



*"Your child really
does matter"*

St Mary's

H I G H S C H O O L
D O W N P A T R I C K
Prospectus

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St Mary's High School

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St Mary's High School

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Principal: Mrs S Darling

Chairperson of the Board of Governors: Mr E McGrady

Designated Teacher for Child Protection: Mrs M Arkins

Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection:

Ms R McLaughlin

Mrs D Dornan





Welcome to St Mary's High School

Parents/Guardians and Students you are very welcome. We are a very successful community school, where every effort will be made to meet the spiritual, educational and personal needs of your child.

Students from all communities are welcomed regardless of race, colour or creed. In St Mary's High School you will discover:

*"Your child really
does matter"*

All staff in St Mary's will be working in partnership with you to ensure:

- **Your child is treated with dignity and respect**
- **Your child receives an outstanding education**
- **Your child is guided and supported to do her/his best**
- **Your child is a valued part of the school community**
- **Your child is challenged to develop a strong work ethic**
- **Your child cooperates with staff in an atmosphere of mutual respect**
- **Your child is prepared for the challenges he/she will face in finding work in the local and global economy**

St Mary's High School continues to provide a high quality education for every child, thereby ensuring every child experiences success. GCSE and A level results are outstanding, scores are consistently well above the average in other schools across Northern Ireland.



Uniform

Years 8-12

- Blazer: Whites Royal P446
- Jumper: Hunters blue 'V' neck.
- Skirt: Whites Royal P446 skirt (front and back 5 inch kick pleats) side pocket; knee length - colour and material the same as White's blazer.
- Shirt/Blouse: David Luke Blue with revere collar
- Tights: Navy only
- Shoes: Flat black

Hair: Hair accessories should be discreet and in either navy or black.

Jewellery: Jewellery should not be worn on any part of the body with the exception of a watch and a pair of small stud ear-rings.

Make-up: Pupils may not wear make-up or fake tan.

PE Uniform

- Swimming costume
- Towel
- Navy polo shirt
- Navy track suit bottoms (Plain - No Logos)
- White socks
- Trainers (Laced trainers suitable for sports - no fashion or plimsoles for Health and Safety reasons).

Uniform Years 13-14

- Blazer: Whites Royal P446
- Cardigan - same colour as 'Hunter' jumper - pale blue stripe down front edges the same as in the striped blouse
- Skirt: Whites Royal P446 skirt. Back central closed pleat with buttons above the pleat - knee length. Colour and material the same as White's blazer.
- Shirt/Blouse: Denbydale (David Luke) Striped blouse (sky blue stripe) with revere collar. Available in fitted and loose style (long/short sleeve options available).
- Tights: Navy only
- Shoes: Flat black

Hair: Hair accessories should be discreet and in either navy or black.

Jewellery: Jewellery should not be worn on any part of the body with the exception of a watch and a pair of small stud ear-rings.

Make-up: Pupils may wear discreet make-up with no-eye shadow, and no eyeliner.

Optional - if desired:

Official shower proof fleece (from suppliers)

School hooded sweatshirt (available from school)

Official Uniform Supplier:

Pricewise	Minders	Rhoda Stewart
17 Market St	23 Market St	High St
Downpatrick	Downpatrick	Ballynahinch





Artist: Davina McConkey

Admissions Criteria

Pupils from all schools are welcome to apply. Should the school be over-subscribed the following criteria will be applied, in the order set down, by the Board of Governors.

- 1 Pupils whose normal place of residence is within the contributory parishes. These are Downpatrick, Saul, Strangford, Ardglass, Killough, Tyrella and Dundrum (not listed in order of preference).
- 2 Pupils transferring from feeder primary schools (this includes pupils enrolled in these schools who are not resident in the contributory parishes).
- 3 Pupils who have a sister at the school on the date of transfer.
- 4 Pupils for whom special circumstances apply e.g. social services report, health, security reasons. The Board of Governors will determine the merits of individual cases.
- 5 Pupils of a parent who is a past pupil of the school.
- 6 Pupils whose parents have expressed preference for a single sex school.

It is parents' responsibility to ensure that any information which is relevant to St Mary's Admissions Criteria is included on the Parents' Remarks Section of the Transfer Report Form or is attached to that Form.

At each criterion preference will be given on the basis of proximity/accessibility to the school, distance between the school and the applicant's home will be used as a tie-breaker.

St Mary's High School Day begins at 8.55am and ends at 3.25pm.

The following Policies are available on the school website:
www.stmarysdownpatrick.org.uk

Anti-bullying
Child Protection and Behavioural Policy
Drugs Policy
Inclusion/Special Needs policy





Charges and Remissions Policy

The school Management acts in accordance with the Charges and Remissions Policy produced by the SEELB.

The Board of Governors reserves the right to levy charges for the following:

1. Residential/non residential trips wholly or mainly outside school hours which are not part of the common curriculum or not required by the syllabus of an approved public examination.
2. Musical tuition involving the hire of a musical instrument and/or cost of such tuition.
3. Materials and/or ingredients used in practical subjects if parents have indicated in advance a wish to receive the finished product.
4. Examination fee charges will be levied where
 - (i) A pupil has failed to attend the examination
 - (ii) A pupil is entered more than once in a subject examination.
5. Malicious damage or loss of school property.
6. Voluntary contributions from parents may be requested in relation to activities provided within school hours.





Music

The Music department plays a very active role in the life of St Mary's. Our primary aim is to promote the enjoyment and understanding of music throughout the school.

Our musicians contribute regularly to many community and charity events and all students get the opportunity to perform demanding repertoire at a very high standard.

Drama

Here at St Mary's High School students are given a wide variety of opportunities to become active participants in their learning. From 'Dance Drama' to 'Cheerleading', 'Improvisation' to 'Staging', there's a role for everyone in the Drama Department.

Through these activities, students will develop a wide range of Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities to equip them for life in our ever changing society.

All students are provided with opportunities to build their confidence and self esteem whilst enhancing their talking and listening skills.

GCSE Drama is offered at KS4 and is a popular choice with high levels of success.

Key Stage 3 Curriculum

The following subjects are taught at Key Stage 3

Art and Design
Careers
Drama
English
Entrepreneurial Skills
French
Geography
History
Home Economics
ICT
Learning for Life and Work
Mathematics
Music
Physical Education
Religious Education
Science
Spanish
Technology and Design

During the Spring term, Year 10 pupils consider the options available for study in Years 11 and 12.





'And They Played On 'til The End'
Titanic Band Members

Curriculum and Assessment

Pupil Centred Learning

We encourage our pupils to be fully engaged in their own learning. Pupils are trained to be self-evaluating and they are supported in their learning by their teachers through marking for improvement and target setting. The pupils are fully involved in this through the use of their Progress Files.

Homework

St Mary's is firmly committed to the belief that homework for all pupils is an essential part of their education. It is school policy to mark homework regularly and to actively seek the assistance of parents/guardians in promoting this.

Reporting

Teachers report to parents/guardians through written reports and on the occasion of the Annual Parent/Teacher Meeting for each year group. Parents may request appointments with teachers to discuss their daughter's progress.

An integral part of teaching

Assessment is used as an integral part of teaching to monitor the progress of each pupil and to diagnose any educational problems which merit remedial action.

The information gained from assessment informs future planning for teaching and learning.

Whilst assessment is ongoing the following represent particularly important stages in the process:

Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4	Post 16
NFER Tests Midyis Tests	Yellis Tests GCSE	Alis Tests AS and A2 Level 2 Nationals

All year groups undertake End of Unit or module Topic Tests, Christmas and Summer Tests.





Key Stage 4 Curriculum

The following subjects are offered to pupils in Years 11 and 12

- Additional Mathematics
- Additional Science
- Art and Design
- Business Studies
- Child Development
- Drama
- English
- English Literature
- French
- Geography
- History
- Hospitality
- ICT
- Learning for Life and Work
- Mathematics
- Media Studies
- Music
- Occupational Studies (Business)
- Occupational Studies (Horticulture)
- PE
- Religious Studies
- Science
- Technology
- Travel and Tourism
- Wider Key Skills

Pastoral Care

In St Mary's High School we believe "every child matters" and all our work seeks to ensure this becomes a reality. We have a strong caring and supportive ethos where we aim to ensure that every child is valued, feels valued and becomes a vital part of our school community.

We work closely with students and their families to build positive working relationships that assist in the development of the whole person. The academic, spiritual, social and emotional development of each student is addressed.

The Form Teacher works with the student on a daily basis to monitor progress and provide support and guidance as needed. The Teacher is supported by the Year Head and the Vice Principal. The promotion of leadership at all levels across the school is considered very important, students are encouraged and trained to take on relevant leadership roles.

The student voice is crucial in St Mary's and students engage in a democratic process each year to elect new members onto the School Council. An example of the student voice in action has been the redesigning of the school uniform which was launched in September 2011.

Counselling services are available in school 2 days each week.





Titanic - 'All Aboard for First Class'

Religious Studies

In St Mary's students from all faiths are welcomed, included and supported to feel a valued part of our school community. It is our challenge to enable your daughter to know and understand Christ and to make a meaningful response to his call to love God and to love your neighbour.

At Key Stage 3 the pupils follow the Fully Alive Programme which is endorsed by the Northern Bishops as the Official Catholic Religious Education programme for KS3 pupils in Northern Ireland.

The Religion Department offers every pupil the opportunity to receive a recognised qualification by the end of Year 12 by completing the GCSE Religious Studies course provided and accredited by AQA. The Religion Department also offers an 'A' Level Religious Studies programme based on the Northern Ireland CCEA syllabus.

The pupils participate in daily morning prayer and weekly assemblies. With the assistance of the school's Chaplain, there are many opportunities as well to participate in liturgical celebrations and prayer services which seek to develop the spiritual life of each pupil.

The newly opened Prayer and Reflection Room will enhance the spiritual life of the school for all faiths.

Inclusion/Special Educational Needs

The aim of St Mary's is to provide access to a broad and balanced Curriculum which is differentiated to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEN/disability, strive to reach their full potential. Pupils whose first language is not English will experience an ethos of support, challenge and encouragement to succeed.

Teaching and learning will be adapted to meet the needs of the pupils and their learning styles. The school adopts a flexible approach to SEN provision, eg in-class support, withdrawal and Outreach Support as deemed necessary. At KS3 pupils with educational statements receive support in our MLD Unit or in mainstream. Classroom Assistants are provided by the SEELB for those pupils who require additional assistance due to their SEN/disability.

We value the partnerships that have been forged between home and school in order to maximise support for our pupils. The school aims to provide a caring environment where all pupils feel included and valued and their self-esteem is raised in order to prepare them for the world of work.





Key Stage 5

The following subjects are offered to pupils in Years 13 and 14.

- Applied Art and Design
- Art Design
- Applied Business Studies
- Applied Health and Social Care
- Applied ICT
- Applied Science
- Biology
- Business Studies
- Chemistry
- Construction
- Design and Technology
- Economics
- Engineering
- English Language/Literature
- English Literature
- French
- Geography
- Health and Social Care Level 2 Nationals
- History
- Irish
- Mathematics
- Media and Communications
- Media Studies
- Moving Image Arts
- Music
- Music Technology
- Physical Education
- Physics
- Politics
- Religious Studies
- Spanish
- Theatre Studies
- Travel and Tourism

Sixth Form students from St Mary's High School, De La Salle High School and St Patrick's Grammar School are taught together in a variety of 'A' Level subjects. Some subjects are hosted in each of the named schools.

Physical Education

St Mary's has a wide and varied PE programme which includes GCSE PE. In addition to sports encountered within the PE programme, St Mary's also promotes netball, basketball, Gaelic football, athletics and dance. Students take part in a number of leagues through the County and in Ulster.

We are constantly striving to develop our PE curriculum to meet the needs and interests of our pupils, in particular promoting Health Related Fitness throughout the school. This has resulted in the development of a dance culture which is a real favourite with the students.



Enrichment

Extra Curricular Activities

The following activities are offered as after school or lunch time clubs:

- Music which includes String ensemble, Choir, Chamber Choir, Irish Traditional
- Group, African Drumming Ensemble, Audio Recording
- ICT
- Technology/STEM Club
- Art Club
- Claymation (Moving Making)
- Creative Cards
- Library Club
- Sports which includes Gaelic, Netball
- Geography department holds an Eco School Club in the spring. The strategic focus is on developing wildlife areas and planting native trees to enhance the ecosystem.
- St Mary's Show-jumping Club

Careers Education

The aim of the Careers provision at St Mary's is to help prepare our young people for entry into a world of work where high level skills and qualities are required in order to compete in the 21st century work force.

A technological environment exists where Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) are keen contributors to the employment market.

In accordance with the Entitlement Framework Careers is now offered in a taught, timetabled programme from Years 10-14. The delivery of the programme is greatly facilitated by the use of Internet Websites including Jed, Pathfinder and Odyssey.

We also have a close working relationship with advisers from the local Careers Service who offer advice and options to our students. This is done through class talks and one to one interviews. This prepares our young people for the best choice of career that is suited to them. The Career planning process is the basis for the taught programme.

We continue to work with the business community to facilitate work placements for our Year 12 and 13 students thereby enabling them to be prepared for the future.



Pupil Voice

Emma Ross

I am very glad that I came to St Mary's. The teachers are all very kind and nice. The atmosphere in the school is happy, joyful, friendly and safe. I have lots of friends and I have made more since coming to St Mary's.

I have really enjoyed all of my subjects especially Science and Maths. I hope that I can do well in St Mary's. I also enjoy learning French and I can't wait to learn Irish and Spanish.

Becky Priestly

In St Mary's I have enjoyed my time so far. I have enjoyed all the different subjects like Technology, Home Economics, Science, Music and Drama. The teachers are very friendly and they help us out when we need it. I have made lots of kind friends in Year 8. The atmosphere is friendly and I feel very safe in St Mary's. The food in the canteen is very nice. My favourite subjects are Art & Design, Music, Drama, Geography and Technology.

Claire Beeton

You are given responsibility which makes you feel appreciated. You are given a world of responsibilities and opportunities. You are also given choices and treated like an adult which I feel prepares me for the world of work.

Niamh Darling

Since I joined St Mary's as a new Year 13 student I have been given the opportunity to further develop my academic and personal skills.

Tori Clydesdale

Being in 6th Form helps you realise that you really are given more responsibility as you get older. The privilege of being given free periods and Common Room time is a real treat!

John Mulholland - Experience of working in St Mary's

I have found the girls in St Mary's a pleasure to work with. As young leaders they show great motivation, drive and a willingness to learn. They were extremely innovative in the selection and implementation of projects.

Collaboration - How you enjoy it and what you got out of it

Niamh O'Brien

I have developed confidence being around different genders. I feel involved through the teachers making me feel welcomed.

Nicole Stratton

It is different but really enjoyable being able to be around different people and learning a new subject is really fun.

Claire Beeton

I feel respected and appreciated within the school and enjoy positive feedback from helping out ie Lunchtime Supervisors.

Kendra McEvoy

We are treated as equals. Adults talk to us as if we are their peers. We have responsibility for ourselves eg how we run our Common Room.

Lauren Robb

You feel appreciated. You are able to get along better with the teachers and you have more independence.

Olivia McCoubrey

You feel on equal standing like a member of staff and given responsibilities which make me feel prepared for going to a job and university.

Experience of being in the young leaders programme

Tori Clydesdale

It really helped me to develop skills which I may need in the future employment. I enjoyed this programme immensely.

Brenna Arnold

The Young Leaders programme has helped me to learn that I must be positive. If I believe I will do something, I will!

Catherine O'Hanlon

This programme helped me to realise that I can do anything if I believe I can and think positively. It helped me to realise how my mind can benefit me.





Friends of St Mary's

Margaret Ritchie

My education at St Mary's High School was formative to all aspects of the person - the sister, friend and colleague - I am today. At St Mary's, we were challenged to broaden our minds and to reach our potential not only academically but in our relationships with others and our wider society. I found that the training for debating enabled me to consider new ideas and to argue persuasively and with good humour! St Mary's helped me to learn to think for myself, to challenge the status quo, and to find constructive ways of dealing with difficulties as they arise. I believe this education has greatly stood to me in my career path ever since.

Tracey Quail

As a past pupil of St Mary's High School, Downpatrick I am happy to say I went on to open my own business. I have just recently been elected as President of Downpatrick Chamber of Commerce. The educational experiences afforded to me in St Mary's High School prepared me well for my future challenges. I have fond memories of St Mary's and am delighted to have been able to support the school through participating in the annual interview schedules for Year 12 pupils.

Lisa Kelly

The first time that I sat in History class I knew that this subject would play a large role in my life. Throughout my five years at St Mary's, from first year Normans to fifth year Russia, I cultivated an interesting and productive relationship with both subject and teacher. Both knowledge and support were ample, enabling me to develop and succeed both personally and academically, achieving top grade in three subject areas at GCSE level, including History. Today I teach History and Politics and attribute my career choice to the education and guidance given to me by a team of motivated teachers, in particular my History teacher.

Bridgeen Savage

I was a student in St Mary's for 5 years between 1995 - 2000. On reflection these were definitely some of the best years of my life so far and I have many fond memories. I met many people during my time at school including some of my closest and dearest friends. I consider my time in high school as a positive experience, where the support and guidance of my parents, peers and teaching staff influenced my adult pathway. I currently work as a senior executive in the Health & Social Care Trust leading multi-agency teams to support local communities.

Laura Pleasants

I spent 5 fantastic years studying at St Mary's, and can honestly say that my decision to pursue a career in business stems from the unwavering support and guidance displayed by my teachers. From day one, they really tapped into my strengths and made it their personal mission to ensure that I fulfilled my academic potential. I achieved a First Class honours in Marketing. I currently work as a Marketing Executive in a global media company.

Melissa Maguire

I enjoyed my time at St Mary's and am proud to be a past pupil of the school. It was a very positive experience, where I was taught not only respect and values but most importantly to believe in myself. The standard of teaching I received at St Mary's was second to none. The teaching staff were always on hand to offer support, words of encouragement and provide help and assistance if required. I currently work in the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Lindsey Curran

My time at St Mary's was both memorable and inspiring. Every teacher focused on my strengths. Teachers concentrated on the qualities of the individual. My determination, hard work and commitment enabled me to achieve my goal to become a teacher. I will always be grateful for the encouragement and support I received. I am proud to be associated with St Mary's High School.

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