



Dear

I joined George Heriot's in the summer of 2021. It was the principles on which the school was founded that attracted me to the role and it's my responsibility to build on these and ensure that all our students have the skills and resilience to succeed in an ever-changing world.

The heritage of the school, its inclusive ethos, exceptional academic performance and significant co-curriculum provision are each clear strengths and the reason we were named in 2020 as *The Sunday Times*' 'Scottish Independent School of the Decade'.

There is a strong sense of community here and to join George Heriot's School is to be welcomed into its family.

I look forward to meeting you.

Yours sincerely

Gareth Warren
Principal



Founded on an ethos of
care that lives on today



Welcome to Heriot's

George Heriot's School has been at the heart of Scottish education for 400 years. As Scotland's oldest independent school, Heriot's is a blend of tradition and modernity, with iconic buildings housing a sector-leading, contemporary education. Heriot's is one of the first schools to attain UNICEF Gold Rights Respecting status, reflecting the shared values and rights-based principles that thrive in school.

Heriot's is a community that breathes kindness. At our core is the Foundation, funding the education of local children who have lost a parent, in accordance with founder George Heriot's belief in the transformational power of education.

The school motto of *I distribute chearfullie* runs through the veins of pupils and staff alike: showing kindness is the Heriot's way. Our values of 'Work hard. Be kind. Be happy' underpin pupil wellbeing and behaviour.

With historic strengths incorporating philosophy, sustainability and pastoral care, George Heriot's today is an acknowledged leader in teaching and learning in Scotland.







Shaping a rich learning culture

Heriot's Junior School is structured in three stages: Early Years (Nursery to P2), Middle Primary (P3-P5) and Upper Primary (P6-P7), with a dedicated Depute for each stage. Importance is placed on developing each child's confidence, respect for others, communication skills and resilience, underpinned by cross curricular teaching to nourish curiosity.

In Nursery, the children thrive under the nurture and care of dedicated Early Years teachers and staff. Engaging play and group times underpin the development of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing skills, while specialist teaching starts early with PE, Music and Learning Enhancement. Working in partnership with parents, the P1 and P2 Early Learning Skills programme helps identify and support developmental needs.

Throughout Junior School, pupils are encouraged to be curious and creative. This is evidenced in scientific investigations, drama productions, technology days, musical festivals and outdoor learning. In Middle Primary, the specialist provision increases to include Art, Drama, Games and the introduction of three Modern Languages. In P6, the children continue Modern Languages, choosing from Spanish, French and German. Specialist teaching in Computing is added to the curriculum.

Heriot's unique Learning Enhancement programme encourages pupils to think for themselves, express ideas and listen to others during Philosophy lessons. The intellectual maturity and emotional intelligence we nurture from the earliest stages equip the children for the academic and real world challenges

ahead. Heriot's was the first school in Scotland to achieve the gold award from SAPERE for teaching Philosophy, which is taught as a discrete subject in Junior School.

Innovation and imagination are evidenced throughout the Heriot's curriculum, at the centre of which lies the Rights Respecting framework.





Junior School

An atmosphere of safety and trust

Pupils learn in a caring and secure environment, underpinned by a framework of individual pastoral care which supports their happiness and wellbeing. Staff encourage positive values amongst pupils, creating an atmosphere of safety and trust in which pupils can thrive. Communication with parents is pro-active: a child who senses that home and school are working together in supporting them, will flourish.

In weekly Health and Wellbeing lessons, pupils are taught to understand and express emotions, form positive relationships, develop a growth mindset and solve conflict. As the children

progress through the Junior School they will collect a 'tool kit' of resilience strategies to help them bounce back from adversity. To help children thrive in our ever changing world, an emphasis is placed on digital wellbeing.

The ethos of Heriot's is care, with opportunities for pupils to challenge themselves to try new experiences through taking part in a wide range of clubs and activities and residential trips.



“I love Heriot’s because as soon as I joined
I could feel that we were not just pupils,
we are family.”

Hugo, P7

Pursuing passion

The range of extra-curricular clubs and activities - from robotics to yoga – offers pupils the opportunity to discover and pursue new passions. Please see the information booklet for further details.







“While its academic performance is exceptional... George Heriot’s determination to give something back contributes significantly to its designation as our Scottish Independent Secondary School of the Decade.”

The Times

I distribute chearfullie

Heriot's distinctive culture stems from the Heriot family motto *I distribute chearfullie*. The embedded ethos of helping others, within and outwith school, is shared amongst pupils and staff and continues long after pupils leave the school.

Showing kindness and giving support is George Heriot's legacy. In his will (1624), Heriot left money to create a school for the 'fatherless bairns' of Edinburgh: helping others is his philanthropic legacy. Today the Foundation educates 60-80 local pupils each year who have lost a parent. Because of its Foundation, the school has become a centre of specialist bereavement support - teachers and pupils undergo training in understanding the language of bereavement.

For Herioters, to *distribute chearfullie* is part of recognising privilege, finding their role in society and improving lives. Charitable pursuit plays an important role, with upwards of 20+ charities benefitting from pupils' fund-raising efforts each year. In S6, pupils participate in a Voluntary Service programme which includes assisting Junior School children in their learning and supporting the work of a varied range of local charities each week.

Put simply, George Heriot's grows kind, considerate adults.



So, you're thinking of joining Heriot's?

"Use a smartphone to scan the QR code and watch our school in action. I hope these films give you a flavour of what the school is like and the kind of things you can do here."



Scan here



“Pupils are naturally thinking about their national assessments, but we try to instil in them a love of learning.

We are teaching them how to persevere, to embrace challenges and to be flexible, and those are very important things.”

Phil Lowe, Teacher



Senior School

Opportunities to achieve

Each year George Heriot's School welcomes current pupils from the Junior School and approximately 30 external pupils into S1 to start their Senior School journey. Pupils follow a broad timetable of study which leads to a choice of 34 SQA academic options together with a wide range of sporting and extra-curricular activities so each child can try something new.

The breadth of subjects studied by S1-2 gives pupils a strong foundation to pursue subsequent specialism. Most pupils study eight National 5 courses over two years, followed by Highers and Advanced Highers in S5 and S6. On average, pupils study five subjects

at Higher level and three at Advanced Higher level; pupils can choose to study subjects they haven't previously studied due to the compact nature of the curriculum.

Alongside subject study, Citizenship classes help pupils to develop life skills such as self-esteem, confidence, positive attitudes and a sense of belonging, while the embedded environmental sustainability programme and eco group EARTH ensures pupils emerge from George Heriot's as environmentally informed individuals.



Senior School

Building resilience

While Heriot's is best known as an academic school, success comes from a holistic approach to education. If pupils are happy in school, they undoubtedly do better. Positive mental health is the focus of the experienced team of class and guidance teachers who oversee pupil wellbeing and create a safe and inspiring learning environment. Pupils are given the tools necessary to build resilience, while coping methods, resources and advice are provided to combat stress and anxiety.

By helping pupils to help themselves, the school sees happier young people, better equipped to face their challenges head on. Pupils benefit from initiatives designed to promote selfcare and emotional health, such as the pupil-led 'Head Gardeners' Programme and 'Love your Mind' activities.

At the heart of school is the UNICEF Rights Respecting charter, assuring a diverse, inclusive learning environment where young people's voices can be heard. Heriot's became the first independent UK school to win the award's Gold level (2015) and has since been re-accredited with Gold.





“If people are struggling with anything, they are encouraged to speak to their guidance teachers about it. It’s a confidential, pupil-led process, a really safe space where they can share whatever they need to share.”

Esther, S6



Beyond Heriot's

The majority of pupils leave Heriot's to go on to universities in Scotland and the UK and pursue careers across a wide range of fields.

The global network of former pupils is currently 11,000, most of whom remain connected with the school via a popular programme of reunion and engagement events. Pupils emerge from S6 to become artists, actors, journalists, Lord Advocates, botanists, environment designers, TV presenters, polar scientists, jazz musicians, occupational therapists, medics and more.

Former pupils are represented both by class ambassadors and a Heriotes President, voluntary roles which ensure the former pupil voice is heard and acted upon within school. A twice-yearly magazine and regular initiatives and events run by the school Development Office offer plenty of scope to remain involved, including acting as mentors, giving career talks to current pupils and meeting up with former classmates.

Come and visit us

The school is delighted to welcome visitors for personal visits and to its annual Open Morning in the last Saturday in September each year. This is an exciting event where families can walk around the campus, see displays and activities and enjoy pupil-led tours of both the Junior and Senior Schools.

To arrange a visit, please contact the Admissions Office.

Full details can be found at www.george-heriots.com.



We look forward to hearing from you

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