrong.

Becoming secretive or distant.

Does your loved one hide their online activity, leave the room when on the phone, or are they reluctant to share information with you?

Increase in anger or short tempered.

Are they quick to anger, has their patience become limited, do they argue or with a lot of things that you say? Do they become angry for no reason?

They are spending more time online.

Have they become less interested in their typical routines, friendships and activities and are spending more time online?

Do they have new friendships with people you don't know?

They mention of new friends groups but have a reluctance to you anything.

Talking about them versus us.

Talking about themselves and others as their own entity and creating a division with others. "Them" often refers to people they see as the enemy and "us" being the saviour and even the targeted.

Using language that is harmful or hateful.

Using racist language or talking in a way that marginalises others.

Showing a distinct lack of tolerance towards others

Do they seem detached? Do they show a distinct lack of understanding or compassion towards others?

Paranoia.

Towards the government, social media and others. Expressing the belief that they are being ostracised and are being targeted by them.

Expressing feelings of injustice that are directed towards others.

Expressing feelings of unfairness and the belief that their rights are being ignored over others.

Developing new or intense interests in controversial topics

Developing new interests in controversial interests in topics such as race, religion, and politics and expressing controversial opinions.

What makes someone vulnerable to radicalisation?

Anybody can find themselves susceptible to radicalisation, here are some things that can make people more vulnerable than others:

Internal Factors

Low self Esteem, feelings of inadequacy or indifference.

Lack of Identity and a need for a sense of meaning and belonging
- Especially for those who are struggling to find their place in the world.

Isolation, loneliness and lack of support.

Sense of injustice, grievance and resentment.

Past and current trauma - Bullying, victimisation, discrimination, abuse & loss.

Mental Health issues and struggles.

Vulnerability, naivety and eagerness to please others.

External Factors

Discrimination, bullying and abuse.

Exposure - To material, actions and opinions online or in the community

Influence - From idols, loved ones, peers, friends and sometimes other family members.

Tension and conflict - World affairs, war and struggles within the community

Dis-information - Believing in a narrative that is being pushed with the aim to deceive.

Looking for support?

Please visit ACT Early's website or call them anytime.
Their telephone number operates 24 hours every day.
Website: www.actearly.uk Telephone: 0800 011 3764

Seeking to reduce extremism via education, compassion and understanding, Exit Family Support is a programme of Exit Hate. A registered charity (1197666) which seeks to help people walk away from extremism if they want to and families who have a loved one involved.

**THE FAMILY
SUPPORT**

Want to know more about
Exit Family Support? Visit:
exithate.com/familysupport