St Margaret's College

Balanced foundations, bright futures.

Junior School Handbook

2027



Contents

Key contacts 2

Introduction 3

Junior School vision 4

Curriculum overview 5

REDS 8

After school care and school pick up 9

Attendance, absences and leave 9

Camps 10

Change of contact details 10

Chapel attendance, assemblies and special events 10

Communication 12

Complaints and concerns 14

Discipline 15

Fees 15

Home learning 16

House system 16

Leck Centre for Learning Enhancement 16

Library and study centre 16

Lost property 17

Lunches 17

Maggie's Café 18

Music, speech and drama 18

Parents' and Friends' Association 19

Pastoral care 21

Reporting to parents 22

School Office 24

Sport 24

Stationery 25

Technology and mobile phones 25

Theatre Dance Academy 25

The St Margaret's College Foundation 26

Transition to Middle School 27

Uniform 27

Visitors to the College 27

Transition to Junior School 27

Transition to School Checklist 29

Key contacts



Diana Patchett
Executive Principal



Bridget Compton-Moen
Head of Junior School



Julie Lewis
New Entrant



Nicki Douglas
Year 1



Michele Callaghan
Year 2



Marisa Spear
Year 3



Stephanie Cowden
Year 4



Sophie Huston
Year 5



Betsy Ryan
Year 6



Lillian Pickles
Learning Enhancement



Bindy O'Callaghan
Learning Enhancement



Audrey Campbell
Digital Technology



Introduction

We are excited to welcome your family to St Margaret's College and are honoured you have chosen our Junior School for your daughter's education. The primary years are pivotal, a time of enormous foundational growth. Research tells us that girls thrive in single-sex education, especially in these early years, when their curiosity, creativity and confidence can truly take flight. We provide a vibrant and joyful learning environment where girls feel a sense of whanaungatanga and are empowered to meet their potential while discovering their own strengths and passions.

Our goal is to ensure your time with us is rewarding, enriching, and that you and your daughter make strong connections that last a lifetime.

This handbook provides information on the day-to-day running and organisation of the Junior School, learning and reporting information, and an introduction to the Junior School teachers.

We value the relationships we have with all of our families. Pastoral care is a strong focus of the Junior School, as are the extensive and stimulating opportunities in all areas of education that will help your daughter to learn, live and lead.

We are excited to partner with you on your daughter's learning journey and provide her with the tools and foundation she needs to flourish.

Please be in touch should you have any concerns as your daughter begins her Junior School journey with us.

Bridget Compton-Moen
Head of Junior School



Junior School vision

The primary years are where our girls lay the foundations for a bright future, a time when feeling safe, being happy and learning well open doors to every possibility. We are committed to creating a positive environment where every girl feels known, valued and celebrated. Our team lays down the building blocks for a life of learning, guiding our girls to be their very best.

Our teaching staff help our girls to take risks, develop resilience and collaborate with others, all in small, single classrooms that provide a sense of community and belonging.

We are committed to helping every girl build a strong foundation in core subjects. We provide targeted support for those who need extra assistance in literacy and numeracy and offer extension opportunities to inspire girls who are ready for more. The girls' primary relationship is with their classroom teacher and they have a range of specialisation teachers who provide a rich programme of specialist subjects. Our wellbeing approach is closely linked to ensuring our girls feel success in their learning and friendships, and are celebrated as the unique individuals they are.

Being part of the larger college community has many benefits for our Junior School girls. Having access to specialist teachers enables our Junior School teachers to focus on core learning. They are absolute experts in the teaching of literacy, maths and inquiry as well as in the pastoral care needs of primary age girls.

The forming of partnerships with our older girls allows our students to learn and look up to their big sisters. This tuakana-teina approach is fundamental to St Margaret's, with enormous benefits for both younger and older students. We strongly believe leaders are made, not born and we nurture leadership skills as age appropriate, throughout your daughter's years in the Junior School. This programme culminates in Year 6 when students take part in our Leadership Programme, each taking on a role and playing a part in contributing to Junior School life.



Curriculum overview

Our Junior School curriculum is based on the belief that the key to successful learning is instilling confidence in students as learners. Every decision we make about learning is based on current research and best practice about how girls learn.

Core subjects

Literacy – In the Junior School, we are committed to ensuring that when our Year 6 students move through to the Middle School, every graduate is a confident, capable reader and writer who can understand and enjoy complex texts and communicate through well-crafted writing.

We know that a love of reading opens doors, so alongside developing skills, we nurture the joy and imagination that books can bring. Our approach to reading is grounded in the science of how the brain learns, with explicit, systematic teaching of the Big Six components of literacy: oral language, phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Writing is taught with the same structured approach, beginning with the foundations of handwriting and moving through word-level skills, sentence construction, paragraph organisation and the crafting of cohesive whole texts. From Year 0-6, this intentional, sequential teaching ensures every girl builds both the skills and the delight that come from being a reader and a writer.

Mathematics – Like literacy, mathematics is taught every day and follows a structured, evidence-based approach. We use a programme based

on the proven Singapore Maths mastery approach, thoughtfully adapted to the New Zealand Curriculum. Lessons move through the Concrete–Pictorial–Abstract progression, giving students hands-on experiences and visual models before working with symbols and numbers. Skills are taught step-by-step, with plenty of guided and independent practice so that concepts are truly understood and remembered. We focus on both fluency and reasoning, helping students to solve problems, think mathematically, and explain their ideas using clear, precise language. Just as importantly, we nurture a positive mindset towards maths, celebrating persistence, learning from mistakes and encouraging curiosity. Through real-world connections, our aim is for every girl to see herself as a confident mathematician who enjoys exploring the patterns and possibilities that maths offers.

Inquiry learning – Inquiry is the name we give to classroom-based learning in curriculum areas such as science, Aotearoa New Zealand history, and the broader social sciences. In the Junior School, we use a guided inquiry approach, where learners are supported by their teachers to build important knowledge while developing skills in research, critical thinking, synthesising ideas, and communicating their learning. Our inquiries are designed to be relevant and engaging, sparking curiosity through rich topics such as Plant Superpowers, See Her, Be Her, and Energy Everywhere. We encourage students to make connections between what they learn and the world around them, and to use their new knowledge to take positive action, fostering both understanding and a sense of responsibility for making a difference.

Specialisation subjects

Music – The music programme encompasses learning each music element through singing, playing and movement. Each music lesson has an element of singing, concentrating on pitch and rhythm through playing percussion instruments, exploring musical topics such as music history, orchestral instruments, composers and creating simple compositions using music technology. Of course, the main aim is to love music and have fun!

Performing arts – In performing arts, students explore dance and drama through processing certain themes and creating simple movement and drama role playing. Activities are related to building relationships and exploring friendships and self awareness. Students are regularly given opportunities to perform, at Junior School and whole school assemblies and Chapels, special events such as Grandparents and Special Friends' Day and in productions.

Visual art – In Year 0-3, students explore the visual arts with their classroom teacher. From Year 4, Visual Arts classes are led by a specialist art teacher. The girls visit the senior art teachers twice a week to engage with all aspects of art making; drawing, wet/dry media, painting, printmaking and even sculpture and photography. The Junior art programme is focused on building confidence across all aspects of art practice, whilst also enabling the girls to express their individual ideas about their own and others' work.

Digital technology – We are fortunate to have a dedicated Junior School digital technology specialist. Girls take part in weekly digital technology sessions where they explore and develop skills in digital development and design, computational thinking, problem based learning and electronics. These skills are integrated seamlessly into classroom programmes.

Languages – Our girls are exposed to a comprehensive language learning programme throughout their time in the Junior School. They have the opportunity to explore the languages and cultures of four different regions before they move into the Middle School. This enables them to make more informed decisions regarding subject choices.

All years – Te Reo
Year 1 and 4 – Chinese
Year 2 and 5 – French
Year 3 and 6 – Spanish

Physical education – In physical education Junior School students have the opportunity to participate in two lessons per week with a specialist physical education teacher. Our teaching and learning programmes are focussed on learning in, through and about movement. Students are exposed to a wide variety of contexts throughout their six years in the Junior School, with a focus on improving and developing fundamental movement patterns, effective interpersonal skills and the joy of being active.

Religious education – Our Chaplain, Reverend Stephanie Clay, provides religious education lessons. In these fun, age appropriate, interactive sessions we cover stories from the Bible and well known role models from New Zealand history. The focus is to encourage and support our students to grow in all areas of life and be equipped to make positive choices and develop their self worth, enabling them to achieve their potential.

Science – Our approach to science education is twofold with both classroom-based inquiry learning as well as the support of a dedicated science specialist teacher who provides specific science-based learning experiences to support current inquiry topics.

REDS

In the Junior School, the REDS are our age appropriate way of talking about what it means to be a great learner. They give us a shared language so we can understand and practise the qualities that help the girls flourish. We talk about the REDS often and celebrate when we see girls showing these qualities in their learning and daily life.

Responsible Citizens are kind, dependable members of our school who do the right thing, help others and make choices that are fair and principled.

Effective Communicators are brave when sharing ideas, and can express themselves clearly, whether they are speaking, writing, or listening to others.

Dynamic Thinkers are creative and curious problem-solvers who work hard, think carefully and always try their best.

Self-Managers look after themselves, their belongings, and their learning. They take initiative and can get organised without being reminded.



The REDS remind us that being a great learner is about more than just what we know; it's about the kind of person we are becoming.

After school care and school pick-up

After school care is available from 3:00pm – 5:30pm, Monday – Friday, on a permanent or casual basis.

After school care is based in the Junior School. Girls are given afternoon tea and are then supervised while they do their homework, as discussed with each parent. They are then free to take part in organised activities or choose their own activity.

Year 0-3 girls are escorted out to the Winchester Street gate by their class teacher. Other year groups must have a pre-arranged after-school plan with their parents so they are very clear on the arrangements made. All Year 0-6 girls who are not collected within 15 minutes of school finishing must go to the after school care room.

We offer after school care as a service to parents and as a way of ensuring that girls who remain after school are cared for in a safe and stimulating environment.

Please contact after school coordinator, Caroline Fletcher for more information, **caroline.fletcher@stmargarets.school.nz**.

Attendance, absences and leave

The Junior School day is as follows:

Year 0-3

8:25am – 3:00pm, Monday – Friday

Year 4-6

8:25am – 3:30pm, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
8:25am – 3:00pm, Wednesday

The Junior School opens at 8:00am. Girls are welcomed into classes from 8:00am onwards. If your daughter arrives before this time, she will be asked to wait outside the Junior School opposite the Preschool, under our Junior School sign (by the bell). Girls are to wait until 8:00am to go into lockers, classrooms, and the playground.

Parents are asked to contact the School Office before 8:30am if their daughter will be absent. The class teacher will notify the School Office if a student arrives after the absences have been noted but it is also a requirement that your daughter signs in at the School Office if she is late. Parents can notify the office via our app, School Bridge, or the School Office can be contacted on 03 379 2000. You may also email your daughter's absence to **absences@stmargarets.school.nz**.

Illness

Girls who become unwell during the school day must report to their teacher or the duty teacher. They are then sent to the School Office prior to going to the Health Centre. The Health Centre is staffed by a qualified nurse, who will notify parents should their daughter need to be collected.

Parents of girls who are absent through illness must email the class teacher or send a note immediately upon their daughter's return. If parents are aware that prolonged absence is likely, we would appreciate notification.

Leave

Requests for leave for family, sporting, or other reasons, should be made to the Head of Junior School in writing, well in advance.

Leave during the school day

It is essential we know the whereabouts of all students during the school day. No student may leave the campus without their caregivers notifying us. The class teacher must be notified by the caregiver if a student is to leave during the school day. We ask, where possible, that appointments be made out of school time.

Camps

Year 5-6 will have a three-day camp and Year 4 an overnight sleepover. The timing of these camps varies from year to year but they are usually held during Term 4.

Change of contact details

Please notify the School Office in writing of changes in address and telephone numbers as soon as they occur at **communications@stmargarets.school.nz**. Emergencies do happen and we need to be able to inform parents immediately, as well as ensure all correspondence reaches the correct address. Update forms are sent to parents at the beginning of each year to help facilitate this.

Chapel attendance, assemblies and special events

Chapel services are an important part of our community life. We gather as a College to begin each week, and Junior School chapel and assembly alternate on Wednesday afternoons from 2:30pm – 3:00pm.



The College calendar sets out the dates, times and expected attendance for all Sunday Chapel services our Junior School girls are to attend. Being together fosters our community feeling and parents are encouraged to attend these services, supporting their daughters in Chapel life. During the year there are Eucharist services and other forms of worship in the Chapel including compulsory Sunday evening services. If your daughter is not able to attend we ask that you contact our Chaplain, Reverend Stephanie Clay directly **stephanie.clay@stmargarets.school.nz**.

At our services, Junior School girls will be performing and using this opportunity to showcase their talents so it is important that girls attend, particularly if they have a special role in the service, and to support their peers.

Celebration Assemblies

Celebration Assemblies are held termly in the chapel and you are warmly invited to attend. These are a chance for us to share performances and present awards for outstanding learning and for girls who are displaying significant effort in one or more aspect of the REDS. Details of these Celebration Assemblies will be shared in the Junior School Newsletter. These assemblies are live streamed and available on our YouTube channel for five days following the event.
@stmargaretscollegechristch7561

Special events

There are three special College occasions which girls must also attend:

Founders' Day which is held in the evening, close to All Saints' Day, 1 November. This service is compulsory for Year 6.

Carol service in the last week of Term 4. This service is compulsory for all students in Year 0-6. Parents are warmly invited to attend.

End of year celebration is held on the last day of Term 4 in the Chapel. All Junior School students attend and parents are also encouraged to attend this celebration.

Communication

We encourage you to contact us with any concerns. This applies to girls and parents and caregivers. We also encourage the girls to approach their class teachers if they have any problems which they would like support to solve. If parents see this is not resolved, please communicate this to the class teacher. We hope the girls feel comfortable approaching any teacher if they need help.

Any questions you have are usually directed to the class teacher in the first instance. If this is not appropriate, please contact the Head of Junior School. We find questions or issues are best dealt with when they are not left too long.

Newsletters

The Junior School newsletter is sent out every Friday via email. Please read this as it contains notices, upcoming events, as well as celebrations of achievements. Please let us know if you are not receiving this.

You will also receive the College newsletter every second Thursday.

Email

Notices, letters and interim reports, as well as newsletters, are sent to parents and caregivers by email.

It is important that the primary email contact address we have for you is one that you regularly access. Please let the School Office know in writing if you change your email address.

School Bridge

We also ask you to download the School Bridge App from the App Store or Google Play.

The app can be a handy source of information on your phone and will be used to alert parents in the case of an emergency. It also enables parents and caregivers to notify us of absences.

Text messages

Text messages to parents and caregivers are reserved for emergencies and crucial information. In the case of an emergency, a text message will be sent to each student's primary caregiver. It is vital that we have the correct information so please let the School Office know in writing if you change your cell phone number.

Website

The College website, **stmargarets.school.nz** is updated regularly and contains information about many aspects of the College. Important messages, news and upcoming events can be found on the homepage. During an emergency, the website is a key source of information. Emergency messages will be displayed prominently and updates will be posted as they come to hand.

Social media

We also share College news and celebrate the efforts and achievements of our girls on the following:

- **Facebook** – facebook.com/stmargaretsnz
- **Instagram** – st_margarets_college
- **YouTube** – @stmargaretscollegechristch7561

Evergreen

Our Evergreen community magazine is published twice a year and contains news and articles about all aspects of College and alumni life. A copy of the magazine is posted to all families.

Events

We invite families to a family picnic at the start of Term 1. The Parents and Friend Association invites parents to events throughout the year. The Junior School Meet the Teacher event will be held on the same evening

These events are in addition to Chapels and assemblies and parent-daughter breakfasts, and provide opportunities for families to get to know one another and the wider College community.

Class Message Groups

Each year group has a class representative who manages a class message group. Your daughter's teacher will inform you who this is. Please ensure you are in the group by contacting the class rep. The intention of these groups is that they are supportive, positive spaces where families can connect.

They are not a forum for airing concerns. If you have concerns or complaints, please go directly to the class teacher in the first instance or to the Head of Junior School. We want to help so please ensure you talk directly to the person who can make a difference.

SMC Connect

Our community website, **smcconnect.school.nz** lists all upcoming parent and community events, is home to our Foundation Business Directory and publishes regular updates about our alumnae and wider community.

Other communication

The College also communicates with parents through:

- written academic reports
- Learning Conferences
- letters, emails and telephone calls

Parent communication with the College may be:

- by a telephone call, email or letter to relevant staff
- by a telephone call to the School Office, who will direct you to the appropriate person
- by making an appointment with the Executive Principal, Head of Junior School, or class teacher
- through communication with the Head of Junior School to request leave or
- pastoral concerns with regard to your daughter

The College communicates with Junior School students:

- at class time daily
- in assemblies

Complaints and concerns

If parents have a query or concern over fees, cafeteria charges, or other charges, the Finance Office can help. If the issue concerns a general problem, including relationship issues between students, parents should speak to their daughter's class teacher initially. Academic concerns should be discussed with the teacher in the first instance. If further follow up is required then please contact the Head of Junior School.



Discipline

Implementing a discipline procedure requires staff to be involved, consistent and committed. To promote a positive learning environment and ensure optimal learning conditions, all students must be aware of their rights and responsibilities. Students have the right to:

- be respected as individuals
- have organised and competent teachers
- have homework and assignments given out with appropriate notice

Students must meet the expectations of:

- arriving at class punctually with ALL necessary learning materials
- being prepared to listen and learn
- being courteous and obeying instructions
- respecting staff, students, their work and property
- mobile phone and electronic device use

If issues arise, they will be handled by the classroom teacher and Head of Junior School and appropriate consequences will be implemented.

Fees

Tuition fees are determined on an annual basis. Payment options are available and details can be obtained from the College's Finance Office.

Additional sundry expenses (cafeteria, stationery, Education Outside the Classroom etc.) are invoiced monthly on a separate account and paid by direct debit.

There are penalties for late payment of fees.


Kōnini


Kōwhai


Mānuka


Matipo


Rātā


Rimu

Home learning

In the Junior School, home learning is seen as a way to consolidate classroom learning, build confidence and develop automaticity in fundamental skills. Junior School students are expected to spend time every day on home learning which is appropriate for their age group. Teachers will give guidance on this at the beginning of the year.

Home learning will include some required daily practice of maths facts, sound packs, spelling and personal reading and may include some optional activities which support topics being explored at school.

House system

SMC has six houses. There are many events on the College calendar where girls will collaborate in their Houses including preparing a musical performance for the much cherished House Day. Girls are sometimes asked to come to school dressed in their House colours and so it is fun to have something in their wardrobe in the colour of their House.

Learning enhancement and enrichment

The Junior School benefits from two specialist learning support teachers who provide guidance and support to girls identified as learning differently. These group and individual lessons are fluid and based on current needs. This enables us to ensure that your daughter's needs are being met and she is reaching her potential.

We also have access to a learning enrichment coordinator who we liaise with regarding girls who would benefit from extension.

Library and study centre

The Library and Study Centre is staffed by a trained library team. Year 0-6 students have opportunities during class time to use the library. Parents may wish to take their daughters to the library after school. The centre also provides extensive online resources.

Lost property

Lost property is placed into the College lost property at Maggie's Café & Shop. This is available Monday – Friday between 10:00am – 4:00pm in Term time. Any items still unclaimed at the end of the Term are donated to charity or disposed of.

Small items of value (e.g. watches, glasses, jewellery) are held in the School Office. Parents are asked to encourage their daughter to take every precaution to keep her belongings safe. All personal belongings and equipment including clothing, sports shoes and sports bags must be named.

Lunches

All lunches are checked by the duty teacher in Year 0-3. Please ensure you communicate with your class teacher if you have any special requests regarding the amount of food you would like your daughter to consume at lunch. All uneaten food and wrappers will go home. This will give you an indication of the amount the children eat during the day and their choices.

Snack time is fruit, vegetables, nuts, cheese and crackers for all year groups. Generally speaking, this is a light quick snack eaten in class.

Please do not give your daughter chocolate or candy.

Our Junior School has been working hard to encourage and use sustainable practices. We prefer to have 'nude food' (food that has no wrapping or wrapping that can be recycled or reused) for food choices and would appreciate your support in this.

We are committed to becoming a zero-waste Junior School and eliminating waste during morning tea and lunch is an important component of this.

Drink bottles

Each child is to bring water to school in their own drink bottle. The only choice of drink available to the Junior School is water.

Lunch orders

Lunch can be ordered daily via our Kindo School Shop. Kindo is open 24/7 and parents and caregivers can place an order each day before 9am, or select the dates required in advance. Orders can be cancelled by 9am if your daughter is unexpectedly absent.

Maggie's Café

A parent must be with their daughter when purchasing from Maggie's before or after school. After 8:00am any items must be consumed in the café before class has started and a parent or caregiver must be present. Café cards can only be used to purchase items if a parent comes into the classroom to collect the card.

Itinerant Lessons- Music and Speech and Drama

Girls may learn a musical instrument or speech and drama through the College. We strongly encourage you to arrange itinerant music lessons for after school while speech and drama lessons often take place during class time, so please be aware girls are missing some class work. Lesson times are rotated to ensure girls are not missing the same class every week. Girls will be required to make up any classwork missed. These are extra lessons, which parents pay for directly to the teacher concerned. Head of Performing Arts, Ms Amanda Woods, is responsible for arranging these lessons. Please complete an enrolment form which is available



from the School Office or sign up online on the SMC website.

Students should not have both speech and drama, and music lessons during school time. This is to limit disruption to class work.

- No Junior Schoolers may have lessons during period 1 or 2.
- Year 1, 2 and 3s may only learn one instrument and it needs to be before school, morning tea, lunchtime or after school.
- Year 4-6 may have one lesson per week in school time to rotate each week.
- Year 4-6 may learn a second or even third instrument but it must be after or before school.

Parents' & Friends' Association

Our Parents' & Friends' Association (PFA) promotes and nurtures positive connections for parents and whānau in an active, inclusive community.

Parents are automatically a member of the PFA through payment of your annual subscription, and are warmly invited to attend PFA meetings, (which take place twice per term), coffee mornings, and evening drinks. PFA events and evening meetings are listed on the calendar, on SMC Connect and in the newsletter.

Being part of the PFA is a great way to become actively involved in the SMC community, enabling you to meet fellow parents, and to connect regularly with the Executive Principal, Trust Board and SMC staff.

Getting involved

Whether you have five minutes, a few hours, or a talent you are happy to share, there are many ways to get involved in life at St Margaret's.

1. Join the PFA

The Parents and Friends Association is one of the easiest ways to become more connected with the school community.

Through the PFA, parents can:

- Meet other parents across year levels
- Support school events and community initiatives
- Help with friend-raising activities
- Contribute ideas, energy and practical support
- Be part of a welcoming group that helps bring people together

You do not need to have lots of spare time or previous experience. The PFA welcomes parents who can help regularly, occasionally, or simply turn up when they can.

2. Come along to community events

School events are a great way to meet other families, connect with staff, and feel part of the wider St Margaret's whānau.

Look out for:

- Year group social events for parents
- Community gatherings for regional families
- Family breakfasts by age group
- Annual Family Picnic
- The St Margaret's College Foundation Spring Lunch
- Special awards assemblies
- Sunday Chapels

3. Get involved in learning and parent education

There are opportunities throughout the year for parents to engage with the learning journey and hear from experts in areas that matter to young people and families.

These may include:

- Parent Education Series events with external speakers
- Curriculum information sessions
- Future-focused education conversations, such as Year group orientation and information sessions

These events help parents better understand the world our girls are growing up in, and how school and home can work together to support them. If you would like to recommend a speaker, please complete this suggestion form.

4. Support sport

Sport is a huge part of life at St Margaret's, and parent support makes an enormous difference.

Ways to help include:

- Assisting at ISSA Zone and Canterbury events
- Helping with transport or carpooling to games
- Supporting from the sidelines
- Assisting with team communication
- Encouraging girls to give things a go

You can also come along and support major school sporting events such as:

- Junior School Swimming Sports
- Junior School Athletics Day
- Cross Country
- Winter and summer sports fixtures
- Tournament days and finals

5. Celebrate the performing arts

The performing arts bring our community together in some of the most memorable moments of the school year.

Key events include:

- Annual school productions
- Music, dance and drama performances
- Theatre Dance Academy events

6. Become a homestay host

By hosting an international student, our families can build strong connections and lasting friendships with students from overseas who are studying at St Margaret's, while sharing with them the very best of Kiwi culture. Homestays can be long or short term, full time or select weekends.



7. Share your skills, time or networks

Our parent community includes people with a wide range of experience, ideas and connections.

You might be able to help by:

- Speaking at a parent or student event
- Sharing career or industry knowledge
- Supporting a learning opportunity
- Helping welcome new families through the PFA
- Connecting the school with community opportunities

However you choose to engage, your presence helps strengthen the sense of community that makes St Margaret's special.

If you would like to hear more about any of these opportunities, please contact us at connect@stmargarets.school.nz.

Pastoral care

The wellbeing of your daughter is of utmost importance to us. Healthy relationships are at the heart of all we do and small classes enable us to ensure we know our girls well; this is fundamental to the strong pastoral care in our Junior School. The small class sizes and design around a central courtyard allows our girls to form relationships across year groups. It also enables our teachers to build connections with every student, giving us a 360 degree view of the pastoral needs of all students.

We have a number of pastoral care programmes that contribute to your daughter's wellbeing and create a strong sense of belonging.

Friendology – Award-winning pastoral care programme which empowers students with friendship skills. It explicitly teaches students how to navigate inevitable conflict and form healthy friendships.

We are enormously proud of the work we do with this programme and credit it with the culture of kindness that runs through the Junior School.

Buddy classes – Each class is buddied up with another class within the Junior School and girls have a special buddy in that class. This means that younger girls have an older student with whom they can spend time and older girls are developing leadership and role modelling skills.

Little sister-big sister – This is a unique feature of SMC with girls from the Senior and Middle Schools making an enormous contribution to life in the Junior School. These girls add richness to the Junior School, doing everything from coaching sports teams to taking clubs. The Junior School Council consists of Year 12-13 girls who actively support Junior School life, holding events such as the annual Teddy Bears' Picnic, coordinated by our Year 13 Junior School Prefect.

Reporting to parents

Regular communication between home and school is an essential part of the learning process. The Junior School reports on individual progress, not only to inform parents but to help each learner achieve her potential.

This will be done in a variety of ways throughout the year.

Connection interviews – At the start of the year (or when your daughter begins), her class teacher will arrange a time with you to discuss learning needs, styles, expectations, and begin to develop a relationship with you.

Student-led conferences – Learning conferences take place in Term 3. It is important that your daughter, her teacher and you as parents meet to look at the progress that has been made and to set some learning goals together for the future.

Ongoing reporting on progress and goals – Throughout the year, information is updated on your daughter's Seesaw page. This is an online platform for which you will be given a username and password to access when school starts.

Seesaw is used to keep you informed of goals that are being worked on and achieved throughout the year in reading, writing, mathematics and Inquiry, as well as information on specialisation subjects, tutor comments, and your daughter's portfolio page.

Your daughter's Seesaw portfolio provides a window into the classroom and will give you insights into your daughter's progress. Please remember that not all work is fully edited; some work samples may be labelled Draft with the intention being that we share with you a snapshot of your daughter's independent learning. She will love receiving positive feedback from you via a short comment.

As always, please contact your daughter's teacher or the Head of Junior School if you have queries about reporting.

Overview of reporting to parents in the Junior School

Reporting to parents in the Junior School	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
Learning conversations	**Connection interviews:** Parent and teacher, beginning of the Term **Parent Interview**		**Learning conferences**	
Written report		End of Term 2		End of Term 4
Learning shared through SeeSaw	At least fortnightly	At least fortnightly	At least fortnightly	At least fortnightly



School Office

The School Office is located in the Winchester North Building. The office is open from 8:00am until 4:30pm. Contact details are on the back page of this handbook.

The Executive Principal's Executive Assistant may be reached on (03) 363 1902 between the hours of 8:00am and 4:30pm.

Finance staff are located in the Finance Office, first floor of Winchester North.

Community Relations, the St Margaret's College Foundation and the Old Girls' Association are all located at 28 Winchester Street.

Sport

The big sister-little sister relationship is what makes Junior School sport at SMC unique. Our Junior students are lucky to receive excellent coaching from students who have spent years perfecting their given sport. Most sports will incur a small fee which will be charged to your account.

There is a variety of sports on offer in the Junior School. These include:

Basketball (miniball) – Year 3-6
Cricket – Year 1-6
Hockey – Year 1-6, including skills for Year 1-2 and Saturday games for Year 3-6
Netball – Year 1-6 including skills for Year 1-2 and Thursday/Friday games for Year 3-6
Swimming (competent swimmers only) – Year 5-6
Tennis Hot Shots – Year 1-6
Water Polo (Flippaball) – Year 5-6

Stationery

Stationery lists are published on the website under Parent Information. Stationery can be ordered online via the OfficeMax MySchool website. Stationery purchases may be made throughout the year from Maggie's Café and Uniform Shop.

Technology and mobile phones

SMC is mobile phone free. We strongly recommend that your daughter does not bring a phone to school or wear a smart watch. If your daughter must have a phone, it must be handed to the class teacher before school starts.

In the Junior School we are intentional about how and when devices are used for learning, guided by Ministry of Education recommendations. All devices are provided by the school and remain at school.

If there is an emergency you will be contacted by the College.

If your daughter attends after school care, she is able to take her mobile phone but must inform the supervisor that she has one. Mobile phones are not to be used in after school care without the permission of the supervisor and are to be used for communication with parents only.

Theatre Dance Academy

The Theatre Dance Academy (TDA) has been established to provide opportunities for co-curricular dance studies for students at SMC and for the wider community. Students are offered opportunities to achieve internationally recognised qualifications in jazz and ballet, and to participate in cirque aerials and open recreation classes in many genres, with a focus on developing repertoire and performance pieces. Performance opportunities are offered throughout the year.

Classes are available for boys and girls, aged 3 through to adult.

Enrolment forms for all classes, class information and the class timetable are available on the SMC website under Theatre Dance Academy.



The St Margaret's College Foundation

The Foundation is the philanthropic arm of the College and a stand-alone charitable trust. It provides financial security for the College's future, as well as supporting a range of initiatives that ensure generations of girls have the opportunity to thrive. There are many ways to support the Foundation, with further information available on SMC Connect.

Transition to Middle School

Throughout Year 6, your family will be supported in preparing for Middle School. Girls will be invited to an SMC for a Day event, to experience life as a Middle Schooler. In Term 2, parents will be invited to a Transition to Middle School evening where they will learn about the curriculum and meet with the Head and Deputy Heads of Middle School and Year 7&8 Dean. Families are also invited to book a personal tour with our Admissions team. Later in the year the girls will be involved in the Year 7 Orientation Day (usually held early November) where they will meet all the girls joining that cohort, as well as meeting their tutor group. Similarly, there is a parent induction evening at the same time of year that allows you to get to know other families joining the cohort.

Uniform

Please see the Uniform Handbook.

Visitors to SMC

Visitors must call and register in the School Office and sign out on departure. If parents wish to speak to their daughter, we ask that this be arranged via our staff, rather than to have families dropping in informally. Appointments with the Executive Principal are easily made through the Principal's Executive Assistant or by an email or phone call to a staff member. Parents are most welcome to contact the College at any time.

Transition to Junior School

Starting school is an important and exciting time in your daughter's development. At SMC, we endeavour to work together with you to ensure this transition is as smooth as possible.

Parents and children experience a variety of feelings as they arrive at school on the first day. Our classrooms are happy, exciting places for girls to come to school to learn, make friendships and have a lot of fun. Parents are a huge part of the learning process and your support in helping your child to learn is invaluable.

The relationship between teachers and parents is important at all stages of a child's schooling but it is particularly important at the transition into school. Remember that communication is a vital tool, please ask if there is anything you are unsure of.



Transition to School Checklist

- [ ] Read the information you receive about SMC Junior School's Transition to School Programme.
- [ ] Ensure your daughter attends the school pre-visits.
- [ ] Attend the information session with the Head of Junior School and your daughter's teacher.
- [ ] Consider arranging some playdates with girls in your daughter's class.
- [ ] Label absolutely everything clearly with your child's name.
- [ ] Practise dressing and undressing – girls can get anxious at PE classes if they feel they are slow at changing into their PE uniform.
- [ ] Consider picking your daughter up at 3pm for the first week. We do appreciate that this can be a big ask for working families but starting school and after school care in the same week can be very tiring. If this is not possible, we will work with you to keep this process as smooth as possible.
- [ ] Try to keep those first weeks as quiet as possible. You may be surprised at how tired your daughter is, even if she has been used to full days at Preschool previously.
- [ ] Your daughter will have some home learning. We recommend doing this before dinner if possible.
- [ ] Get involved in College life if you can. Come to Chapels, sports and College events if you can.
- [ ] Keep in contact with us.
- [ ] Download Kindo, Seesaw and SchoolBridge.

St Margaret's College

Balanced foundations, bright futures.

12 Winchester Street
Merivale, Christchurch 8014

03 379 2000

stmargarets.school.nz

ISNZ Independent Schools of New Zealand