

St Margaret's



GLOBAL

EXCHANGE PROGRAM

2025
2026

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A local school with a global outlook



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From the Principal

I am delighted to invite our secondary students to explore the opportunity to participate in the **St Margaret's Global Exchange Program**. This exciting program will afford many girls the chance to study abroad in one of our sister schools in South Africa, New Zealand, Germany, Japan, Canada and the United States of America, as well as the rewarding experience of hosting a student from overseas.

The Exchange Program is an integral part of the School's Goal – *Broadening Horizons*, which forms part of the **St Margaret's Anglican Girls School Strategic Plan**. A local school with a global outlook, St Margaret's invites students to contribute to the wider community, explore opportunities and develop a deep understanding of their responsibilities within local, national and international contexts. Our Global Exchange Program aims to strengthen the international focus of school activities and provide opportunities for overseas, rural and city students to experience the cultural, geographic and economic diversity that is a unique strength of Australia. We aim to be the undisputed leader in offering international exchange.

The St Margaret's Anglican Girls School Global Exchange Program provides exceptional opportunities for students to participate in the global community within the context of school and family life. I hope that as you read this brochure and talk to former students who have enjoyed the program, you will come to share their feeling about the unique opportunities this program offers. I look forward to hearing of the adventures and achievements of St Margaret's students gaining an educational experience abroad.

Yours sincerely
Ros Curtis AM
Principal



Broadening Horizons

Broadening Horizons

The St Margaret's Exchange Program aims to:

1. Supports the school's goal of 'Strengthening the St Margaret's Experience' by ensuring a focus on developing our students' global outlook; specifically, enabling resilient and responsible engagement in a multicultural and globalising world.
2. Support the Christian ethos of the school and seek to facilitate students' knowledge from a global perspective to promote an appreciation, a tolerance and an understanding of the diversity of people and culture.
3. Support the school's goal of 'Focusing on academic excellence' through a personalised learning approach which provides opportunities for students to participate in educational environments that require self-paced and independent learning.
4. Support the integration of technology as a tool for learning and communication as student's access online learning materials to study from abroad.
5. Supports the holistic nature of education as students participate across the breadth and depth of academic and extra-curricular activities. This encourages students to learn to adapt to new environments with different expectations, thus promoting personal growth and the qualities of becoming ambassadors for their family, school and country.
6. Promote in students an inquiring mind and an appreciation of the diversity of learning by providing students with relevant and authentic experiences in the context of the globalisation of education.



Selection Criteria

Selection criteria and process for exchange selection

1. Students are selected for the Exchange Program on the basis of how they reflect and embody the core values of St Margaret's, their academic standing, personal motivation and participation in school activities.
2. Students selected must demonstrate initiative, strong communication skills, social maturity and resilience.
3. Students must complete the Cultural intelligence (CQ) test as a requirement of exchange selection.
4. Students are selected on their suitability as an ambassador for St Margaret's Anglican Girls School and their ability to adapt and function independently in new environments.

Process

Exchange Information Evening

Students and their families interested in applying for the Exchange Program attend an Information Evening held mid-June in Term 2.

Exchange Applications

Year 9 students will be invited to apply for the Exchange Program.

Application forms will be available on the POD following the Term 2 Information Session. Applications close in late July. Students are strongly encouraged to be open to all exchange destinations; however, they must indicate in their applications the destination they do not prefer to travel to and give explanations.

Exchange Interviews

All applicants are interviewed and each interview consists of the applicant being asked several questions by the panel, and each applicant also provides a two-minute PowerPoint presentation, which is played at the interview. Interviews are held with the Deputy Principal, Dean of Students, and the Coordinator of the Global Exchange Program; students are advised of the outcome of this interview by email in the last week of Term 3.

St Margaret's Host Families

Students will either board or be hosted by a school-approved host family during their exchange experience. Your entire family has the opportunity to share in the exchange experience when hosting a student. It is a requirement of all St Margaret's parents who will host exchange students to obtain a Volunteer Blue Card. This includes other siblings and occupants, including regular visitors, to the home aged 18 years and over.

Our exchange schools follow the child safety processes for their country.

Communication with Schools, Exchange Partners and Host Families

Once the exchange allocations are complete, students and their families are encouraged to begin communication with their overseas exchange partners and host families. The Coordinator of the Exchange Program at St Margaret's provides continual communication and information to all parties throughout the experience, and shares updates from our students travelling on exchange with the school community.

Summary

St Margaret's students and their exchange partners learn as much from their journey as from their destination, and evolve as contributors to the global community through celebrating differences and accepting and conquering the challenges and amazing opportunities offered to them through the exchange experience.



Partner Exchange

St Margaret's Anglican Girls School Partner Exchange Schools:

Crofton House School, Vancouver, BC, Canada

Since 1898, Crofton House School has built a solid reputation as a progressive and inspiring learning environment for young women and has become the leading independent girls' day school in British Columbia. Their school founder, Dr Jessie Gordon, was an educational pioneer with a dream. She envisioned an all-girls' school where young women would have dynamic and stimulating surroundings in which to learn and build a solid foundation to meet life's challenges.

Dr Gordon's vision is still vital today, as generations of young women continue to excel through the support of a close-knit school community that unites students, faculty and parents. At the heart of their curriculum is a philosophy that combines the traditional Crofton House values of courage, creativity and citizenship with modern learning methods.

Students are engaged in their education through first-class teaching facilities and resources, a ten-acre wooded campus, cutting-edge technology, and a professional faculty that is committed to helping every girl achieve her full potential.

In Term 1, students from Crofton House School come to St Margaret's, and St Margaret's students go to Vancouver in Term 2.

Pensionnat du Saint-Nom-de-Marie, Montreal, Canada

Pensionnat du Saint-Nom-de-Marie is a boarding school that found its roots in the love and desire of Eulalie Durocher to work for the Christian education of young people. It was at the foot of Mount Royal, on former agricultural estates of the municipality of Outremont, that the boarding school was erected between 1903 and 1905. The school offers a stimulating learning environment on a magnificent site.

It is the educational aim of the Pensionnat du Saint-Nom-de-Marie to help students develop their personal and social possibilities to the fullest, to become women involved in the groups in which they work. The school aims to give young girls a high standard of training. The success of the Holy Name of Mary is rooted in an educational relationship between master and pupil, a relationship of respect, listening and sound discipline. The all-girls' school has over 1150 students; the language of instruction is French.

The history of the boarding school is, first and foremost, of a group of women of faith – the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (PSNM) – who have given their lives to ensure the wellbeing of young girls and prepare them for their role in a society that never ceases to evolve.

The SNJM Congregation made it a point of honour to always maintain high standards in teaching. Science, literature, languages and physical education have always been the focus of attention. Musical training given to students also contributes to the rich tradition of boarding school, which has shared its premises with the Vincent d'Indy School of Music since 1981. The Marie-Stéphane concert hall recalls the remarkable contribution of certain nuns.

In Term 1, students from Pensionnat du Saint-Nom-de-Marie come to St Margaret's, and St Margaret's students go to Montreal in Term 2.

Shawnigan Lake School, Vancouver Island, BC, Canada

Shawnigan was founded in 1916 as a boys' school, in a then-secluded rainforest on Vancouver Island. In 1988, the school became co-educational and currently boasts a population of 550 students, ninety percent of the students are boarders. There is a full athletics and sporting program on offer to students, as well as a fine arts program and a leadership values-based program.

Students from Shawnigan Lake come to St Margaret's in Term 1, and St Margaret's students go to Shawnigan Lake in Term 2. The most convenient flight path is: Brisbane/Vancouver /Vancouver Island.

Lycée du Sacré Coeur, Aix-en-Provence, France

Tradition meets innovation at the Collège du Sacré-Cœur, a historic institution founded in 1583 and nestled in the heart of Aix-en-Provence. With a strong commitment to academic excellence, personal growth, and intercultural understanding, the collège offers a vibrant learning environment for students.

Travelling in Term 1, St Margaret's students fly to Charles de Gaulle Airport and then travel by train to Aix-en-Provence or fly to Marseille. The host family will meet at either of these destinations. Sacre Coeur travel to St Margaret's in Term 2.

Ursulinenschule Hersel, Bornheim, Germany

Ursulinenschule was established in 1852, and is a school for girls with 350 students on campus. The school offers an encompassing curriculum and choice of subjects, including a fine arts program, and the extra-curricular choices are choir, orchestra, theatre, running, soccer, lifeguards etc. The language program includes German, Latin, French, Spanish and English. Ursulinenschule School has been involved in exchange programs for almost 25 years.

The students from Ursulinenschule come to St Margaret's in Term 3, and St Margaret's students go to Germany in Term 4 and fly from Brisbane to Dusseldorf and then travel by road for 90 minutes to Ursulinenschule for their exchange.



Schools

Konan Girls High School, Kobe, Japan

Konan was established in 1920 and incorporates the junior and senior schools. Their focus is to encourage intelligent and independent young women to have dignity and to prepare them for life in a very positive manner. The Konan school motto reads: "Be pure, be just, be gentle and be strong". The list of extra-curricular activities and clubs on offer is extensive, from table tennis and Japanese archery to calligraphy and broadcasting.

St Margaret's students fly to Osaka for their exchange, as Konan is a thirty minute car journey from Osaka. Konan students come to St Margaret's on exchange in Term 3, and St Margaret's girls go to Japan in Term 4.

Toyojoshi Senior School, Tokyo, Japan

With over 120 years of educational excellence, Toyojoshi High School stands as a beacon of opportunity for young women in the heart of Tokyo. Rooted in tradition yet forward-looking in vision, the school offers a dynamic and inclusive environment where every student begins on equal footing and is encouraged to reach their fullest potential.

St Margaret's students travel to Tokyo for exchange in Term 2. Toyojoshi students travel to St Margaret's in Term 3.



Partner Exchange

St Margaret's College, Christchurch, New Zealand (Rowing Exchange)

St Margaret's College was founded in 1910 and is an independent day and boarding school for girls, situated in Merivale, Christchurch. The school has 750 students in Years 1-13, and offers a wide range of academic choices, and sporting and cultural opportunities. This is a rowing exchange, whereby two St Margaret's AGS girls spend Term 1 in Christchurch for their rowing season which culminates in the Maadi Cup at the end of their season, and two St Margaret's College students are hosted in Brisbane in Term 3, to participate in our rowing season.

St Margaret's AGS students fly direct from Brisbane to Christchurch for their exchange in Term 1, and St Margaret's College students come to Brisbane in Term 3.

St Anne's Diocesan College, Hilton, South Africa

St Anne's is an independent girls' boarding school situated in Hilton, KwaZulu-Natal. Hilton is adjacent to the capital of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, a city an hour's drive from Durban.

Founded in 1877, St Anne's has a long tradition of providing quality education for girls. It is predominantly a boarding school for girls from Grades 8–12 (ages 13 to 18). Around 60% of the girls are from KwaZulu-Natal, with the remaining 40% coming from neighbouring provinces, surrounding countries and other parts of the world. Eighty percent of girls board at St Anne's in a stable, caring and homely environment, and a wide range of co-curricular activities are offered to meet each girl's interest and passion.

St Margaret's students fly Brisbane-Johannesburg (may need to go via Sydney or Perth) and onto Pietermaritzburg. This exchange is offered in Terms 2, 3 and 4.

St Mary's Diocesan School for Girls, Kloof, South Africa

St Mary's was founded in 1906 and is an independent Christian girls' school incorporating the junior and senior schools from Grade R to Matric. The school is a day and boarding school of nearly 900 students, offering boarding from Grade 8.

The school's motto is 'The curiosity to think, the character to thrive' and their approach is for students to have an all-round education underpinned by the principles of emotional intelligence and a growth mindset. Their teaching philosophy is to equip students with skills for the 21st century, including offering an extensive music and sports program, nurturing participation in the classroom, on the field, the stage and in the community, and encouraging students to embrace their successes and failures to grow in character and confidence.

St Margaret's students go to St Mary's in Term 3, and St Mary's students travel to St Margaret's in Term 4. St Margaret's students fly to Durban and then travel for about 30 minutes by road to St Mary's in Kloof.



Schools

Wycombe Abbey, Buckinghamshire, United Kingdom

Set within 170 acres of stunning parkland in Buckinghamshire, Wycombe Abbey is a world leader in girls' boarding education. With a legacy of academic excellence, character development, and leadership, the school nurtures young women to become confident, compassionate global citizens.

St Margaret's students travel to London Heathrow, arriving for exchange in Term 1. Wycombe Abbey students join St Margaret's in Term 3.

Augusta Preparatory Day School, Martinez, Georgia, USA

Augusta Preparatory Day School (APDS) was founded in 1960, providing the highest quality college preparatory education as the area's only Kindergarten through Grade 12 non-sectarian, independent co-education school with Lower, Middle and Upper school divisions. Their program offers a balance of age- and developmentally-appropriate rigour and support amid an atmosphere of diversity of background, ideas, and ethnicities. Through small classes and flexible programs, talented and committed teachers provide individual attention to help each student achieve his or her academic best. Their school motto "To be, rather than to seem," describes a community of doers who work together to make the world a better place.

The students from Augusta Prep come to St Margaret's in Term 3, and St Margaret's students go to Augusta in Term 4, flying from Brisbane to Augusta Regional Airport, with stopovers in both Sydney and Dallas Fort Worth.

Chatham Hall, Chatham, Virginia, USA

Chatham Hall is an all-girls' private boarding and day school in Southern Virginia. Chatham Hall was established in 1894 and has 120 students of which 89% are boarders. Their innovative academic program offers Advanced Placement courses, global study and travel, as well as project-based learning and their athletic teams regularly compete at the State level and their exceptional riding program is nationally recognised. Chatham Hall fosters the intellect and character of each student and, through their Honor Code, live in a community of trust. Grounded in its Episcopal heritage, the school welcomes students of all faiths and backgrounds.

Chattanooga Girls' Preparatory School, Chattanooga, Tennessee, USA

Nestled in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Girls Preparatory School (GPS) has been inspiring young women since 1906. With a mission to cultivate confident, compassionate leaders, GPS offers a transformative educational experience tailored specifically to the developmental needs of girls in grades 6–12. The school's intentionally designed environment fosters curiosity, resilience, and self-discovery — qualities essential for thriving in a globalized world.

St Margaret's students travel to Chattanooga via Dallas Fort Worth, arriving in Term 4. GPS students travel to St Margaret's in Term 3.



South Africa

St Anne's Diocesan College, Hilton, South Africa

In April, three girls and I embarked on a journey to South Africa as part of the Global Exchange Program. This extraordinary opportunity had been a longstanding aspiration of mine since my primary school years. The anticipation leading up to our arrival in a foreign country was nerve racking, as it marked my first time visiting another country by myself for a long period of time. The sense of unfamiliarity through trying to find myself in a new environment was a great learning curve. The transition from being a day student for 12 years to then becoming a boarder on the other side of the globe was a great change. This journey not only introduced me to a new school but also immersed me in the rich South African culture. I involved myself in St Anne's Diocesan College community by participating in tennis and community service opportunities. Throughout the trip, we went shark cage diving and contributed through volunteer work in local schools and orphanages. My host family took me to Cape Town, where we visited Boulders Beach and encountered penguins hatching and patted a Cheetah at a conservation centre. We also hiked Table Mountain, reaching an elevation of 1,086 meters. This opportunity has reshaped my outlook on our world.

By Mariana Breslin



St Anne's Diocesan College, Hilton, South Africa

One of the highlights for me would have had to be playing in the St Anne's first basketball team, allowing me to truly immerse myself in schooling life and culture and become fully connected to the community of the school, always feeling overwhelmingly supported by the student sections war cries at every game. Exchange also provided me with the opportunity to make lifelong friendships and connections, some of which were so strong I actually returned to South Africa at the end of the year to visit them again! Inevitably, there were many cultural differences in South Africa compared to Australia. This allowed me to open my eyes to the world around me, and the underprivilege and poverty many live in and face every day – something that I was not previously exposed to firsthand. This encouraged and provided me with the opportunity to help out in any way possible, spending many schooling afternoons teaching at underprivileged schools and trying to bring as much happiness as possible to them. My time at St Anne's is something I will never forget, and I feel so fortunate to have been given this opportunity.

By Grace Marchant

I was lucky enough to have the privilege of attending St Anne's in South Africa for eight weeks of Term 4, 2022. It was such a memorable and amazing experiences which I will treasure for many years to come. Whilst overseas I was fortunate enough to take part in some amazing once in a lifetime experience such as cage-free shark diving, zip lining, watching the world-famous Drakensberg Boys Choir, as well as staying at Nambiti Game Reserve, visiting Cape Town and even going down the tallest slide in Africa at uShaka Marine Park. St Anne's runs a program - The St Anne's Education in Partnership Program. It encouraged us see the wider world around us and to meet people from different backgrounds and cultures. I had the chance to help in two small disadvantaged schools. While we were there, we played numerous games and activities, taught them English and even learnt some Zulu myself. I also had the opportunity to volunteer at a small elderly medical clinic where I met some of the older members of the community and learnt their stories and backgrounds. I would recommend to any girls in the younger years to apply, as I believe I have learnt many life lessons and grown as a person in many ways and now have a new perspective of the world around me.

By Emma Douglas



New Zealand

St Margaret's College, Christchurch, New Zealand

We were lucky enough to spend 12 weeks at St Margaret's College in Christchurch, New Zealand. Since this was primarily a rowing exchange, we spent our first week on a rowing camp in Twizel, where we spent most of our time at Lake Ruataniwha. Compared to our Brisby River, it was like rowing on glass. When we got back to Christchurch, we were overwhelmed at how quickly everyone welcomed us and soon we got into the rhythm of being SMC girls. Athletics days, pastoral care days, excursions to beaches, a quick trip to Queenstown, numerous Macca's visits, and of course LOTS of rowing: there was so much to do to keep us occupied. Our exchange was such an eye-opening experience. Both of us being day girls in Brisbane, we were able to get a taste of boarding life and we gained a newfound love for home-cooked meals. Being away from home was tough at first, but we opened our arms to this experience and honestly gained so much from it. We are so thankful for being given this wonderful opportunity and would recommend this exchange to anyone who is considering applying.

By Izzy Cox and Lily Devereaux

During Term 1, I spent 12 weeks in New Zealand at St Margaret's College, Christchurch. I was on a rowing exchange as a cox, and got to experience my host family's home, while being a boarder and travelling to Twizel for many rowing competitions. During the last week of the exchange, we participated the Maadi Cup Regatta – the largest regatta in New Zealand – racing in heats and finals and supported the rest of SMC at the Parade and then at the podium after many medals were won. I made some amazing memories and some even more amazing friends..

By Izzy Winks



Canada

Shawnigan Lake School, British Columbia, Canada

Before being given the privilege of going on exchange to Shawnigan Lake School during Term 2 in 2018, I had never stepped foot in another school, let alone a boarding house with sixty other girls. If I didn't say that I found this a massive change to begin with, I would be lying. Nonetheless, it was one I quickly settled into and grew to love over my ten weeks attending the school. Unlike St Margaret's, 95% of the school population are boarders and every day student is still allocated a bed. There are nine separate boarding houses. The boys are split into Duxbury, Lake's, Lonsdale's and Ripley's and the girls are Groves', Kaye's, Renfrew and Strathcona. I was placed into Groves' and, despite my personal bias, it is definitely the best out of the nine.

As a day student, I was slightly apprehensive about transitioning into boarding life, but the acceptance and sense of community within the house was astounding and allowed me to settle in seamlessly. Each girl is placed into a sister group with girls across the grades in the house, and this is used to allocate chores and acts as a closer, tight-knit support group. They are always there for each other and willing to give and share whatever is needed to help another house member. I found this particularly helpful in my first weeks when I still didn't know where I was meant to be and when. This welcoming and friendly attitude can be found across the school, which meant I found my feet quite quickly once I got my head around the busy day to day schedule. While studying at Shawnigan, I participated in French, Sports Science and Woodwork, as well as English, Accelerated Maths, Science and Social Studies. Unlike St Margaret's, English is split into three different courses (creative writing, spoken language and literature), which all focus on different aspects of the subject. I chose spoken language as my focus and found the class very rewarding, as I was able to gain more knowledge on the structure and delivery of speeches and debates.

On top of everyday classes, afterschool on Monday and Wednesday afternoons there is a compulsory fine art period where students participate in activities such as pottery, search and rescue, sewing, photography, studio art and figure skating. During this time, I tried my hand at a few options including baking, sculpture and photography, before I settled on woodwork. This was interesting and not something I would normally do, but it was an enjoyable challenge. It also allowed me to be more ambitious in the projects I chose to construct in my elective class, as I had these extra times to complete a set of four shelves and a bench for my room. On Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, students either train or play competitive sport. I participated in soccer, despite completely lacking any form of skills. I found that doing a team sport was extremely beneficial as it allowed me to connect with many girls across the grades and houses in the school. As it was competitive soccer season, I was also able to compete in three different tournaments around British Columbia. This meant I visited Vancouver, Surrey and Victoria. I also competed in the school's field hockey Spring League, which played once or twice a week in Duncan. Being a mixed team, this broadened my friendships further as I got to know some of the boys around the school.

Despite our busy schedules, there was still plenty of downtime to relax and take part in extra events around the school. On my second night at Shawnigan was the annual Spring Fling dance. This event is a highlight in the social calendar and enjoyed by everyone. One thing I didn't know was that it is a tradition for the girls to ask out their dates. Somehow, my roommate managed to convince me it would be a great idea to ask one of the boys who didn't have a date to go, despite the fact I had only been at the school for 24 hours. Let's just say holding a massive cardboard sign in front of a group of thirty strangers that



read: "You don't know me, but will you be the vegemite to my toast @ Spring Fling?" is a memory I'm not likely to forget. During my time at the school, I was also invited to the Dean's Dinner which is a special formal dinner for students who obtain a high level of effort in their extra and co-curricular activities and celebrates their achievement. As it was coming into spring while I was there, the weather started to warm up which meant in the afternoon and on weekends the docks were always busy with people tanning and swimming in the lake as well as the rowers who were training for their regattas and national championships. Like many other schools, Shawnigan hosts an annual regatta, and on fourth weekend, I was able to work as a volunteer. I was put in charge of organizing all the medal and trophy presentations, as well as helping the headmaster present them to the athletes. This allowed me to explore even more of the school's amazing campus as it was held in a different part of the lake I hadn't visited.

I can definitely say that during my time at Shawnigan, I got my fitness up quite quickly trekking across the school from one class to the other. The boarding houses surround the campus in an arc with the main academic buildings on the inside. At the centre is the gorgeous chapel where I spent every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday morning. During the week, this time is used as more of an assembly with the headmaster addressing you on Tuesday and the Rev on Thursday. Saturday, however, is an official service and you are required to be in your formal uniforms or number one's as they are more commonly called. This entails a long sleeved white button up shirt, tie, kilt, and blazer, as well as grey knee-high socks and closed in black shoes – sadly Birkenstocks and socks are not welcome on Saturdays much to everyone's dismay.

Overall my time at Shawnigan was absolutely amazing and one I will never forget. I have made so many memories and life-long friends who will always have a place in my heart. The whole exchange process allows you to grow in ways you don't even realise before coming into it. I can definitely say I have become far more independent, proactive, aware and grateful for what I have and the opportunities I have been given. I would strongly encourage as many people to apply for this unforgettable experience and to put Shawnigan in your top four places because it is truly an incredible place.

By Sophie Gerlach-Zuch



Canada

Crofton House School, Vancouver, Canada

For two months, we had the incredible opportunity to attend Crofton House School in Vancouver, Canada. The experience was full of fun, excitement and provided countless life lessons along the way. Located in the beautiful neighbourhood of Kerrisdale, just 15 minutes from downtown Vancouver, Crofton House boasts incredible facilities, teaching staff and lovely, intelligent students. We had the chance to get to know many of the girls during classes (including English, Social studies, PE, French, Science, Drama and Film) as well as choir, band (for Sophia) and rowing (for Olivia).

Over the multiple weekends during our stay, we were lucky enough to have been shown around Vancouver by our host families. From the forests, beaches and wildlife to exploring Granville Island, Steveston, Downtown Van and Whistler, it's safe to say we had a wonderfully authentic and well-rounded tour of a city we came to call home for seven and a half weeks.

Thank you to the leadership team for your countless efforts coordinating and making this exchange possible.

By Sophia Colledge and Olivia Garland



Student Testimonials

Pensionnat du Saint-Nom-de-Marie, Montreal, Canada

I attended Pensionnat du Saint-Nom-de-Marie, a girls' school in Montréal, Canada, as part of the Global Exchange Program. My exchange partner, who visited Brisbane in Term 1, seamlessly integrated into my family and friendship group. In Montréal, my host family and host school warmly welcomed me. Being immersed in the French language was initially daunting, but it allowed me to significantly improve my listening and speaking skills. Skiing, encountering wildlife like moose and bears, and visiting Niagara Falls created unforgettable memories.

By Jessica Krook



USA

Augusta Preparatory Day School, Martinez, Georgia USA

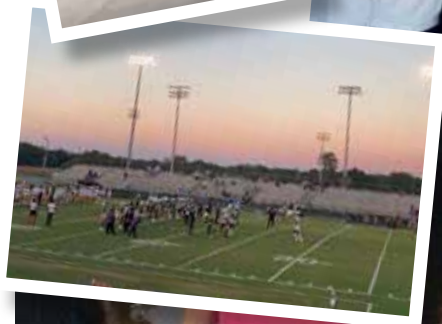
I was fortunate to spend nine weeks at Augusta Prep School in Georgia, USA. I had such a wonderful time there, and it was a truly amazing experience that I will always cherish. I would highly recommend all girls to apply for the exchange because you can learn important life skills and have great experiences that are once in a lifetime. During my exchange, I was lucky to have many great experiences, including Friday night American football games travelling around the south. I went to Hilton Head Island, Charleston, and Atlanta. All of the places were so different to home, and I am so grateful for the opportunity to be in a new place and surrounded by a different culture. Augusta Prep was a kindergarten to Year 12 co-ed school. I made so many lifelong friendships I hope to return one day and see them all again. I will be forever grateful for this experience, and I will never forget it and would like to thank everyone who made it possible.

By Gardenia Antelme

Charlotte: Fun fact was that the school chapel was actually made to hide the underground gym and swimming, because at the time women were unable to do sport. The atmosphere of the school is so unique in every aspect. I could join both the swim team and the indoor track team. They were both so fun and both teams welcomed me with open arms. Each morning when we had morning reports everyone applauded at the date and our jetlagged selves were very shocked by this. But we really got to see the Emma Willard spirit with the induction of the new principal Miss Rowe, which was a once in a lifetime opportunity. The night was filled with dancing, laughs and food trucks. We were also there for the school talent show, and we may or may not have given our version of 'Men of Work'.

Matilda: We honestly had the time of our lives. It's so crazy how fast it all flew by, but I am sure I can speak for both of us when I say we will never forget the people we met and the amazing things we did. We would like to thank Ms Gorrie, Ms Townsend and Ms Curtis for this great opportunity and for making our experience on exchange unforgettable and encourage any girls who are on the fence about exchange to sign up because we guarantee you won't regret it.

By Matilda Palmer and Charlotte Wala



Japan

Konan Girls High School, Kobe, Japan

As you can probably imagine, Japan was a lot different to Australia. It was so cold there for a Queenslander. We had monsoons and earthquakes (in Okinawa) but nothing to worry about!

The first week for me was difficult because my Japanese was terrible and I was pretty much mute for the first couple of days. I felt sorry for my host family because all I said was Hai (yes) to everything. But saying yes to everything was actually good, because in the first week I had a lot of food I usually wouldn't eat which was a surprise. I lived in Kobe, a town about an hours' train ride from Osaka. Probably the thing that was most different at Konan is that we didn't have morning tea, only lunch, so Claire and I were starving by the time lunch came around. We also had indoor and outdoor shoes and there were sliding doors.

I went to Kyoto and saw a Gold Palace which was absolutely beautiful. I also went to Osaka and Nara, where I was attacked by a deer! Japan was so eye-opening. I think the whole aura of being in a country like Japan was awesome.

By Jadalyn DeBusch



Toyoshiki High School, Kobe, Japan

I had the privilege of participating in an eight-week exchange program to Toyoshiki High School in Japan. The experience offered me a unique opportunity to immerse myself in a different culture and way of schooling. Despite the challenging aspects of attending a Japanese school and navigating daily life without knowing the language, the experience taught me resilience and independence. The exchange has left an indelible mark on my personal growth and was an unforgettable experience.

By Milana Sorbello



Germany

Ursulinenschule Hersel, Bornheim, Germany

I had the opportunity to go to Germany on exchange, where I had the most incredible experience. Having just hosted my exchange partner, Glenda, in my house for seven weeks, I was excited to meet her family and experience a taste of her life in Germany. My host family was so lovely in welcoming me into their home and taking me to Berlin and Brussels just in my first two weeks in the country! Despite their lack of English, and my limited knowledge of German, I really formed a connection with them and had the opportunity to partake in some of their Albanian and German traditions, which included many exciting nights in front of the TV watching the Soccer World Cup.

The school we attended, Ursulinenschule Hersel, was vastly different to St Margaret's, in not only their lack of uniform, but also the subjects, extra-curriculars and opportunities it offers. Glenda took four languages, German, Spanish, English and Latin, which was unfathomable for me to say the least. While there is no school-organised sport, many of the girls participate in club sports and activities, and Glenda and I went for some long walks and runs along the Rhine, which was beautiful.

Ultimately, I feel so privileged I was given the opportunity to go to Germany on exchange. This was such a fulfilling and unforgettable experience, and we are so lucky for the opportunity to broaden our horizons and knowledge of Europe's culture.

By Arabella Harris

Upon being told that I would have the opportunity to become a German exchange student for 10 weeks, I was very excited to fly overseas for the first time. I had heard all about Germany and its incredible architecture, cities and Christmas celebrations, and never thought I'd be able to experience it until I was an adult. Luckily, Urselinenschule had opened its gates to a few of us St Margaret's students, and we flew over in a total of 22 hours, arriving late at night on 2 October. I was greeted by my buddy, Inga, and her welcoming family. It was the start of the Autumn school holidays – we were thrilled to learn many host families were planning on travelling around, some were even driving to neighbouring countries – something you could only dream of in Australia. The following two weeks were filled with some of the most exciting, unique experiences I've ever had.

The other Aussies and I quickly settled in at Urselinschule and met many new friendly girls who we still keep in contact with. The library and cafeteria became our places for study, where we would keep up with Maths and certificate work from Australia. It was amazing how we could keep in contact from so far away. At lunch times, we would go just across the road to Edeka – the German Woolies – and enjoy a quick bakery snack (usually a pretzel). On the weekends or after school, we would get on the train and ride for 10 minutes into Bonn, home of Haribo gummy bears, where we could do some shopping.

This experience was something that I will cherish for many years. The St Margaret's Global Exchange Program gave me the opportunity to broaden my horizons, meet so many new people, try new things, learn so much more about the world, and adapt to a new lifestyle. I would highly recommend applying for exchange to younger students, and I am very grateful for being able to participate in such an amazing and fulfilling program.

By Millie Maunder

I was given an amazing opportunity to go on exchange to Bornheim, Germany. It was an experience like no other and one that I will never forget. The first two weeks of exchange, the German girls were on school holidays, so my family took me to the Netherlands, as well as Strasbourg, France! In the Netherlands, I got to see quaint little coastal towns and the beautiful architecture of Amsterdam as we floated through the famous canals, and in Strasbourg I had a traditional French crepe and saw some of the most beautiful churches. Although the holidays were so amazing, after the two weeks concluded, school started back and I got to experience the everyday life of a German student. Every morning I would rug up with all my layers, hop on my bike and ride to the train where I met all my friends for a quick chat before arriving at school! School in Germany is extremely different to school in Australia. First of all, they don't have uniforms, so instead of doing up my middle badge, I would throw on a jumper and some jeans! Some days we would have spares and we were all allowed to walk down the road to the delicious bakery to get some warm pastries that were absolutely delicious! While attending the school classes, I even picked up a fair amount of German to show off to my friends at school! My favourite part of exchange was our weekend trip to Paris. Seeing the Eiffel Tower for the first time was jaw dropping and a memory I will cherish forever. Overall, the experience was so incredible! I made so many new international connections and made so many memories. Exchange taught me about independence, acceptance, and perseverance. So, not only did I gain insight into all aspects of their culture, but I learnt life lessons I will take with me into adulthood.

By Scarlet Lythgo



Australia

Exchange Experience at St Margaret's

During my time here in Australia, I got to meet a lot of wonderful people, visit beautiful places, and discover many new things. I got to discover a new country and all its traditions. But during my exchange here, I also got to work on some more personal things. I developed my autonomy, my open mindedness, learned new words in English, worked on my articulation and many other things. My host family and exchange partner were the best that I could have gotten, and I will forever be grateful for that. They were welcoming, including, made me feel at home and showed me so many wonderful things. I couldn't have asked for better. I had the chance to see kangaroos, koalas, quokkas, and many other animals too that I had always dreamed of seeing. I also saw lots of beaches, which was fun since we don't have those at home. Everyone at St-Margarets was extremely welcoming and I made friends for life because of that. One of the challenges of the exchange was to be away from my friends and family for almost 3 months but I would still do the exchange a hundred times if I could. It is one of the most incredible experiences of my life and I will never forget it.

By Sarah, PSNM, Canada

Sydney Excursion

The Sydney trip was really fun, especially when we went to the Opera House to watch the sunset over the landmark, where we took way too many photos. The whole trip was honestly perfect, from the Taronga Zoo and the Sealife aquarium to the supper spent at a lovely restaurant in the Rocks, and everything in between.

By Virginie, PSNM, Canada





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