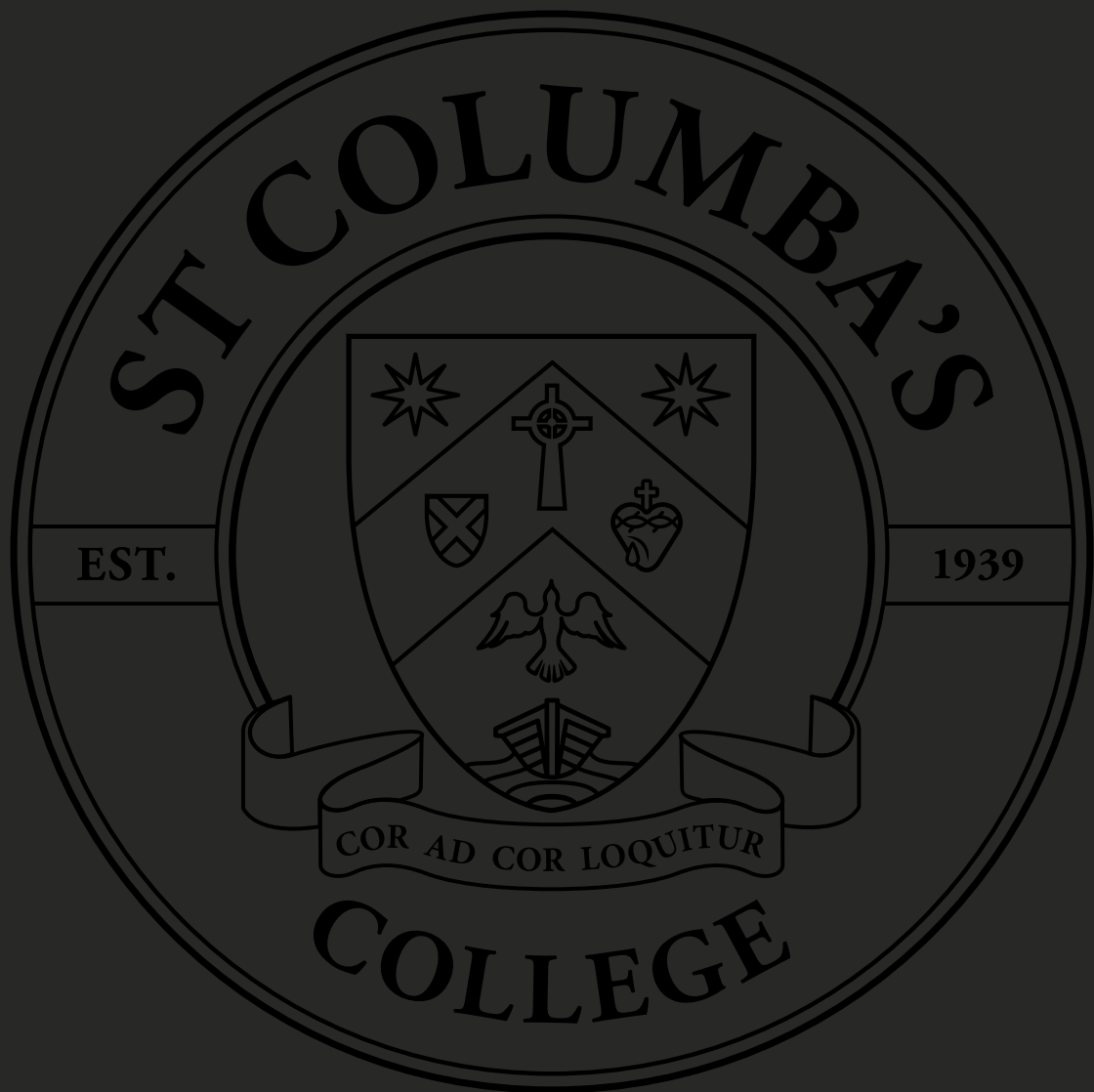


Where young
people are
**known,
valued &
treasured**



Prospectus

2025-2027

“

*Where young people are known,
valued and treasured.*





Welcome to St Columba's College

A very warm welcome to St Columba's College – a community where all our young people are known, valued and treasured.

Our College prides itself on the value of its community, and an education where head speaks to heart.

To be a Columban is to be distinctive: academically ambitious and successful yet individually nurtured by an education that is highly holistic and underpinned by our religious values.

Young people from 4 years old are welcomed and developed through personal attention and a conviction that education is far more than teaching students how to make a living – more about creating a life.

I am immensely proud of our whole community and warmly invite you to visit us, so that you can experience for yourself the first-rate education and deep collegiality of St Columba's College.

Karl Guest, Headmaster

Our History

St Columba's is part of a story that began more than 200 years ago, when André Coindre founded the Brothers of the Sacred Heart in Lyon, France. His vision was simple but powerful: to care for and educate young people, particularly those in need of support and guidance.

That mission soon spread across the world. In the 1950s, St Columba's became part of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart network. Today, we belong to the American Province, alongside ten other schools in various states of America and the Philippines. These deep foundations continue to shape our community and the way we do things today.

From the very beginning, the focus has been on nurturing the whole child. That still holds true. While our approach has evolved with time, we remain rooted in the Brothers' original mission, to offer a values-led education for all our students.

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*Exemplary pastoral
care + great teaching +
emphasis on co-curricular
= happy children reaching
their full potential.*

Good Schools Guide





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Happy learners become academically ambitious.

Our Future

Being part of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart (BOTSH) means we belong to a global community and that gives us more than just a shared past. It gives our young people a real sense of belonging to something bigger than themselves. They are connected to a worldwide community of students, opening doors to friendships, opportunities and new ways of thinking.

Our values are woven into daily life, in the way we teach, lead, guide and celebrate each young person. We educate the head, heart and hands, equipping students with the

knowledge, values and skills to contribute meaningfully to society. Our students grow into young people who are confident, compassionate and happy individuals.

We believe happy, well – supported young people are happy learners and go on to achieve great things. So, while we are proud of where we have come from, we are always looking ahead to what comes next, equipping Columbans not just for school, but for life.

The journey is different for every young person, but the message is always the same: once a Columban, always a Columban.

Our Pastoral Care

Personalised Learning at St Columba's College

At St Columba's College, we believe in nurturing the whole person. Our pupils are known, valued and treasured as individuals, with success measured not only by academic results but by personal growth, wellbeing and character. We help each child to understand their worth beyond grades, cultivating self-belief, purpose and a sense of belonging. Long before wellbeing became a national priority, it was already embedded in our ethos. St Columba's is more than a school – it is a sanctuary where young people thrive, feel at home and achieve exceptional outcomes.

Supporting Physical, Mental and Emotional Wellbeing

Pastoral care is at the heart of life at St Columba's, inspired by the compassionate ethos of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. We are deeply committed to the happiness and wellbeing of every student, providing personal attention and consistent support throughout their journey with us. Our holistic approach blends warm relationships, friendly structure, faith-based values and academic ambition – creating an environment where every student feels seen, heard and supported.

We aim to educate both the head and the heart, developing confident leaders, kind friends, socially responsible citizens – and all-round good people.

A Comprehensive Pastoral Framework

A House for Everyone:

From the Prep School through to the Sixth Form, every pupil belongs to a House, fostering friendships across year groups and a strong sense of identity and community.

Wellbeing Hub:

Our Wellbeing Hub is a calm, welcoming space where pupils can seek support, reflect or recharge.

Seamless Transitions:

Our dedicated Student Transition Coordinator ensures continuity of care, particularly during key milestones such as moving from Prep to Senior School.

Layers of Support:

- A qualified College Counsellor provides confidential, professional support.
- Sixth Form Mentors undergo rigorous training to offer peer-to-peer support.
- Our Staff Listener Programme adds another layer of care, offering approachable and informal support for everyday concerns.

A Values-Driven Culture of Care

Our pastoral care is deeply rooted in our values, supporting the emotional and spiritual growth of each pupil. We encourage resilience, integrity, and empathy, all of which form the foundation of our pupils' personal and academic development. We describe this to our pupils as holistic development – learning to grow in every dimension of life.

A Relevant and Responsive Pastoral Curriculum

From the earliest years in the Prep School through to the final days of Sixth Form, our tailored Pastoral Programme empowers pupils to navigate the complexities of modern life. It helps them build emotional intelligence, maintain good mental health and face challenges with confidence, compassion and clarity.



*Strong roots of care and connection
help our young people thrive.*



Our Co-Curricular Activities

The SHAPE Programme

Our SHAPE Programme is at the heart of holistic education at St Columba's. Designed to support every aspect of a young person's development, SHAPE reflects our belief that learning does not stop at the classroom door. It invites students to take part in a wide variety of experiences that help them grow as individuals.



Running throughout the Senior School, the programme brings the timetable to life with activities that challenge and inspire. Students might take part in a subject-specific workshop, rehearse with a music group, act in a school production, or work towards their Duke of Edinburgh's Award. They can also explore new interests, from Pilates and fencing to Warhammer, Columban Youth Theatre, astronomy or Japanese mythology. Many also give their time to service roles that build empathy and responsibility, whether that is supporting a charity, taking on a leadership position, or helping care for the environment.

Sport

Sport is an integral part of life at St Columba's, valued not only for the physical skills it builds, but also for the confidence, teamwork and resilience it creates in every student. Whether they are playing for fun or competing at national level, all students are encouraged to take part.

From Prep through to Sixth Form, we offer a wide-ranging programme of physical activity. Our younger pupils enjoy broad exposure to sports through PE lessons and after-school clubs, while our Senior students compete in a variety of sports including rugby, football, netball, basketball, fencing and cricket. Many of our teams compete at county and national level, with outstanding success in athletics, swimming, football and basketball. We are proud to be home to several National Champions.

House competitions and sports tours keep our calendar full of opportunities to grow, perform and celebrate success together.





Sport is an integral part of life at St Columba's, where every challenge sparks growth and every victory reflects teamwork and resilience.



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*A place where our young people develop
their passions and all children thrive.*



Our Co-Curricular Activities

257+
Co-curricular
Activities
There is something
for everyone

Arts

We believe the arts are an important part of life at St Columba's, with music and drama central to the College. We know that the performing arts help young people find their voice, build friendships and develop confidence that goes beyond the stage.

Music is inclusive and vibrant. From chamber choirs to bell choirs, jazz, rock and samba bands to orchestras, there is a place for everyone to explore and perform. Individual tuition is available during the school day and students of all abilities are encouraged to take part in ensembles. Advanced musicians have opportunities to shine as soloists, while our choirs and bands perform regularly at school events and prestigious venues such as St Albans Cathedral.

Our creative offer extends beyond music and drama. Students can also explore artistic expression through Art, ICT, Textiles, Photography and Food Technology - discovering new talents and developing valuable skills. The diversity of our co-curricular offer ensures there is an opportunity for all our students to find their voice.

Our drama programme is equally ambitious. The annual school production gives students the chance to act, sing and dance, or contribute behind the scenes in lighting, sound, or design. Recent productions have included *James and the Giant Peach* and *Shrek*, with visiting workshops from the Royal Shakespeare Company, Complicité Theatre and Frantic Assembly adding professional inspiration. The Columban Youth Theatre Company is open to students in all year groups and gives students opportunities to become script writers, directors, actors and costume designers for their very own show which tours to local primary schools. The Senior Acting Ensemble allows our older students the opportunity to explore sophisticated texts and perform to audiences. LAMDA tuition is popular here, with students of all ages taking the opportunity to refine their acting skills through weekly lessons with an expert LAMDA teacher. Termly showcase evenings offer LAMDA students the chance to perform to their families and friends.

Trips, Visits & Outdoor Pursuits

At St Columba's, learning does not stop in the classroom. Our extensive programme of over 250 trips and visits adds real-world context and enriches every stage of a student's education.

In the Prep School, children explore the world around them through hands-on learning, Forest School and residential trips that build independence and resilience. In Upper Prep, Life Skills sessions help students to connect what they learn with how they live.

In the Senior School, subject-specific visits include trips to CERN in Geneva, France for adventure activities and Iceland for Geography. Enrichment Days expand students' experiences, while our partnership with schools in the US enables memorable sports and cultural exchanges and Sixth Formers can also take part in our flagship overseas formation trip to Zambia as part of Project Respond.

A wide range of other opportunities are offered throughout the year. Students have travelled to New York for basketball, enjoyed skiing and netball trips to Europe, explored ancient history on a Classics trip to Athens and deepened their understanding of international politics on a visit to South Korea. These experiences build character, confidence and lifelong memories.



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*In our Prep School, we don't fear mistakes –
we welcome them as stepping stones to success.*



Welcome to life in Prep

Here at St Columba's Prep, children thrive in a nurturing environment that combines curiosity, creativity and care.

We are proud of our strong reputation for high academic achievement, underpinned by first-rate pastoral care. Every child is known, valued and supported to reach their full potential. We aim to launch pupils on their individual journeys to become well-rounded, socially aware young people who are equipped and confident for twenty-first century society.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard McCann'.

Mr Richard McCann
Head of Prep



Lower Prep

Lower Prep at St Columba's is where a lifelong love of learning begins. Pupils join Reception in the September before they turn five, stepping into a warm, nurturing environment, where curiosity is welcomed.

From the very beginning, pupils are immersed in the Columban learning ethos of resilience, teamwork and a positive growth mindset. In Reception, our pupils thrive through structured play, indoor and outdoor exploration and creative, topic-based learning. They quickly grow in confidence, progressing from their own unique starting points with the support of dedicated, experienced teachers and learning assistants.

Daily phonics, individual reading and numeracy tasks lay a strong academic foundation. At the same time, our enrichment programme includes specialist-taught PE, Music and weekly Forest School.

As pupils move into Prep 1 and Prep 2, learning becomes more structured and our young people begin to develop their independence. Small class sizes and personalised teaching ensure that every pupil is both stretched and supported. Interactive whiteboards, individual iPads and specialist teaching in Art and Science bring learning to life. Regular trips, workshops and themed weeks enrich the curriculum even further.

We understand that young people learn best when school and home work hand in hand. As such, we very much value our close partnerships with families. Our Tapestry platform continues into Prep 1, helping parents stay connected with their child's journey through shared photos, updates and learning moments.

By the time they reach the end of Lower Prep, our pupils are confident learners, excited by discovery and full of questions about the world around them.

Upper Prep

Upper Prep builds on the strong foundations laid in the early years, empowering our young people to take ownership of their learning and discover their individual strengths.

The curriculum becomes more rigorous and exciting, with specialist teaching in subjects such as Music, Science, Art, RE, Computing, Modern Languages and Sport. Pupils thrive on variety, exploring topics through storytelling and drama, learning data skills through real-world projects and enjoying hands-on activities such as pond-dipping or book-binding.

In Upper Prep, pupils also begin to explore leadership, collaboration and independence - qualities that prepare them for a confident transition to our Senior School. Carefully designed home learning supports classroom learning, encouraging responsibility and good study habits.

As a proud member of the Prep School Baccalaureate (PSB) group, we embrace a forward-thinking, values-based assessment model that champions a holistic education. The PSB framework focuses on six core skills – Thinking and Learning, Reviewing and Improving, Communicating, Independence, Collaboration and Leadership - all essential for success in an ever-changing world.

In Prep 6, each pupil completes a PSB Project Qualification (PSPQ): a three-month independent study that reflects their passions and showcases the breadth of their learning. This project is shared in a transfer document that follows them into Senior School, capturing the full picture of their personal and academic development.

By the end of Upper Prep, our pupils are ready. Ready to take on new challenges, ask thoughtful questions, lead with kindness and embrace the next stage of their learning with confidence.



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*With strong foundations in place,
the transition to our Senior School
feels natural – like the next chapter
in an exciting adventure.*



Adventures in our Forest School

Exploring, discovering, growing - the Forest School experience is an enriching part of life in the Prep years at St Columba's.

This newly developed space offers children the freedom to enjoy outdoor learning beyond the confines of the classroom, encouraging meaningful connection with the natural world. It is a place where curiosity is nurtured, independence takes root and each session brings a new kind of adventure.

Children might spend the morning building dens from branches, problem-solving in an exciting outdoor maths lesson, or reading stories aloud in the open air, surrounded by the sounds and textures of the forest. The mud kitchen becomes a space for experimentation and play, while the vegetable patch offers lessons in care and patience as they watch their seeds grow. The bug hotel brings tiny creatures into focus and wildflower areas inspire calm observation and appreciation of the environment. Whether making music in the bell tent or simply pausing to listen, the forest provides moments of both creativity and stillness.

These experiences let imaginations run wild and give children space to guide their own learning. Along the way, they develop confidence by trying unfamiliar tasks, adapting their ideas and working alongside others. They learn how to take risks safely and to see challenges as opportunities.

Forest School brings learning to life in a way that feels natural, purposeful and full of discovery. It builds resilience, encourages exploration and creates memories that last long after pupils return to the classroom.



*A place where our young people
design, create and explore -
the possibilities are endless.*





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To be a Columban is to be distinctive: academically ambitious and successful yet individually nurtured by an education that is highly holistic and underpinned by our religious values.





Welcome to our Senior School

The Senior School at St Columba's marks an important stage in each young person's development; intellectually, personally and spiritually. It is a time of increasing independence, when students begin to take ownership of their learning and make decisions that will shape their future.

We are proud of our academic standards and the strength of our teaching. Specialist teachers bring energy and subject expertise to the classroom, encouraging curiosity and independent thought. Our students are expected to engage with ideas, think for themselves and approach their studies with ambition and purpose.

As students progress through the Senior School, their development is carefully tracked. We use a range of data to monitor academic performance and provide timely, personalised support when needed.

Every student has access to their own digital device, supporting independent learning and helping them to develop confidence in using technology. Our curriculum includes STEM, financial literacy and a unique 'Big Question?' programme that encourages deep thinking, ethical discussion and global awareness.

A broad curriculum ensures students study a wide range of subjects in the early years before focusing more deeply in preparation for GCSE's. Students are encouraged to pursue subjects they enjoy and excel in and many discover new passions along the way.

Columban values are central to school life. Students develop self-awareness and personal responsibility as they explore the choices and challenges of adolescence.

Leadership is encouraged in many forms and older students are given opportunities to take the initiative and support others. All students in Forms 1 and 2 are paired with a Sixth Former to ease the transition into Senior School and all students are encouraged to take part in Inter-House competitions and contribute to community events throughout the year.

Most of our students choose to continue their education at St Columba's Sixth Form. A close knit, aspirational community where a wide range of A Level and AAQ subjects are available.

Nurturing curiosity, igniting potential

At St Columba's, we believe that every pupil should be inspired to think deeply, challenge themselves and develop a lifelong love of learning. Stretch & Challenge is not a separate strand of our education - it is embedded in the life of the College and rooted in the Brothers of the Sacred Heart tradition, which celebrates the unique potential of every individual.

Our dedicated team work across all year groups, offering both structured programmes and spontaneous opportunities that encourage intellectual curiosity. From Prep to Sixth Form, our aim is to help young people grow in confidence - academically, creatively and as individuals.

Key Stage 3

In the early Senior years, Stretch & Challenge focuses on independent thinking and a sense of academic adventure. Scholars and other inquisitive pupils take part in specialist sessions, external competitions, reading groups and discussion clubs - all designed to broaden their outlook.

Highlights include The Good Place discussion forum, Junior reading groups and the In Search Of... programme, which explores themes across subjects and culminates in international study trips, such as Geneva or Florence.

Key Stage 4

As students progress, opportunities become more targeted. Form 4 Scholars attend a Cambridge University lecture day and a Model United Nations conference, while all pupils can access high-level discussions and enrichment events throughout the year.

Critical thinking workshops and subject-specific seminars support those who want to deepen their academic interests. Leadership Foundations and mentoring programmes also help students to test ideas, build confidence and take greater ownership of their learning.





Welcome to our Sixth Form

Welcome to the St Columba's Sixth Form, a thriving 'College within the College', where our students become the fine young adults that we are so proud to send out into the world.

Here you will find a sanctuary of academic rigour and personal growth, a lively environment in which students can take their place at the head and heart of the school, aspiring to their very highest potential and serving others to become leaders and citizens with a global view. There are Columbans forging successful and worthwhile lives in every field imaginable: we know, because they come back and tell us, passing on their experience and sharing their passions.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Waters'.

Mr David Waters
Head of Sixth Form

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The impact St Columba's and the staff have had on my daughter has been life changing. I thank you all.

The Sixth Form at St Columba's offers a distinct and supportive environment. Whether continuing from our Senior School or joining from elsewhere, every student is welcomed into a close-knit, aspirational community where they are encouraged to grow in independence and look ahead with purpose.

We like to think of our Sixth Form as a College within a College - a place where students are challenged to take ownership of their learning, think seriously about their future and work towards ambitious goals. Whether planning for university or an apprenticeship, they are encouraged to aim high and build a portfolio of achievements that sets them apart.

All Sixth Formers have the opportunity to complete an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), exploring a topic of personal interest. This develops skills in research, analysis and presentation, providing excellent preparation for university or future employment. Alternatively, they can study for an LIBF (London Institute of Banking & Finance) certificate, both are worth the equivalent of an AS level.

A wide range of A Level and AAQs are available, taught by expert staff who know their students well and are committed to their success. Small class sizes and personalised guidance ensure each student is given space and encouragement to flourish.

Pastoral care continues to play an important role. Tutors, subject teachers and the dedicated Sixth Form team offer ongoing support, from academic progress to personal wellbeing and future plans.

There is a wide range of opportunities beyond the classroom. Students can take part in leadership programmes run by STEP, volunteer in a local charity or in the local community, as well as contributing to College life through music, drama, sport and House events. Many take on the role as mentor to younger pupils, or lead charity initiatives.

Our Sixth Form students consistently achieve excellent results, with many going on to top universities or competitive apprenticeship programmes. We are particularly proud of our strong university success, with students regularly gaining places at leading institutions, including Oxbridge.





Careers education every step of the way

At St Columba's College, our high-impact careers programme empowers students to thrive in exciting, suitable, future-ready careers. From the age of 4 to 18, careers education is embedded across the curriculum, ensuring every pupil develops the confidence, skills and self-awareness to pursue their goals.

Our students achieve outstanding destinations each year, from Oxbridge, Russell Group and Top 10 universities, to Medicine, Veterinary Science, Dentistry and specialist art institutions. They also pursue cutting-edge programmes, highly sought after apprenticeships, vocational routes, direct employment and international study often supported by academic or sports scholarships. We champion all post-18 pathways, providing personalised guidance, strong links with employers and real-world experiences to prepare every student for success.

Our dedication and belief in the impact of impartial careers guidance means students have at least six structured meetings from Form Three onwards. They can also go to our weekly drop-in clinics from Form One up and they are actively encouraged to seek further tailored advice from our Careers Adviser, Form Tutors, subject teachers and Heads of House whenever they need it.

Work-related learning begins in Prep Three and evolves in the Senior School into work shadowing, virtual work experience placements and our flagship Professional Placement Week in Sixth Form where students are immersed in a workplace. Volunteering is widely encouraged throughout the school to build employability skills and confidence.

Our annual Inspiration Day is a carousel of almost 30 talks by employers from our alumni community. It connects students with industry leaders, often reshaping career ambitions and sparking new aspiration.

Part of our commitment is to support our parents and carers in understanding the ever-changing world of careers and qualifications. With this in mind, our Head of Careers is available to meet at parents evenings from Form Three onwards as well as distributing a termly newsletter to all families at The College.

Careers education at St Columba's has long been a whole-school commitment—woven through lessons, events, trips and conversations—ensuring every student is supported to build not just a living but a future life where they will thrive.

Alumni

stcolumbasconnects.org

That sense of lifelong belonging is at the heart of St Columba's Connects, a play on the acronym we all speak of SCC, encompassing our vibrant community of former students, parents, staff and friends of our College. More than 6,500 Alumni, together with our wider community network, forms over 13,000 members who celebrate our rich history and enduring spirit of St Columba's College through philanthropy, mentoring, shared values and giving back.

Our members actively support our current generation of students as well as each other by playing a vital role in supporting career development, mentoring and work placements. We thank them for contributing to our bursary programme enabling students to experience our first class education and co-curricular opportunities and towards our development programme ensuring the continuous development of our College. St Columba's Connects offers opportunities to keep in touch, give back and be part of our Columban Community through attending reunions and our many events we hold throughout the year. A highlight

of the year is our annual Inspiration Day, where Alumni return to share their professional journeys and insights with our current students – helping to guide and inspire the next generation of Columbans.

Connections continue long after leaving SCC, many of our families have deep roots here, with grandparents, parents and children all part of the same proud educational tradition. Some former students have returned as staff who proudly wear our alumni tie, others now send their own children to St Columba's. This sense of continuity and connection is at the heart of what makes our community so special sharing values that have always shaped our College.

Our school leavers are invited to their first 'Class of' December reunion event as they become members of our Alumni and many return to our annual Columban fayre, where we look forward to catching up and hearing their news since leaving us. Once a Columban, always a Columban.

This is what makes St Columba's College special.







Joining St Columba's

We welcome all to apply for a place at St Columba's College, where we aim to build strong relationships with families supporting them with the information and guidance needed to make an informed choice about joining our Columbian community.

Our application process attracts young people who will thrive academically, socially and personally, within our nurturing values-led environment. We look for students who will flourish within our College's holistic education of academic excellence and co-curricular activities. We pride ourselves in being a school where young people enjoy and take every opportunity open to them. They thrive during their education here and achieve accordingly.

Our Admissions Process

We welcome applications through our structured application process of testing, reference, interview and school report:

- Reception
- Prep (Years 1-6)
- 11+ (Year 7)
- 13+ (Year 9)
- Sixth Form (Year 12)

For entry into other year groups (such as Years 8 or 10), or for late or mid-year our admissions for availability. Late applicants may be considered in-year.

Please note: we do not offer the option to defer an offer of a place to a later year.

For Prep admissions enquiries please contact:

prepadmissions@stcolumbascollege.org
01727 892097

For Senior admissions enquiries, contact:

admissions@stcolumbascollege.org
01727 892040

Information about Open Days, entry requirements, fees, scholarships, bursaries or to apply for a place please visit stcolumbascollege.org

We're not here to
fit the mould.
We're here to
shape the future.



St Columba's College, King Harry Lane
St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL3 4AW

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Email: admissions@stcolumbascollege.org

www.stcolumbascollege.org



THE
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