Her journey starts here.
You will learn your way.

St. Margaret’s School (SMS) is an all-girls, independent day and boarding school located in the City of Victoria on the scenic west coast of British Columbia, Canada.

We know girls. We know how to spark their imaginations, cultivate their curiosity, and raise their expectations of themselves. Since 1908, we have focused entirely on the education, development, and well-being of girls. At SMS, we provide a personalized learning experience in an environment where girls can be daring, gain confidence, and discover their passions. Our programs equip girls with the knowledge, attitudes, and courage to thrive – in their studies, their careers, and in life.

The benefits of a girls’ school do not come from separating girls from boys, but from the ability to focus entirely on the education, development, and well-being of girls. As a girls’ school we are able to devote all our time, resources, attention, and energy to the unique needs of girls where co-educational schools simply cannot. Our teachers have the flexibility to customize teaching strategies, programs, and experiences to draw on girls’ strengths, capture their interest, and actively engage them in learning. In this dynamic environment we are uniquely positioned to provide girls with opportunities and experiences they simply won’t have anywhere else.

>> Girls’ school graduates rate higher in a number of areas – from math and science, to leadership and public speaking – versus their co-ed peers. Find links to further research on the benefits of all-girls education at www.stmarg.ca
Empowering her to set her own course and shape her own dreams.
Excellence
I am encouraged to relentlessly pursue my goals and actively participate to achieve great results.
You will find opportunities everywhere.

Our small-scale learning environment offers big opportunities. Students don’t belong to just one club or team; they often participate in our school community in several capacities. The spring production isn’t just for “drama kids,” and the athletics teams aren’t just for “star athletes.” Our students try everything and develop an incredible variety of skills and experiences as a result.

Each year’s activities and events truly reflect the interests of our students; whether a girl’s passion is for team management or dramatic production, we make it possible. Every student will find opportunities to extend her skills, explore her interests, lead others, and take on new challenges. Every girl will contribute her ideas, passions, and talents, and be able to see and feel her impact within our school.

It is easy for young girls to find strong and diverse role models among their peers. **Girls see other girls excelling** in a broad range of subjects and activities. In a girls’ school, girls are the strongest athletes, most brilliant scientists, most talented musicians, most creative artists, and most confident leaders. Girls are the ones speaking up, standing at the podium, holding the microphone, and leading their peers. They see they can fill any role, pursue any passion, and excel in any subject.

>> In a girls’ school, girls see that they can do or be anything, and they see it every single day. There are dozens of clubs and councils to take part in, and girls lead every one of these extracurricular activities. Our junior grades see a **95% participation rate in athletics teams** (over 70% among seniors).
You will be known.

Our advantage is more than small class sizes. Learning at SMS is a highly personalized experience. It is simply not possible to get lost in the crowd here; our teachers know each girl and customize learning experiences to individual interests and learning styles. Coursework is of value to each student, and worthy of her time and effort. This fosters genuine enthusiasm for learning and, as a result, greater academic success.

We recognize that learning occurs at different times and in different ways; our learning environment respects the diversity that exists among our students and supports the development of each girl. If a student is struggling, she will receive additional support; if she is excelling, she will be provided with opportunities to stretch herself further. Our highly qualified teachers consider the best approach for each student and address her learning needs together, through personalized learning plans. We challenge each girl to improve her own performance, exceed her own expectations, and realize her own potential.

When a student population comprises only girls, the diversity that exists among girls is more apparent. Girls’ schools are better able to nurture and celebrate that diversity. You won’t see all the girls doing certain activities and all the boys doing others, because girls do everything. There are no preconceived notions about what girls are good at or should be involved in; they pursue subjects, activities, and opportunities according to their strengths, interests, and passions.

>> Small classes, empathetic peers, specialized instructors and community-building events... these are some of the building blocks for exploration and discovery.
Girl-centred

I am understood and have the freedom to be creative and discover my strengths and abilities.
Courage

I am eager to take on challenges, learn from my mistakes, and do what’s right in the face of adversity.
You will push your boundaries.

Ask an SMS student what she loves about our school, and one of the first things she will tell you is that she feels comfortable here. She feels supported and encouraged by her teachers and by her peers. A safe, nurturing, and supportive learning environment is the very foundation for successful learning. It is an attribute often taken for granted, but one that is critical to ensuring the healthy development of each girl.

Most people will choose the familiar rather than risk embarrassment trying something new. **Girls take more chances** when fewer social pressures are mixed into their learning environment; they are more willing to risk a wrong answer, misstep, or failed attempt because public mistakes don’t carry the social risk they do in a co-ed environment. In a girls’ school, girls don’t always stick to what they already know they’re good at. They believe in their ability to succeed at any task and in a variety of subjects. They learn first-hand the value and reward of stepping outside their “comfort zones” and discover talents and interests they may never have uncovered in a co-ed setting.

Our students are respected and respect each other. They can offer an answer or voice an opinion without fear of ridicule or shame. This environment gives students the courage to raise their hands, take academic risks, and try new things, even things they may not be good at. It allows them to develop the **courage and resilience** to learn from mistakes and to never give up on themselves.

>> **Adventure is a tradition here**. Annual programs and events encourage each girl to accept both physical and intellectual challenges. Outweek takes girls on adventurous outings off campus, and regular assemblies and performances offer outlets for creative exploration.
You will be part of a close community.

Being part of a community of girls from Early Childhood Education right through to Grade 12 is a unique part of the SMS experience and provides tremendous opportunities for mentorship and cooperative learning across age groups. Our students develop friendships and connections that span ages and grade levels, they learn the importance of respect and collaboration, and they genuinely care for and trust one another. It is a unique environment that fosters a strong sense of belonging and a supportive community of peers.

Our Big Sister/Little Sister Program is a student-led mentorship program much beloved by our students. Each senior girl is paired up with a more junior girl in a sisterhood that will last their career at SMS. Sisters then participate in school events together. The benefits of this program are felt by all our students: younger students have someone to look up to and who will always offer a hug; older students have someone to set an example for; boarding students have a sense of family; international students have an unintimidating conversation partner. This program fosters positive relationships that span grade divisions and provides a strong sense of community within our school.

>> This is a school that encourages strong connections between parents, teachers, and administrators, as well as among students themselves to complete the circle of support in which girls thrive.
Service

I am genuine, generous, and caring in my relationships and service to others.
“It is the aim of the School to consider the special requirements of individual girls, and to give to each one as much attention and consideration as possible.”

Edith & Isabel Fenwick, SMS Founders, 1909

“I believe every child has a gift, but not every school has the ability to nurture it. SMS is a safe haven full of caring and experienced teachers who provide an environment in which young girls can flourish.”

Parent of Grade 11 student
“This school is full of awesome people, awesome places, and awesome ambitions. Being here has changed my life, and I know my time here will stay with me for the rest of my life. The supportive, opportunity-rich environment here has inspired me to reach for the stars and work hard to achieve my goals.”

SMS Alumna
Integrity

I am open, honest, and accountable, treating all people with dignity and respect.
You will grow through experience.

Who you are – your attitude, conduct, and spirit – is at least as important as what you know. We are committed not just to the academic development of each of our students, but also to her emotional and moral development. These are tools each girl needs to be willing to challenge herself, and to be open to new perspectives and experiences.

Our academic program is supported by experiential programs that offer meaningful opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and see the value of what they learn in class. Learning this way is less fragmented and takes place authentically, through social, physical, or academic exploration, and through trial and error. Students are able to see how subjects are interconnected, and develop skills and attitudes that could never be taught in a classroom. They learn a lot about themselves and each other, gain confidence in their abilities, and develop higher levels of emotional and moral intelligence.

Opportunities for personal growth teach our girls to become strong citizens who know how to effect positive change and who possess a desire to make a difference. Each girl will discover a lot about herself, her peers, and the world in which she lives through the experiences she has here.

>> State-of-the-art facilities on campus allow us to build experiential learning seamlessly into our curriculum, while field trips take advantage of the wealth of opportunities right in our own backyard. Mentorship, outdoor education, global learning, integrated technology, leadership, and community service are all major components in this approach.
You will make a difference.

Our school is named for Queen Margaret of Scotland (c.1045–1093) who was canonized for her work for justice and to improve the conditions of the poor. Her spirit of loving service inspired the school’s motto, *Servite in Caritate ~ Service with Love*, and forms the fabric of our school’s commitment to mould strong citizens of the world. Students here lead philanthropic initiatives throughout the year that benefit women and children in need both locally and internationally. Teachers and staff give generously of their time and passion to respond to individual student needs and support student projects well outside the classroom. Parents and families are encouraged to get involved at every turn to complete the circle of support in which students thrive.

**Our graduates** are equipped with the skills, the vision, and the confidence to pursue their passion for business, computer science, fine art, humanities, media, medicine, science, writing, and more. Our alumnae have made differences in the lives of others as humanitarians, researchers, and policy-makers; have made history with their contributions in medical science; have inspired others as artists and Olympians. Big changes in the world always start with small differences, and a girls’ journey to reach her full potential starts here.

>> “I am nurtured and inspired to become a lifelong learner, and am challenged to achieve my full potential and contribute to society in a meaningful way.” You can read the school’s **10-year Strategic Plan online**, which lays out the vision for our school and is written entirely from a girl’s point of view.
Where girls who want to change the world become women who do.
Leadership
I lead through my words, my actions, my thoughts, and the support of leaders around me.
You will take the lead.

This is a school where students’ voices are heard and acted upon. Our students are empowered to take responsibility for their learning and shape the overall learning experience. They are encouraged to develop leadership abilities, become independent thinkers, take risks and learn from mistakes, and collaborate with others. SMS girls are used to stepping into leadership roles because it is part of their everyday experience.

Leadership is simply part of our school culture. Our teachers and staff are facilitators and supporters; they offer guidance and encouragement, but it is our students who take action and lead school initiatives. Student clubs, school assemblies, lunchtime intramurals, the spring production, fundraising activities, and environmental programs are all led by our students. The Duke of Edinburgh program is mandatory for all Grade 9 students and Leadership students lead Service Days out in the community. By the end of the school year, it is our kindergarten students who lead school assemblies. Student-driven learning means our girls own their success and our graduates are ready to lead no matter where their journey takes them.

>> SMS students take the lead in our school’s everyday activities, but also in long-term planning. Girls helped shape the school’s 10-year Strategic Plan as part of the Student Advisory Committee.
You will gain a global perspective.

Our student population includes girls who join us from all over the world, and their cultures and experiences enrich our learning environment.

Post-secondary studies and careers are becoming increasingly global. The international experience offered at SMS prepares our students for real life, where they will need to work successfully with individuals who come from diverse backgrounds. SMS students gain a global perspective, both through their day-to-day classroom experience and through a variety of programs designed to explore and celebrate other cultures. Through these experiences they develop appreciation for differences and friendships that span the globe; they display a willingness to consider new perspectives and a degree of self-awareness that will be invaluable when they travel, study, or work internationally in the future.

SMS students also have opportunities to explore other countries and cultures first-hand. Between intercultural exchanges with a number of schools worldwide and our annual European adventure, our students have many opportunities to immerse themselves in a different culture and language. All travel experiences are guaranteed to broaden

>> Recent destinations for student trips have included Ecuador, Costa Rica, Kenya, Japan, Chile, Morocco, and a variety of European countries. Students new to Canada enjoy quintessential BC experiences like skiing in Whistler and whale-watching on the ocean.
horizons as students encounter new customs and cuisines, forge new friendships, and create lasting memories, but few experiences are as life altering as our volunteer service trips.

During service trips, students visit local schools and experience the values of another culture through peer-to-peer interaction. They take part in community service projects that directly improve the lives of the people in the regions they visit. Issues that seemed remote become people with faces, names, and needs. It is a humbling and inspiring experience for our students, who return motivated to participate in solving global challenges and with a broader understanding of the world in which we live.

Of course, for many of our boarding students, their everyday experience at SMS is already an experience abroad, and we are only too happy to show them around our own backyard and some of BC’s most spectacular destinations.

Global–minded

I see the interconnectedness of the world and understand that my actions have an impact on my environment and my community.
You will love it here.

Our state-of-the-art facilities sit on 22 acres of park-like grounds near lakes and the ocean, with access to extensive hiking and cycling trail networks. Our location contributes greatly to the extraordinary learning environment at SMS. Though nestled in a quiet neighbourhood, our school is only minutes from the city centre. Learning experiences extend well beyond our campus; our community is safe, our surroundings are beautiful, recreational activities are possible year-round, and world-class attractions are at our doorstep.

Located on the southern tip of Vancouver Island, Victoria is a choice community for its temperate climate, natural beauty, recreational sites, and superior economic opportunities. The city is alive with people and activity, and blessed with a wealth of natural and human-made riches. Stunning heritage architecture is framed by ocean views and mountain vistas. A strongly cultural community, the city is home to world-class art and natural history museums, and boasts a wide variety of performing arts including opera, symphony, theatre, and ballet. The temperate climate makes outdoor activities like hiking, bicycling, and water sports possible year-round, while Olympic-level pools and sports facilities further support our highly active community. The world is your playground with old-growth forests and seasonal ski/snowboarding within driving distance, and the metropolitan centres of Vancouver, BC, and Seattle, Washington, a short journey away by air or sea.
Come and see for yourself...

Contact us with any questions, or to schedule a visit:
admissions@stmarg.ca | (+1) 250 479 7171 |

>> Each girl is different and only she and the people closest to her can determine which school is the best fit for her and will provide her with the opportunities she is looking for. We also know that a brochure can tell you only so much – we’re here to help you learn more about our school and welcome you to ask us questions, come for a tour, or even spend a day as an SMS student.
Confident girls. Inspiring women.