



St Mary's  
Colchester

# St Mary's Lower School

## Parents' Handbook

### 2023-24

## Welcome

At St Mary's we are committed to ensuring the happiness of every one of our pupils. We firmly believe that the girls flourish when their individual talents are recognised and nurtured and when they have confidence and self-belief.

Although St Mary's girls are expected to work hard, they have lots of fun at the same time! The girls achieve excellent academic results while also excelling in many other fields. They are encouraged to make the most of the many opportunities on offer at the school to develop their interests and talents.

We hope that each of the pupils will enjoy life as a St Mary's girl, developing the confidence, skills and strength of character which will stand her in good stead for secondary education and beyond.

This Parents' Handbook is designed to give information on the day-to-day organisation of St Mary's Lower School. The Lower School Office or your daughter's class teacher will be happy to help if you have any questions or concerns.

**MRS EMMA STANHOPE**

Head of Lower School

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## Academic curriculum

St Mary's is a non-selective school, but we expect our pupils to always give their very best and to strive for the top! Our academic results are consistently high, which is demonstrated by the number of Senior School Scholarships and grammar school places the girls achieve, as well as excellent SATs results.

### Curriculum

Mrs Wentworth is the Assistant Director of Lower School (Academic) and is responsible for the delivery of the curriculum. If you wish to speak with her, please make an appointment via the Lower School Office.

For further information regarding the curriculum please visit the school website [www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/lower-school/lower-school-curriculum](http://www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/lower-school/lower-school-curriculum)

### Planning, Observation and Assessment in the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage)

At St Mary's your daughter will have her own unique pathway of learning. Daily interactions involve observing, reflecting and deciding how best to support your child. At key points, whilst your daughter is with us, the class teacher will reflect on her learning pathway, creating a summary of her development, learning and progress. A holistic summary will give attention to knowledge and skills, your daughter's emotional wellbeing and connections, and to the development of her attitudes for learning.

It is important that parents can share in the achievements of their daughter. The online learning programme Tapestry is a two-way system which gives parents the opportunity to see what their daughters have been learning in the Preparatory Class and to add achievements at home. This creates a rounded picture of a child's learning and development.

A link to set up a Tapestry account will be sent at the start of the autumn term.

### Key Stage 1 and 2

Please see <https://www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/current-parents/curriculum/> or The Hub section in the St Mary's School app (which parents have access to when their daughter joins the school), to view a detailed outline of the curriculum provision for Year 1 to 6.

## **Music**

All year groups have a weekly music lesson. Singing is a strong feature of the school. In Year 2 and beyond the girls are given the opportunity to learn to play the recorder. In this way, every child learns to read music with many going on to take up an additional instrument.

## **Drama**

Girls in the Preparatory class have a weekly drama lesson. In the spring term they prepare for a group LAMDA exam. Year 1 and 2 also prepare for these group exams during the spring term. These lessons are led by Theatre Arts Academy.

Year 3 and 4 prepare a school production in the spring term where the Year 4 pupils are able to take on the lead roles. In the summer term the Year 5 and 6 pupils perform a production where the Year 6 pupils take on the lead roles.

## **Outdoor Learning/Forest School**

At St Mary's we are privileged to have lots of open outdoor space for the girls to explore and learn in. They are able to experience the natural world as they feel weather, hear sounds in nature as well as experience the changes in natural light. The girls have the unique opportunity to spend quality time outside in the natural environment. They learn to challenge themselves, take risks and develop new skills. Time outdoors also benefits their health and wellbeing. By experiencing first-hand, the girls begin to make sense of the world, and to learn to care for their environment.

The natural environment also supports their imaginative play and the development of relationships, encouraging collaboration with others. The children begin to develop flexible thinking. Challenging activities across the curriculum also allows them to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills. The fantastic outdoor learning space allows the children to be inspired, to help them develop their interests and curiosities, encourage questioning, awe and wonder, and sustained shared thinking.

Forest School is part of the curriculum throughout the Lower School. We encourage the girls to be outside in all weathers, so it is really important that the girls wear layers and are warm. Prep pupils have a Forest School session weekly; girls in other year groups have one afternoon Forest School session per week, for one term of the year.

Forest School clothing lists, appropriate for the time of year, will be shared ahead of each term.

## **PE (including swimming)**

PE is an important part of the curriculum and girls should have the correct PE kit in school at all times. Please see the uniform guide, which will be sent as soon as the final new uniform lists are confirmed and will then be available on the St Mary's app and the website.

Please ensure that all kit is named. From Year 1, each class swims for one term at First Strokes swimming pool, across the road from the school. Pupils are expected to wear the correct swimwear – a black swimsuit, white swim hat and goggles. The girls may join the netball club from Year 3 upwards. An additional weekly netball squad session is provided (by invitation) for girls in Years 5 and 6. Netball matches are arranged against other local independent schools and schools in the Colchester Primary League.

## **Ballet**

Our professional ballet teacher engages the Preparatory girls in a weekly ballet session which takes place in the Dance Studio. The children enjoy interpreting the music as they move around the lovely space.

## **Home learning**

Top tips for parents in supporting home learning

- Create a space for your daughter to carry out her home learning. Ensure that you have pens, pencils, ruler etc so that time is not wasted trying to find equipment which may be needed – all home learning should be carried out using a pencil unless your daughter is using a pen in class
- Make it a really positive experience. The work does not have to be correct. If it has errors the class teacher will revisit the work with your daughter
- Set the expectation that home learning must be completed within the given time schedule and that it should be of an acceptable standard (if you are unsure, please speak to your daughter's class teacher)
- Try to keep distractions to a minimum
- Encourage your daughter to complete her home learning by giving lots of positive praise
- Try to get into a routine of home learning time so that your daughter knows when she is expected to complete tasks

In Prep there is an expectation that the pupils will engage in homework. In this first year of school it will include activities such as reading, learning phonics, spellings and some number activities. The homework should not take more than 10 mins per session, and we recommend that your daughter takes part in these activities at least 5 times per week.

In Key Stage 1 (Year 1-2), home learning is set to support the girls in their learning, with the active involvement of their parents or carers. The expectation is that home learning is completed. Tasks will include reading, learning spellings as well as carrying out additional

maths work. All work would have been taught already in school. Home learning should be carried out over 4-5 evenings of 15-20 mins sessions.

At Key Stage 2, girls are encouraged to work more independently, so that by the time they leave they are able to cope with the formal homework schedules they will encounter at senior school level. They will be encouraged to manage the activities with little help and to prioritise, while recognising that they must hand in home learning on time, no matter how busy their lives outside school may be.

A copy of the home learning procedure can be found in the Curriculum Policy on the school's website.

To help with managing the tasks set, a Homelinks letter for every year group is sent home each Thursday. Home learning is expected to be completed and handed into the class teacher by the following Wednesday.

## Extra-curricular opportunities

Our range of clubs and activities offers girls the chance to discover and develop new talents and interests.

### **Clubs**

A comprehensive Clubs Booklet is distributed at the end of the Summer Term so that girls may choose clubs ready for the start of a new academic year. It is very helpful if parents can make their requests for their daughters as promptly as possible. If your daughter would like to join a club at any other point in the school year, please speak to the Lower School Office staff who will be able to inform you which clubs have available spaces. It is important that girls attend clubs for the right reasons. Girls who do not show commitment may be asked to leave, to make space for those who may appreciate it more. Most clubs finish at 4.30pm. Girls should be collected on time please.

The majority of after-school clubs are run by external providers. Please be aware that the school is not responsible for the organisation of these clubs and communication will be sent directly to you from these providers once you have enrolled your daughter.

### **Instrumental lessons**

The school has a team of peripatetic music teachers, who teach a variety of orchestral instruments, as well as voice. Music lessons are scheduled during the school day – lessons are missed in rotation, although English and Mathematics lessons will never be missed. To arrange music lessons, parents should contact the relevant peripatetic music teacher directly – contact details can be found in the Clubs Booklet, or by contacting the Lower School Office. If your daughter wishes to stop learning an instrument in school, a term's notice must be given to the peripatetic teacher.

## **SMASH**

SMASH (St Mary's Activities in the School Holidays) is a programme of daily activities for St Mary's pupils in Prep to Year 6, held at the school. Sessions may include arts and crafts, drama, sports, adventure, games etc. Girls may take part for either a full week, or on a daily basis.

The SMASH programme is made available to parents in advance of each school holiday. The SMASH day is 9am-3pm, Monday to Friday within the dates specified, with the option of an earlier start for breakfast at 8.30am and a late stay until 4.30pm. A charge is made per day/week and added to the fee invoice with parents' permission.

The provisional SMASH dates for the academic year 2023-24 are as follows:

October half term:  
16-27 October

Christmas holidays:  
14-15 and 18-20 December

February half term:  
19-23 February

Easter holidays:  
25-28 March and 2-5 April

May half term:  
28-31 May

Summer holidays:  
15-19, 22-26 July and 5-9 August

## **Houses**

The House system at St Mary's aims to engender a sense of identity in the school, to encourage teamwork across the year groups and to foster respect between the girls. On joining St Mary's, every girl is allocated to one of the four houses: Abbeygate, Balkernegate, Headgate and Scheregate. House badges are presented to pupils when joining the school so they can wear them with pride on their blazer. Pupils remain in their houses throughout their time at St Mary's Lower School and Senior School. Each house has its own House Captain. The houses compete at various sporting and fun events. Throughout the year house points are also awarded for being:

- Ambitious
- Bold
- Compassionate

- Dynamic
- Enquiring

House point totals for each class are collected weekly and the winning house is presented with the house point cup. There is also a total for which school value as been achieved the most during the week. At the end of the academic year, the house with the most house points is presented with the house shield.

### **School responsibilities**

Girls are encouraged to play an active part in the school community and to develop their leadership skills by becoming involved in our School Council, Eco team, committees and charity work, and taking on roles of responsibility.

### **Head Girls**

The election of Head Girls takes place in the summer term for the following academic year and the new Head Girls are announced at Prize Giving. Head Girls are required to:

- support the Head of Lower School in representing and promoting the school
- sit on the School Council
- meet with the Head of Lower School
- represent the school at events
- make speeches promoting the school
- show new parents/visitors around the school
- assist and direct parents who are attending school functions
- carry out break duties as required
- arrange facilities for school activities

## Pastoral care

In our friendly, warm community, each girl is known, valued and cared for as an individual. As a relatively small school, with a staff dedicated to meeting the needs of each and every pupil, we are able to focus on ensuring that girls at St Mary's have a happy school experience and leave with the confidence and skills to make the most of the life ahead.

Mrs Adamson is the Assistant Head of Lower School (Pastoral). She supports pupils who need a little more 'tender, loving care', either academically or pastorally. Please speak to her if you have any concerns about your daughter. If you need to contact Mrs Adamson, please message her through the St Mary's app to Lower School Pastoral – St Mary's.

In our supportive environment, girls receive the individual attention they need to make the most of their lessons and to be happy and engaged throughout the school day. They are



able to build good relationships with their class teachers, so that if any concerns are raised they can be dealt with at an early stage.

Class teachers support pupils in managing their friendships, helping them to understand the importance of valuing each other as individuals and developing the skills to work harmoniously together.

The wellbeing of every individual, pupil and staff member is of paramount importance at St Mary's and informs all that goes on at the school. In such a supportive, caring atmosphere, girls learn to be successful, while at the same time developing a sense of integrity and a strong empathy for those around them.

#### The Wellbeing Hub

As a parent of St Mary's, we are delighted to invite and encourage you to register with The Wellbeing Hub.

The site provides access to lots of advice and resources which supports your daughter's development.

Each month, there is a theme and all resources such as webinars are tailored to this theme. As a school, we use the St Mary's app to keep parents up to date with what is happening on The Hub so that you do not miss out on opportunities. It is an outstanding resource that will provide you with access to webinars, weekly Q&A's, a Q&A library, specialist support, parenting courses and much more.

We would strongly encourage you to register and look out for reminders of webinars and other upcoming events.

Please be aware that registration for this site is for St Mary's parents only, details of which will be sent out at the start of the autumn term. We therefore ask that you do not share the URL with anyone outside of the St Mary's school community as this is a breach of the Teen Tips Wellbeing Hub Terms and Conditions.

#### Girls on Board

At St Mary's, from Year 4 upwards, we use the Girls on Board approach to empower the girls to resolve their friendship issues for themselves. It does this by evoking empathy through teacher-led, non-judgemental sessions, led by Head of Lower School and Assistant Head of Lower School (Pastoral), which are called in response to conflict amongst the girls. If you wish to learn more about this approach, please see <https://www.girlsonboard.co.uk/>

## **Pupils' Code of Conduct**

We pride ourselves at St Mary's on manners, tidiness and the warm welcome we extend to visitors. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and for those around them. On rare occasions where behaviour is not quite as we would wish – a quiet word is normally all that is required.

The class teacher, Assistant Head of Lower School (Pastoral), Assistant Head of Lower School (Academic) or the Head of Lower School may contact parents directly, depending on the nature of the concern. We regard our partnership with parents to be of paramount importance.

## **Behaviour Policy**

Our school Behaviour Policy has very clear steps for pupils. This can be found on the school website, or please contact the Lower School Office if you require a paper copy. Its aims are:

- For every member of our school community to be happy, valued and respected, and to be treated fairly
- To have high expectations, appropriate to their developmental years, of girls' behaviour and to ensure that all pupils work to the best of their ability
- To foster self-discipline through positive encouragement and reward

Pupils are expected to conduct themselves in line with the few 'school rules' that we have in place. These are regularly reinforced in class and in whole school assemblies. They are:

- Treat people as you want to be treated
- Make school a safe and happy place
- Be polite, show respect and be helpful at all times
- Wear the correct school uniform
- Walk quietly and sensibly around the school

We aim to provide a caring, friendly and safe environment, ensuring the wellbeing of all members of the community. Pupils have the right to feel safe at school.

Bullying at St Mary's will not be tolerated and any incidents that are reported to us are dealt with in line with the school policy (this can be found on the school website). Incidents of bullying are extremely rare in this school, but we must never be complacent and think it would never happen here.

Bullying is defined as an action that is repeated over time and that intentionally hurts another pupil or group physically or emotionally. The term bullying is sometimes used inappropriately; it is important that pupils, staff and parents understand the correct meaning, so that we can all work together in the interests of all pupils.

Further information can be found in the parents portal on our website [www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/current-parents](http://www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/current-parents) or via the St Mary's app in The Hub for current parents.

## The school day

8.00am	Breakfast Club in the School Hall
8.25am	The school gate opens
8.40am	Bell rings for the start of the school day, all girls to be in school
8.45am	Registration
8.55am	Assemblies are held most mornings in the School Hall. Girls are encouraged to bring in certificates to be presented. Please let us know of any outside school achievements, for example swimming certificates, dancing medals or riding rosettes. Stickers are presented to 'birthday girls'.
9.15am	Lessons begin
10.15am	Outdoor play. Milk or water with a small snack is provided for all the girls. Fresh fruit is provided for infant girls. In addition to their snack, junior girls may bring a piece of fruit from home.
10.35am	Lessons resume
11.40am	Infant lunch. A hot meal with vegetarian and salad options is served in the School Hall in a 'family dining' setting where staff help serve the girls.
12.10pm	Infant girls return to class after lunch
12.20pm	Junior lunch. A choice of hot meal with vegetarian and salad options is served in the School Hall.
12.45pm	Infant and Junior playtime
1.20pm	Lessons resume
3.00pm	Infant school day finishes. Activity Time is only available for girls waiting for older sisters or siblings in Kindergarten.
3.25pm	Junior school day finishes
3.30-4.30pm	After-school activities. Contact the Lower School Office for information.
3.30-6.00pm	After-school care. Contact the Lower School Office for information and a booking form.

## **First Day checklist**

The first day of starting a new school is really exciting. Please see below a checklist of items that you will require:

- Coat
- Blazer
- Water bottle
- Book bag
- Pencil case (Year 3 and above – must fit into a tray)
- PE kit – include full kit (see uniform list)
- Recorder (Year 2 and above)
- Recorder Magic Book (Year 2 and above)

## **Lunchtimes**

Our catering contractor, Holroyd Howe, provides the girls with a two-course lunch every day. Meals are varied and nutritionally balanced and, on occasion, devised to complement events or topics being studied in school. Menus are available to view on the school website. If your daughter is a vegetarian or has specific food allergies, please notify the school immediately, in writing, so that we can make sure that suitable food is provided, and the appropriate allergen forms are completed.

## **Playtimes**

The Preparatory class have their own designated play area which is supervised by the Preparatory Practitioner. Year 1 to 6 girls are able to play in the wooded outdoor space. Breaktimes are closely monitored by staff on duty. Any concerns about behaviour or disagreements among the girls are noted and passed on to the relevant class teachers. Our 'friendship bench' is a place for anyone feeling unsure or upset to sit and wait for a friend. Please discuss persistent worries over friendships with your daughter's class teacher as soon as possible.

## **Activity Time**

This session is only available for Infant girls who are waiting to be collected with Junior sisters or siblings in Kindergarten, and runs from 3pm to 3.25pm.

## **Breakfast Club**

Breakfast is available from 8am each morning. The pupils do not need to be registered to attend; they can come on an ad hoc basis. There is a wide choice of food available which includes cereal, yoghurt, fruit, toast, croissants etc.

### **After-school care**

The school provides two different sessions for childcare at the end of the day. Session 1 finishes at 4.30pm and Session 2 runs until 6pm. A light tea is provided for those who stay until 6pm. Please speak to the Lower School Office staff if you wish to use this facility, either on a permanent basis or ad hoc. There is an additional charge for using this facility. Further details can be found on our website.

## **Communications and events**

At St Mary's we pride ourselves on excellent communication with parents.

### **Open door policy**

If you have concerns about your daughter, or would like further information, please speak to her class teacher in the first instance. If you have any specific questions regarding the curriculum you speak with Mrs Wentworth, the Assistant Head of Lower School (Academic). Please speak to Mrs Adamson, the Assistant Head of Lower School (Pastoral), for information on your daughter's pastoral care.

### **School records**

It is important that school records are complete and up to date, in the event that parents need to be contacted urgently. Please notify the Lower School Office if there are any changes.

### **Home School Log**

If you need to speak with your daughter's class teacher please email them through the St Mary's School app.

### **Reporting**

Reports are issued at Christmas and at the end of the school year in July. The Christmas report is a shorter report, which includes A general teacher comment, English, Mathematics and short statements regarding the Foundation Subjects. A full report is sent home in the summer term. Girls are continuously assessed and parents meet with teachers in October (Prep class only) and February/March, April/May to review progress and to discuss their daughter's next steps.

SATs tests take place at the end of Year 6. The pupils also take part in the Incas diagnostic testing at Year 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

## **Parents' Evening**

There are Parents' Evenings in October (Prep), February/March and April/May each academic year. Specialist teachers are available at the Parents' Evenings. Parents who are unable to attend Parents' Evening are welcome to speak to the Lower School Office to arrange a mutually convenient time to discuss their daughter's progress with her class teacher.

## **Open Classrooms**

Parents of pupils in Years 1 to 6 are invited into the classrooms at least every half term on a Friday at the end of school to look over their daughters' work. Please note that this is not a time for consultation with the class teacher, but an opportunity to celebrate your daughter's work and to be involved in her learning. Classrooms are closed from 4pm.

## **Email communications**

Parents can contact teachers directly by messaging via the St Mary's school app: Prep – St Mary's, Year 1 – St Mary's etc.

## **School App**

St Mary's has a school app through which parents are sent communications such as calendar dates, notices, school trip messages and news stories. Parents are able to contact relevant staff directly through the messaging system on the app.

## **Website**

The school website is a great source of information on all sections of St Mary's School. It also includes school policies and the latest news.

The Parents Portal can be found at [www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/current-parents](http://www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/current-parents) and contains useful information such as school day timings, key dates, menus, uniform guide and online shop, curriculum and news. This information can also be accessed via the St Mary's app for parents when their daughter joins the school.

## **Social Media**

You can follow us on Twitter (@stmaryscolch), Facebook (stmaryslowerschoolcolchester) and Instagram (@StMarysColchester)

## **PTA**

St Mary's has an active Parent Teacher Association, which organises at least one social or fundraising event for the whole school each term.

Membership of the PTA is automatic and parents are kept informed via the St Mary's app and by letter, of the various PTA events.

Parents who would like to help organise PTA events are encouraged to join the PTA committee, who can be contacted by emailing [sms.colchester.pta@gmail.com](mailto:sms.colchester.pta@gmail.com) The committee meets on one evening each half term to plan events.

## **Drop-off, collection and visiting**

We appreciate parents' courtesy when bringing their children to school, collecting them or visiting during the school day.

### **Visiting the school during working hours**

During the school day, all visitors (including parents) must ring on the main gate. A member of the Lower School Office team will then come out to greet you. All visitors/parents must then report immediately to the Lower School Office.

Parents are not permitted to walk around the school. This is due to fire regulations and our responsibility for the safeguarding of the pupils in our care.

### **Parking**

The car park has been designed to ensure that traffic flows well at busy times. It is extremely important that parents drive very slowly and carefully while on the school site, for the safety of the children and other parents. The drop-off area is for those dropping off girls entering the school independently and should not be used for parking.

### **Procedure if you are late or not able to collect you daughter**

If you are knowingly going to be late to collect your daughter from school, please contact the Lower School Office so that we can reassure your daughter that you are on your way. If a different person is picking up your daughter, please inform the class teacher in the morning or telephone the school as early as possible so that we can let her know of the new arrangement and we can be sure we are handing her over to the correct person at the end of the day.

If a child has not been picked up, she will be taken to Activity Time, so she is with other children until 3.25pm. After that time, she will be seated outside the School Office. If no call is received, the school will try to contact the child's parent/carer to ask his or her

whereabouts. If a parent/carer cannot be contacted, we will call the second contact. If no-one collects your daughter after one hour of waiting and there is no-one who can be contacted to collect your daughter, we apply the procedures for an uncollected child. Please see the school website for the details of this policy.

## Absence and medical

It is important that our school records are complete and up-to date in case we need to contact parents urgently. Please notify the Lower School Office straight away if there are any changes.

### **If your daughter is unwell**

Please telephone the school by 9.30am if your daughter is unwell and will not be in school. In order to minimise the opportunity for infection within the school, please keep your daughter off for 48 hours if they have vomited or have had diarrhoea. A child starting a course of antibiotics must also be absent for 48 hours (unless this is part of an ongoing care plan to treat individual medical conditions e.g. asthma and the child is not unwell). This is because it is important that children are not subjected to the rigours of the school day, which requires socialising with other children and being part of a group setting, when they have first become ill and require a course of antibiotics.

If your daughter is ill during the school day she will be looked after in the medical room and you will be telephoned to collect her.

### **Other absences**

If your daughter is to be absent for any other reason (for example, medicals or holidays) please contact the Head of Lower School to request a leave of absence either by letter or email [lowerschool@stmaryscolchester.org.uk](mailto:lowerschool@stmaryscolchester.org.uk) as the school is required to keep a record. Similarly, if your daughter leaves the school during the day (for example, for a dental appointment), she must be signed out at the Lower School Office and then signed in again on her return.

### **Medicines**

Only medication prescribed by a doctor may be administered at school and it must be handed in to the Lower School Office and a permission form completed before it can be administered. Parents should please collect medication either at the end of each day or at the end of the course of treatment.

### **Medical needs**

The parent of a child who requires an inhaler or an epi-pen must submit a Health Care Plan. These can be obtained via your doctor.



## Uniform

Children in all sections of the school at St Mary's wear the uniform with pride and enjoy the sense of belonging it brings.

### **Lower School uniform**

The Lower School uniform is practical, easy to care for, smart and stylish.

Either the summer or winter uniform can be worn for the first half of the autumn term and the summer term. The winter uniform only should be worn from the second half of the autumn term until the end of the spring term.

It is essential that all items of clothing are named. School blazers should be worn to and from school.

### **Uniform guide**

Our Uniform Guide will be sent as soon as the final new uniform lists are confirmed and will then be available in the St Mary's app and on our website.

We will specify which items can be ordered online through School Colours and which can be purchased elsewhere and will note where items are optional.

### **Care of Property**

Expensive items should not be brought to school. There are bins for lost property in the cloakroom. (Most lost items usually re-appear eventually).

## Policies, complaints, staff and Governors

School policies are available on the school website at [www.stmarycolchester.org.uk](http://www.stmarycolchester.org.uk) or via the St Mary's app.

If you require a hard copy, please speak to a member of the Lower School Office staff.

### **Complaints**

At St Mary's we pride ourselves on our 'open door' policy and parents' concerns are usually dealt with in an informal way. However, if you feel you have a complaint, please follow the school's complaints procedure which can be found on the school website [www.stmarycolchester.org.uk](http://www.stmarycolchester.org.uk) or via the St Mary's app.

## Key staff and Governors

A full and up-to-date list of staff and Governors can be found on the school website [www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk](http://www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk) or in the St Mary's app.

**Acting Chair of Governors:** Mrs Mel Loxley and Mr Graeme Lambert

**Principal:** Mrs Nicola Griffiths, MA, PGCE, NPQH

**Head of Lower School:** Mrs E Stanhope, G Mus PGCE NPQH

**Head of Senior School:** Miss A Jones, BEd (Hons) NPQH

**Head of Finance and Operations:** Mrs Elizabeth Bevan, BSc, ACA

## Contact us

**Lower School Office:** via the St Mary's app messages for current parents to Lower School Office – St Mary's or [lowerschool@stmaryscolchester.org.uk](mailto:lowerschool@stmaryscolchester.org.uk), or on 01206 211242

**Senior School Office:** via the St Mary's app messages for current parents to Senior School Office – St Mary's or [seniorschool@stmaryscolchester.org.uk](mailto:seniorschool@stmaryscolchester.org.uk), or on 01206 572544

**Finance:** [accounts@stmaryscolchester.org.uk](mailto:accounts@stmaryscolchester.org.uk), 01206 572544

**Registrar, Justine Tierney:** [registrar@stmaryscolchester.org.uk](mailto:registrar@stmaryscolchester.org.uk), 01206 594256

**St Mary's Kindergarten and Lower School:** 247 London Road, Copford, Colchester, Essex, CO3 8LT

**St Mary's Senior School:** 91 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3RB