

PUTTING GIRLS FIRST IN EVERYTHING WE DO



ST. MARGARET'S

SCHOOL FOR GIRLS



PROSPECTUS

WELCOME



At St Margaret's, we aim to make choosing the right school for your daughter, at any stage of her development, a little less daunting. We recognise the importance of a decision that has the potential to shape her entire future, but we also understand girls – how they learn, how they play and how they develop. Our school values of respect, equality, hard work, ambition and community are at the heart of all that we do.

In a bright, spacious well-equipped building, with secure, grassed playground facilities, from the first day of nursery we are nurturing the communication skills, resilience, self-confidence and global outlook necessary for our pupils to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Our school is large enough to offer flexibility and choice in terms of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities, but small enough to ensure that each girl is well known within a warm and welcoming atmosphere. St Margaret's staff are experts in teaching girls and are committed to supporting each student, both inside and outside the classroom.

We believe that a girls' school offers pupils the space in which their intellectual and physical identity can blossom, a space which is free from stereotype, full of challenge and rich with opportunity and care. It is in this sort of environment that girls can develop the self-esteem and confidence which will enable them to make a positive impact on the world.

We provide pupils at all ages and stages with a variety of extra-curricular opportunities. Music, sport, debating, drama, dance, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and many other activities are available. These

are enjoyable in themselves, but they also help girls to develop the skills and personal qualities which will contribute to success and happiness in and beyond school.

Our all-through community, from nursery to sixth year, provides abundant leadership opportunities and fosters a sense of belonging. At St Margaret's there are no stereotypes and no glass ceilings: we provide opportunities for girls to grow in any direction their talents and aspirations take them.

This prospectus tells only a small part of our story. We look forward to welcoming you to St Margaret's and showing you what a special place this is.

**Anna Tomlinson,
M. Theol (Hons), PGCE
Head, St Margaret's
School for Girls**



MEETING THE NEEDS OF SUCCESSIVE GENERATIONS

St Margaret's School for Girls has been evolving to meet the needs of successive generations of girls from the moment that 21 year old Ann Stephen established a day school in the drawing room of her parents' house at 1 Union Wynd in August 1846.

Alongside continual investment in facilities and staff development, our relationship with parents has been a crucial element of the school's success. We know that parents are entrusting to us that which

is most precious to them and are partners in their child's education. That partnership begins from the very first contact with the school and will, for many, continue long after a child leaves us.

Ann Stephen establishes a school in the drawing room of her parents' house.

1846

School hall is built, following a fundraising campaign.

1890

1932

A three-storey link joining 15 and 17 Albyn Place is completed.

1946

1960

1969

The school officially adopts the name St Margaret's School for Girls upon moving to its current location on Albyn Place.

The school celebrates its centenary year and extensions to laboratory and studio are made.

A new Junior Wing is opened.





Addition of physics laboratory, music room and improved gym for the school.

1981

1996

New Summerhill sports pavilion opened.

2009

2016

The school is named Sunday Times Scottish Independent Secondary School of the Year.

2020

2023

The 150th anniversary is celebrated and a new extension with a music suite and extra classrooms is completed.

New science building, drama studio and art studio opened.

Best SQA Higher results in 20 years. 99.3% pass rate.





“With only girls in the classroom and on the sports field, they have the freedom to be—and become—themselves.”

THE BENEFITS OF AN ALL-GIRLS ENVIRONMENT

The benefits of an all-girls education are manifold. Research proves that girls learn best when they feel confident and happy. In girls' schools, teachers can create the right emotional atmosphere to optimise participation and maximise progress. With only girls in the classroom and on the sports field, they have the freedom to be—and become—themselves, and to explore fully all of the opportunities available to them.

We create a learning environment in which girls feel comfortable in taking risks and asking questions. Research by the Girls' Schools Association shows that fifth and sixth year girls in single-sex education are almost twice as likely to take physics and chemistry

as their co-educational counterparts; 80% more continue with modern languages and 70% more with mathematics. At St Margaret's the consistently high uptake of STEM subjects regularly converts to university degrees in maths, science and engineering.



NURSERY



The nursery is a vital and integral part of St Margaret's, where foundations are laid in literacy, numeracy and health and well-being, and transition to the junior school is smooth.

We provide active learning opportunities for girls and boys aged 3 to 5 in our well-resourced nursery and outdoor area. The children's interests lead and develop our planning. We promote learning through planned and spontaneous play to encourage imagination, creativity and exploration.

Outdoor learning in our safe, enclosed playground is important to us. Initiatives such as the Wee Green Spaces project, whilst developing awareness of local green space and caring for the environment,

encourage the children's independence skills, resilience, problem-solving abilities and ability to assess and manage risk. Twice weekly, the children have the opportunity to participate in timetabled music and gym sessions with specialist teachers.

We have well qualified, enthusiastic staff, who bring a wide variety of experience to our nursery. Our nursery environment reflects the care, quality and professionalism of our staff who include a nursery teacher as well as qualified early years practitioners.

“At St Margaret's Nursery, our children are encouraged to learn through child-led interests and active exploration. Learning through play encourages children to gather information about the world around them, helping them to develop a wide variety of skills whilst building confidence and resilience.”

Jenn Minett
Nursery Manager





“We promote learning through planned and spontaneous play to encourage imagination, creativity and exploration.”

JUNIOR SCHOOL

The many girls who begin their St Margaret's journey in our nursery or junior school enjoy the benefits of small, well-resourced classes and individual attention in their most formative years.

Strong foundations in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing are complemented by the wide range of specialist teaching from which our junior pupils benefit: specialist teaching in French, PE, music and drama is enjoyed from 1 Junior. In 5 Junior, specialist art teaching is introduced and, in 7 Junior, the girls begin lessons in Latin and the three sciences of biology, physics and chemistry which are taught in our state-of-the-art science block as part of the

seamless transition to senior school. We provide every pupil with their own Chromebook and from 1 Junior the development of digital skills is embedded in the curriculum along with an appreciation of diversity and sustainability.

Learning at every level is enhanced by a rich programme of expert speakers, outdoor learning and visits to places of interest.

"We are a cheerful and welcoming school which motivates our girls to excel in every aspect of their education. We have high standards for our pupils, and we provide a diverse array of learning experiences spanning all areas of the curriculum. Our girls collaborate and have fun while learning, and take an active role in all aspects of school life."

Miss Emma Cottingham
Head of Junior School





SENIOR SCHOOL



The senior school is a lively and creative learning community where global issues and the changing demands of the world beyond school are reflected in our continually evolving curriculum and programme of extra-curricular opportunities.

In I Senior, girls follow a wide, balanced curriculum to develop skills and extend knowledge and experience in all areas. Curriculum choice begins at the end of I Senior when girls pick their foreign language options.

At the end of II Senior, girls choose eight subjects to study at National 5, starting in III Senior. At the end of IV Senior they choose five Highers, while Advanced Highers continue to form the core of the VI Senior

curriculum, in preparation for the academic rigours of university. At every stage plentiful careers advice is provided and is tailored to the individual.

There is a culture of hard work and aspiration in all our classrooms where it is the norm for girls to be actively engaged in and contributing to lessons as well as to the ongoing development of the school.

“We have been delighted with and grateful for the very fine education and high level of pastoral care that our daughter receives at St Margaret’s School for Girls. The continued learning, support and kindness our daughter enjoys at school have gone a long way to ensure not only her academic success but also her happiness and wellbeing.”

Parent of III Senior Pupil



“In 2024, pupils achieved a 100% pass rate in English and Maths at National 5, and a 98% pass rate in STEM subjects at Higher”

“The hugely enjoyable Sixth Year Conference at the start of session is just the beginning of the VI Senior enrichment course comprising a weekly programme of lectures, workshops and presentations on essential life skills.”



SIXTH YEAR

Sixth year sees the culmination of a girl's school career, and we aim to make it a memorable and rewarding experience, which launches her on the next stage of her life. St Margaret's will have equipped her with all the skills and qualifications she needs for higher and further education and the years beyond.

Girls are supported throughout the year with expert guidance through the university application process. From the outset the girls work hard academically, usually sitting three Advanced Highers or a combination of Highers and Advanced Highers.

The hugely enjoyable Sixth Year Conference at the start of session is just the beginning of the VI Senior enrichment course comprising a weekly programme of lectures, workshops and presentations on essential life skills and concluding with a leavers' course and formal leavers' ceremony in the last week of session.

Sixth year girls are given many leadership opportunities, as part of the Head Girl Team, prefect body or House Captains to name just a few.

They fulfil a wide range of responsibilities, not least as role models to younger pupils.

A particular highlight of the year is the annual school dance in November, ever a glamorous occasion, organised by the girls with help from the head of sixth year. The girls ruefully agree that sixth year flashes by and ends all too soon.

Once girls leave school, at any stage, they become a member of our Former Pupils' Club which meets at organised events throughout the year. This is a thriving club made up of generations of St Margaret's girls and your daughter will always be considered part of its past, its present and its future.

"I have really fond memories of my time at St Margaret's, from nursery right through to my very last emotional day in sixth year. The school has given me the skills and values to succeed both at university and in the workplace."

Former Pupil

WELLBEING



At St Margaret's, wellbeing is at the heart of everything that we do. As we emerge from the pandemic, we understand that individuals, families and wider society have been affected by the uncertainty of recent years.

The physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of each individual member of the St Margaret's community is of paramount importance. It is fundamental to the ethos of our school that we enable children and young people to learn to look after themselves, other people and the world in which we live. At every stage we support our pupils to develop the skills and resilience they need to work through challenges and to thrive.

The importance of health and wellbeing permeates every aspect of our school life: pupils learn about and reflect on their own physical and mental wellbeing in the classroom and on the sports field and we are continually developing a school ethos which nurtures resilience and personal growth.

We recognise every girl as an individual, and our pastoral team, including our school nurse, strive to provide tailored support to meet the needs of our children and young people at every age and stage.

Rich and varied, our extra-curricular programme contributes a great deal to wellbeing through social engagement across year groups and through a myriad of opportunities to identify and build individual strengths. The school year is punctuated at St Margaret's by both form class and whole school charity events which generate a sense of common purpose and compassion, therefore enhancing wellbeing.

Pupils are encouraged to embrace a range of roles of responsibility, building confidence and developing skills to step out and be tomorrow's leaders. There is a strong emphasis on pupil voice with opportunities to join pupil council, focussed committees and discussion groups, empowering pupils to shape the future of our school and become responsible global citizens.

Our school values of hard work, ambition, respect, equality and community underpin the kind, caring and supportive community you will find at St Margaret's.

"Presentations and public speaking have done an enormous amount for my confidence, communication skills and career prospects."

VI Senior Girl

CHOICES AND CHALLENGES



Our aim here is to have happy, confident girls who know their strengths when they eventually leave us for the wider world. In all-girls schools, girls don't just enjoy equal opportunities, they enjoy all opportunities, whether they be in the arts, sport, science, expeditions, career insights or other extra-curricular activities.

Offering a wide choice is key to bringing out their full potential. Each girl can certainly discover for herself what she is good at and have the chance to develop her talents to the full with the support of our dedicated staff. We actively encourage girls to represent the school in the wider community and regularly celebrate their successes.

We see all our girls as potential leaders, whether in titled roles or simply as role models for others. Leadership opportunities are legion at St Margaret's. The Head Girl team with their cohort of prefects, the junior and senior house captains, sports captains, club

leaders and form class officers are just some of the areas where girls make an indispensable contribution to the life of the school and the promotion of our ethos. From ages 3 to 18, our girls comprise a single community where the older girls mentor, care for and inspire the juniors.

We have high expectations of our girls, socially and academically. As they leave us, pupils have a strong sense of self and a determination to succeed. They are confident, resilient and ready to make the most of life's challenges.

"I have seen teachers go the extra mile for individual girls countless times, whether that's by holding lunchtime revision sessions or spending time seeking out articles that they think might interest particular pupils. The key to their commitment is that they truly respect the individuality of their pupils and strive for their success, whatever that might mean for a particular girl."

Head Girl



“We are offered many varied and stimulating opportunities within the music department, such as performing in concerts and being part of choirs and many different ensembles. Throughout the whole school, the tuition in individual instrumental lessons, and in class music lessons, is outstanding.”

Advanced Higher Music Pupil

CULTURE

Whilst academic results and extra-curricular achievements are important, becoming a well-rounded, confident young woman is vital for success in later life. This is why we encourage all girls to explore art, music, drama and the spoken word.

The foundations of art and design are laid in the early years, with specialist art and design teaching from 5 to 7 Junior. Girls at all stages from 1 Junior to VI Senior have the chance to be involved in our drama productions, not just performing, but producing and directing too. Our show club is open to 4, 5 and 6 Junior girls who ultimately perform in a local theatre. In 7 Junior they are introduced to the works of Shakespeare, and all participate in a public performance, most recently of Richard III, Hamlet and Macbeth.

Our annual senior show is produced in a city centre theatre to give girls the exciting experience of performing in a real theatre to packed audiences. Theatre and cinema visits, relating to our curriculum in English and foreign languages, occur regularly.

St Margaret's has a strong musical tradition, and talents are nurtured from early years through class music and additional instrumental tuition and voice training. In a variety of choirs, orchestras and musical ensembles, girls delight audiences in many events

both in school and the wider community. Our biennial musical tours abroad are unfailingly popular.

Throughout their time at school, girls' communication skills are developed through debating and presentations to their friends or in school assemblies. In I Senior all girls are entered for the English Speaking Board examinations, while all girls who wish it participate in competitive public speaking and debating through their school careers.

Our new art studio at the heart of the school is flooded with natural light and is an inspirational place to work. Girls' work includes fine art areas such as drawing, painting and printmaking as well as design specialisms such as jewellery, textiles, product and graphic design with the use of subject specific technology. Girls regularly enjoy success in national art and design competitions as well as achieving success throughout National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher SQA examinations.



SPORT

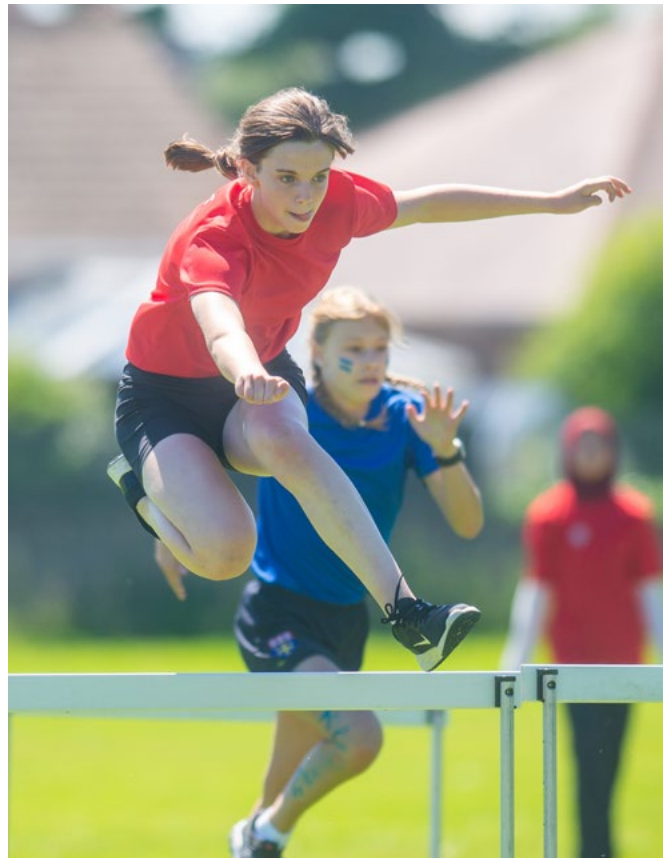


We believe in the development of the whole child, the fostering of a 'sport for all' philosophy and the promotion of a lifetime investment in sport and physical activity. We level the playing field, creating an environment where girls' participation in sport is championed.

Our playing fields and pavilion are situated two miles away at St Margaret's Place, off Summerhill Road, near King's Gate. Our facilities include two full-sized hockey pitches, which convert to a 400m running track in the summer, five tarmac tennis courts and a grass netball court. We also make regular use of the sporting facilities available at Aberdeen Sports Village and the Aquatics Centre among others.

Physical education from Nursery onwards introduces girls to a wide range of sporting activities. We enter teams for many competitions in many disciplines and have gained significant successes over the years. Sport inculcates self-discipline, communication and time-management skills, team ethos and the resilience to accept disappointment with fortitude and victory with modesty. We value effort and sportsmanship as much as winning. We believe in the development of the whole child, the fostering of a 'sport for all' philosophy and the promotion of a lifetime investment in sport and physical activity.

Everyone takes part in Sports Day, some as very serious competitors in our championship races, others just for the sheer fun of participating with their friends. We hope that by fostering a love of sport we shall help our girls to continue with it through their adult lives.





“Having the opportunity to take part in the huge selection of sports at St Margaret’s, I have been able to build my confidence and work with so many girls in both the junior and senior school. Being part of the netball team in particular has not only allowed me to become a more motivated individual but has also contributed to making our school a close-knit community.”

VI Senior Sports Captain



SENSE OF BELONGING



While supporting each girl to achieve her academic potential is at the heart of a St Margaret's education, it is only one aspect of the rich life of the school. We promote physical and mental wellbeing through our extensive extra-curricular programme: talents and creativity are fostered through sport, art, music and drama.

We give tomorrow's leaders a voice and a critical awareness of world issues through debating and Model United Nations. We foster compassion and care for others, near and far, through charity events such as the Youth Philanthropy Initiative and countless other fundraising activities.

We offer physical challenges through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and overseas expeditions designed to develop cultural and global awareness.

There is a strong sense of belonging here. Girls and staff are proud to be part of St Margaret's and all that the school achieves. We celebrate our successes and support one another in times of need, consequently developing strong bonds of friendship.

When they leave, all girls can maintain friendships and their links with the school through the Former Pupils' Club, and our St Margaret's Connect online community. Parents and teachers are members of our very active Parent Teacher Association. Involvement in the many school events that are held helps our parents to feel part of our community.

At St Margaret's we aim to help girls develop into young women who are self-assured, resourceful and successful. Their experiences here will equip them to be future leaders able to make a difference to their chosen field. We are skilled at empowering girls and giving them the confidence to take on the world – and they do.

“Starting St Margaret's in 7 Junior has been fantastic for my daughter. She has really benefited from the input of so many specialist teachers, and the academic rigour is preparing her very well for secondary school.”

Parent of 7 Junior Pupil



FORMER PUPILS

St Margaret's
Connect

St Margaret's School benefits from a supportive and engaged former pupil and staff community. The school keeps in touch with our worldwide community through our dedicated online portal, St Margaret's Connect.

St Margaret's Connect is updated regularly with news and upcoming events, and members receive e-newsletters and updates from the school. Former pupils regularly provide career advice or alumnae profiles to inspire current pupils, and support events and fundraising initiatives for the school.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH



The wellbeing of every girl is paramount; we wish to ensure that all of our pupils are happy in school and confident in their progress. Specialist guidance staff get to know our girls well and provide support during the important teenage years.

Form teachers throughout the school are the first source of support for each girl. Classes from 1 Junior to 11 Senior also have class prefects who act as friendly and less formal figures from whom younger girls can seek help and advice.

As an all-through school, St Margaret's is able to ensure a smooth transition and progression from junior to senior stages. New girls entering at 11 Senior find that the process is facilitated by an induction day during the third term of 7 Junior; new entrants meet with girls already in school and establish friendships so that they already feel part of the whole school community by the time they begin their secondary school career.

Higher education and careers guidance is provided by experienced advisers and our careers programme is bespoke to the needs and interests of each year group. Our ethos is a caring one: girls actively support one another and have teachers who will always do their best for them. We welcome girls of all nationalities and all faiths.

Aberdeen is a place where people from all over the world come to work, which gives us a real international flavour. Some of our girls are with us for many years and others for a shorter time, but we hope that all will benefit from a St Margaret's education that is academically Scottish but has a worldwide dimension to it.

"Thank you for the unstinting support and encouragement that has been provided for our daughter throughout the academic year. We have noticed how much she has grown in confidence and thrived since joining the school."

Parent of 1 Senior Pupil





Senior pupils serve as role models and mentors to our younger girls.

FAQS



Can I visit St Margaret's and see the school in action before making an application?

Yes; we shall be delighted to welcome you to the school. Open mornings are a wonderful opportunity to visit our school and meet staff and pupils. There are so many important things to consider when choosing the right school for your daughter, and it is a good idea to think about some of the things you would like to ask before the visit. When touring the school do not hesitate to ask questions as and when they crop up. As well as our Saturday open mornings, we host working open mornings which allow you the opportunity to see the school on a normal working school day. Appointments and tours of the school with the Head are also available and our admissions officer will be happy to assist you in this.

What is the application process?

The first stage in the admissions process is to complete a registration form, returning it with a photo of your daughter, a copy of her latest school report, and a £50 registration fee. Once the form has been received, we will then arrange an assessment. Our admissions office will ensure that you are kept updated and fully informed at all times throughout the application and assessment process.

Does the school provide transport?

Together with the other independent city centre schools, a joint bus service runs from certain towns in Aberdeenshire with dedicated stops into the city. There is a cost for the bus service. The cost and current timetable can be provided by the school.

Is school lunch available?

St Margaret's School for Girls provides optional lunches for all our pupils through a local contractor, Entier, who have long served the school with diverse, nutritional and tasty fare. There is a comprehensive 4-week cyclical menu, providing for a wide range of preferences, and parents are able to select which days of the week their children will take a hot lunch. We are fortunate to have dedicated Entier staff who have come to know our pupils well, keeping the children happy and ensuring they eat well. The school obtained a Health Eating Award several years ago, an award which we have held ever since. Pupils may also choose to bring a packed lunch to school.

FAQS



How does the school cater for children with medical needs?

We have a registered and experienced paediatric nurse on site during the school day in term time who caters for the needs of all children, and in particular, those who may require support due to long and short term medical conditions. Medication is stored and administered by our school nurse in a dedicated medical room and this space is used to support pupils in caring for all aspects of their health and wellbeing. In addition to our nurse, staff undergo regular first aid training to ensure the medical needs of children are met.

Does the school provide additional support for learning?

One of the primary aims of St Margaret's is to ensure that every pupil achieves that of which she is capable in both the curricular and extra-curricular life of the school. Additional support exists to help class teachers and pupils achieve this aim, because it is recognised that any pupil, including the most able, may benefit from support in her learning at some time during her school career. We are fortunate to have a range of staff qualified in inclusive practice who are dedicated to supporting our girls' learning. Their expertise provides holistic support throughout the school, identifying concerns early so that they can be dealt with quickly by the class or subject teacher. When learning barriers are identified, there are many ways in which Support for Learning staff can contribute to the success of each individual.

Is financial assistance available?

Girls who do well in entrance examinations for entry into 6 and 7 Junior and I Senior, and whose families cannot afford the full fees, are eligible for bursaries of up to 100% of school fees. Bursaries may also be awarded to applicants for places in V and VI Senior, based on examination results (National 5, Higher or non-Scottish equivalents); and exceptionally they may be offered to other senior year groups. Bursaries are assessed in January and February each year for entry the following August, and awards are means tested. More detailed information can be obtained from the Head of Finance and Operations.

What are the requirements for uniform?

Uniform lists are provided which detail required items each year. As well as our external uniform suppliers, we also operate a second-hand uniform sale in school which has items for sale at a fraction of the original cost. We encourage pupils to take pride in their uniform as representatives of our school community.



ST MARGARET'S
SCHOOL FOR GIRLS



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