

SEND friendly guide for parents and carers visiting Santa's Elf Academy at Metrocentre



Welcome to Santa's Elf Academy, where the lessons are full of festive fun!

Join Santa and his friends this Christmas and get the super skills needed to be an expert Elf.

Get involved and be entertained in this exciting new Grotto experience filled with the best lessons this side of the North Pole!

Expect stealthy present placing practice, and even an elf & fitness class in this playful, heartwarming family experience.

Santa will be on hand to give each child a graduation gift of a plushie reindeer and their very own elf hat to take home. Congratulations, you have graduated from Elf Academy with flying Christmas colours!

When will the Grotto run from?

Santa's Elf Academy Grotto will run from 21st November until 24th December on a peak vs off peak time basis, selecting only certain days through the week until we get closer to Christmas where it will be open every day.

You can find dates and timeslots available via this link -

<https://metrocentre.digitickets.co.uk/>



This also includes several SEND sessions bookable via the website available throughout November and December

The difference between our standard sessions and the SEND sessions is that our SEND sessions are much quieter and calmer, with a fixed reduced capacity.

The sessions will last around 10 – 15 minutes, this is the same for the SEND sessions.

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This includes an introduction with our helpful elves and talking reindeer, then taking you through to the classroom where you get your Elf certification and lastly a personal visit with Santa.

If you or your humans feel the need to leave for any reason, that is absolutely no issue and you are free to do so at any point during the experience. However, you may not be able to return immediately to continue your booking and may need to rebook for another time. Please speak with the staff at reception if possible.

Your time slot is specific to you and for logistical reasons it would be helpful to not be early or late for the slot – this is to avoid customers waiting in long queues on the mall

If you need any more info or to ask a question please call our customer services department on 0191 493 0200 or email metrocentre.information@themetrocentre.co.uk

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Where is Santa's Elf Academy this year?

- Santa's Elf Academy is in a new location for 2025, you can find Santa located in Upper Green Mall, just opposite NEXT on your way to The Village (see the red circle in the image below)



My visit to see Santa at Metrocentre

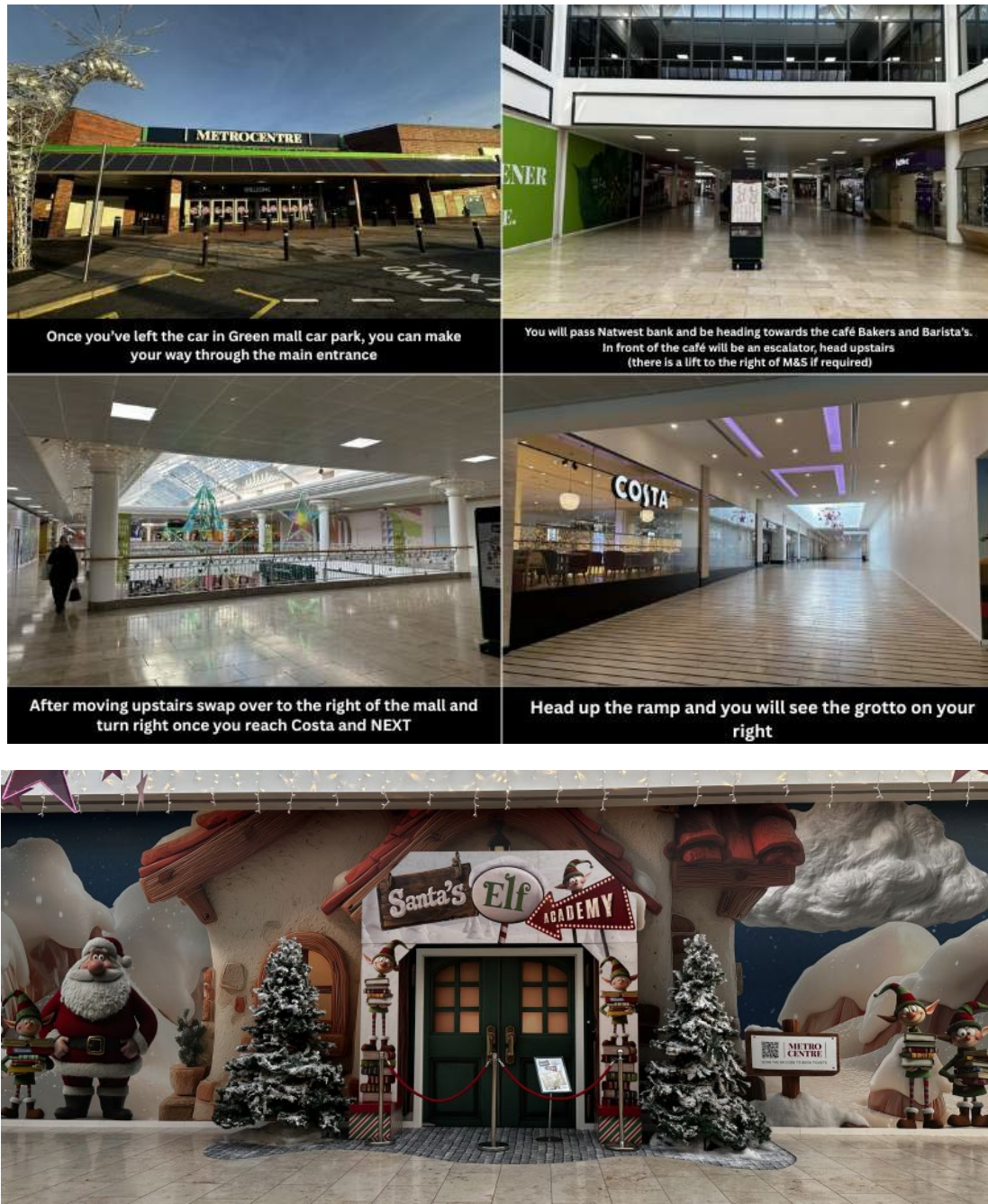
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How do I get to the Grotto location?

- The grotto is located in our 'Forum' section which is just next to The Village in Upper Green Mall. If arriving by car, you can park in either the Green Mall car park, near the main entrance or **Level 3 of the Blue Mall Multi Storey Car Park** – This has many disabled access bays and quick access to our Shopmobility service, if required.

How will I get to the grotto from Green Mall?



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How will I get to the grotto from Blue Mall?



Once you've left the car in Blue mall car park, you can make your way through the main entrance.



One through the doors you will see Wetherspoons on your right and Acropolis on your left, turn left to walk past Acropolis and KFC.



Heading straight through The Village and past the tree in the centre you will see the entrance of the grotto up on your left



You have arrived!

If you are arriving from another point in the centre, please use this link or scan this QR code will give you directions from a point you select -
https://livingmap.link/f/metro_centre/751216489618



When I arrive at the grotto I will see:

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A Cobblestone carpet with 2 snowy Christmas trees and the “Santa’s Elf Academy” archway welcome you into the experience

The Welcome Area

The Welcome Area is split into two parts, the right-hand side contains a lectern for ticket collection on entrance, a present photo-op, two singing reindeer, and the disco dance floor.

Visitors will exit the grotto experience into the right-hand side, past the photo-merch stalls. A buggy park will be tucked away in the corner

Lights will be as bright as in this image as they don’t dim. The reindeer will talk to each other and tell jokes, you will also hear music but the volume of both can be controlled.



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Classroom

The Classroom is dressed in Santa sacks and wrapped presents, craft tables and a blackboard, a teacher's desk and a cozy corner with a Christmas tree and rustic rocking chair. There is also space at the back of the Classroom for a bit of a bounce!

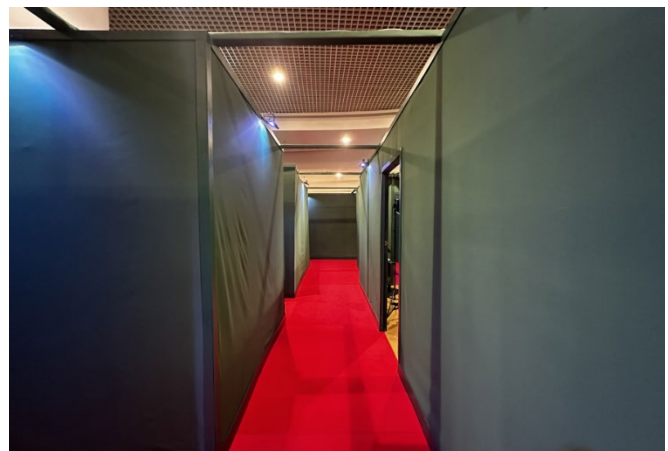
The area contains 4 desks which will be allocated one per booking with a maximum capacity of 4 Families



Green Corridors lead to the Grotto

The solid Green Corridors will lead you from the classroom to the Grottos down a winding path bringing you to the main man himself Santa Claus

They will be lit as you see in this image here, with light music played in the background.



Grottos

Every Grotto will be an exact copy of each other so that all of the photography matches up. The grottos will be dressed up with a wingback chair for Santa and a collection of present seats for his guests. Rustic dressing will fill the room and a large map to help Santa find his way round will be mounted behind him, enclosed by plush curtains.

This is where you will meet Santa, each experience is personal and only 1 family at a time. Santa may ask you a couple of questions such as your name and what you would like for Christmas. Though for the SEND sessions these can be avoided. He will give a soft plush toy as a gift. You will hear music and Santas voice, there may also be flash photography but you can request for this not to happen



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Greeting Elves

You can expect the friendly elves that check you in and guide you to be dressed like this:



Meeting Santa

When it's time to see the big man himself Santa Claus, you can expect to see him in his classic red suit, white hair and beard with a lovely red hat to match. Santa will greet you and talk to you and give you your first Christmas present of the year.



Toilet Facilities The toilet facilities at Metrocentre are all open and can be found in:

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- Upper Green Mall – Opposite NEXT (Nearest to the Grotto)
- Lower Exhibition Square – Behind the Escalator opposite Primark
- Upper Blue Mall – Past Wetherspoons and Acropolis, on your way through to the Public Transport Interchange (Nearest to the Grotto)
- Upper Red Mall – Turning right at Sports direct and straight forward

All four toilet blocks also include separate disabled toilets, and they are stoma friendly.

Our toilets are deep-cleaned on a regular basis and regular deep cleans and hygiene checks are carried out throughout the day.

We also have Changing Places and baby feeding/changing rooms.

Our Changing Places facility is located in Upper Red Mall

This facility is free of charge and is available for customers who need to use it. It is open during centre hours and the toilet has a controlled entrance, simply call the intercom to access it.

Metrocentre's Changing Places assisted facility is located on the Upper Red Mall near New Look. Our facility includes a height-adjustable changing bench with hoist, and ceiling track and a peninsular toilet. This facility is free of charge and is available for customers who need to use it.

Please note that we do not provide slings and advise you to check with your sling manufacturer to ensure they are compatible. Due to the specialist needs of individuals, Metrocentre staff are unable to provide assistance in the use of this facility.

Please be assured that our team will clean the facility between every use.

Inside the grotto there is a space to park buggies and wheelchairs if required, however the space is also large enough to move these with you.

All staff are on hand at any point if anyone needs any additional support on the day. The staff are trained to be understanding and make reasonable adjustments, should they be needed.

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DD73UjcOKoP/?igsh=ODg0Nmd4cWVhOXVi>

Please watch this video based on the grotto layout from last year (it is still the same experience, just laid out slightly different)

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