Student Exchange Handbook

Information for St Mary’s Exchange Students and their families
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St Mary’s Year 10 Exchange Programme has been running very successfully for over a decade. During Term IV, Year 9 students are invited to apply for exchange for the following year. The school usually receives many more applications than there are places available, so competition is strong.

Vision and Aims

The St Mary’s Exchange Programme provides each student selected for exchange with a unique opportunity to experience living and learning in another country and, in return, to host a visiting exchange student from the partner school. The programme aims to enhance her education, independence and life skills whilst living in a safe and secure setting within a host school family and boarding environment. It offers her the chance to learn more about herself and to develop new strengths and independence; to learn about others, their lives and cultures; and to expand her perspective on life beyond Western Australia. Exchange students will often make long-lasting relationships with people from around the world and develop a lifelong appreciation, interest in and understanding of the value of diversity. The exchange experience will allow St Mary’s students to recognise themselves as part of a global community.

The exchange programme at St Mary’s aims to:

- promote respect, understanding and an appreciation of other cultures, peoples and values
- promote a positive impression of St Mary’s and Western Australia
- develop in students the skills to become citizens of the world
- foster in students an inquiring mind by exposing them to different educational experiences
- provide an opportunity to challenge one’s usual way of thinking
- encourage the development of long-lasting relationships with people from other countries
- develop independence by spending time in a foreign environment learning how to adapt to new situations and different cultures
- provide an opportunity to host an exchange student and to be responsible for her well being as she becomes accustomed to life at St Mary’s. At the same time students will explore their own environment, deepening their understanding and appreciation of Western Australian life and culture

Exchange Student Selection Process

The selection process begins during Term IV with St Mary’s Year 9 students listening to past exchange students talk about their exchange experiences at a year group meeting. Girls interested in applying for a place on the exchange programme are then invited to submit a formal written application. The number of students going on exchange each year is dependent upon the availability of places offered by our exchange partner schools.

Application forms are available online (via the Year 9 page on the school’s intranet) or from the Head of Year 9, Ms Toia. The application form lists St Mary’s partner schools and the time of year each exchange takes place. Girls are advised to look at the websites of the schools they are interested in to find out more about the schools, and then rank their preferred options on the application form. Whilst
these rankings are taken into consideration, our school endeavours to find the best fit for each student, mindful of their academic needs and interests.

The selection process takes a few weeks to complete. Once all applications have been received, interviews will begin. Interviews will be approximately 10 minutes in length and will be with Mrs Thomson (Principal), Ms Karmelita (Deputy Principal/Dean of Students), Ms Toia (Head of Year 9) and Mrs Campbell (Head of Boarding). A series of questions will be asked of the girls in order to ascertain how they will manage the exchange experience. To prepare for their interviews, girls should consider how they might answer questions such as those below.

Suggested interview questions

- What do you hope to gain from the exchange experience?
- What personal qualities do you feel make you a suitable representative for this programme?
- What would you tell your host about St Mary’s Anglican Girls’ School?
- Are there any aspects of the exchange programme that make you nervous? What are they?
- What does being ‘independent’ mean to you?
- If you were staying with a host family, what would be some of the things that you could do to ensure that you created a favourable impression?
- How would you cope with homesickness whilst away from family and friends?
- Tell us something about you or something that you have done, that makes you feel really proud.
- How would you manage the academic demands of St Mary’s whilst being away on exchange?
- If you were hosting an exchange student from another school, what do you think you would need to keep in mind to ensure that she had an enjoyable experience?

The selection criteria include

- contribution to school life
- effort and application in class
- presentation during the interview
- suitability as a school representative
- perceived benefit for the individual student from the exchange experience
- citizenship qualities and attributes
- willingness and ability to host an exchange student
- ability to cope with the exchange experience both academically and socially

Teaching staff are also asked to comment on the suitability of each applicant, both academically and as an ambassador of the school. The student’s Year 9 report is also considered. Some schools require the exchange students to be strong academically, e.g. Westover School.

Following the interviews, placements are decided and the successful students are matched to their exchange schools. Mrs Thomson will inform the girls and their parents of their acceptance and confirm which schools they will be going to.

Mrs Thomson will also speak to those girls not selected for exchange. As the field of applicants is always strong, unfortunately some girls will be disappointed. These girls might like to consider opportunities for exchange through other reputable organisations, such as a Rotary exchange, or applying for a Year 13 placement with Westover School, following their completion of Year 12.

Please note that students who undertake an exchange will be not be eligible for Speech Night academic prizes at the end of Year 10.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF SCHOOL</th>
<th>ST MARY’S STUDENT ON EXCHANGE</th>
<th>ST MARY’S HOST AN EXCHANGE STUDENT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bridge House, South Africa</td>
<td>Term III 8-week exchange</td>
<td>Term II 8-week exchange</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.bridgehouse.org.za">www.bridgehouse.org.za</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Havergal College, Canada</td>
<td>Term IV 4-week exchange</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.havergal.on.ca">www.havergal.on.ca</a></td>
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<td>Loretto Senior School, Scotland *</td>
<td>Term IV 6-week exchange</td>
<td>Term III 6-week exchange</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samuel Marsden Collegiate School *</td>
<td>Term IV 3-4 week exchange</td>
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<td>St Margaret’s College, New Zealand</td>
<td>Term IV 8-week exchange</td>
<td>Term II 4-week exchange</td>
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<td>Stanford Lake College, South Africa</td>
<td>Term III 8-10-week exchange</td>
<td>Term IV 8-week exchange</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uplands College, South Africa *</td>
<td>Term II 10-week exchange</td>
<td>Term III 10-week exchange</td>
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<tr>
<td>Westover School, USA</td>
<td>Term IV 11-week exchange</td>
<td>Term III 8-10-week exchange</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.westoverschool.org">www.westoverschool.org</a></td>
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* Please note that girls going on exchange to Loretto School, Samuel Marsden Collegiate School and Uplands College will stay at the homes of their host families. Similarly, incoming exchange students from these schools may stay at the homes of their St Mary’s host families rather than in the boarding house.

**Exchange Dates**

The approximate timing and duration of each school exchange is listed in the table above. The recommended dates for exchange will be discussed annually between the two schools’ exchange co-ordinators to best fit their term dates. However, there is some flexibility around these dates to enable exchange students and host families to book flights and arrange airport pick-ups. Host families may also invite exchange students to arrive earlier or stay later to enjoy their hospitality and see more of the places they are visiting. The intended travel dates must be agreed by both schools prior to travel arrangements being confirmed.

**Flights**

Once the exchange dates have been agreed upon, families should apply for the relevant visa and book flights. Please ensure that visa applications are made well ahead of time. It is important that flight details are emailed to the host family and to the exchange co-ordinators at both schools.

**Hosting an Exchange Student**

Each St Mary’s student selected for exchange, and her family, will in turn host a student from their exchange school. Girls coming to St Mary’s on exchange will usually live in the boarding house during week nights and spend most weekends with their host families. However, please note that places in St Mary’s boarding house are not guaranteed for exchange students arriving from schools noted as ‘home stays’ above. The host families should provide opportunities for exchange students to experience the Australian lifestyle and see something of the city and surrounding areas. It is also the St Mary’s family’s role to greet and farewell exchange students at the airport.
Information Session for Exchange Families

Students selected to go on exchange, and their parents, will be invited to attend an information session at school early in Term I (when they are in Year 10). At the information session, Mrs Thomson will speak about the exchange programme and the school's expectations of students and host families. The Year 11 students and their families involved in the previous year’s exchange programme will also be invited to attend. They will have lots of practical advice and tips to pass on and can answer many of the questions that exchange families may have. It is essential that the student and at least one parent attend this information session.

Forms to be Completed

The following forms will be given to exchange families at the information session.

- **Exchange Student Information Form.** Students and their parents are asked to provide relevant information to pass on to the exchange school - contact details, any specific medical or dietary requirements, the student’s interests, activities and academic course.

- **Working With Children Check** required, by law, to be completed by parents and other members of the household over the age of 18. Note that host families are categorised as ‘volunteers’ and the cost per person is $10. A form for each parent, and any household members over 18, must be submitted to a participating post office prior to hosting an exchange student.

- **Host Agreement Form.**

Forms Required by the Exchange School

Each exchange school will have a number of forms that they require to be completed and returned prior to the commencement of the exchange. These forms may be available from the school’s website, sent to you directly from the exchange school, or given to you by Mrs Gracias. Please ensure that all forms are completed and returned in good time. It is preferable that these forms are scanned and emailed to the schools to ensure that they reach their destination in a timely manner. Mrs Gracias is happy to assist with this process. Girls should then take the original forms with them and present them on their arrival.

Cost of Exchange

While there are no school fees to be paid to the exchange school, St Mary’s school fees continue to be paid by parents whilst their daughters are on exchange. Parents of boarding students will be required to pay only the day tuition fees for the duration of their daughter’s exchange. Additional costs for exchange students and their families include:

- travel expenses to and from the exchange school
- travel and medical insurance cover
- costs of any school camps, excursions, music lessons, etc, at the exchange school
- spending money (approx $150-$200 for a 10-week exchange)
- hosting an exchange student at weekends and during holidays

Exchange schools will advise whether there is a need to make any pre-payments to them to cover some discretionary costs (eg day trips, school camps) and whether any particular health insurance policy is required for, or through, that school.
Responsibilities as a Host Family

Once the school has been advised of who will be coming to St Mary’s from your exchange school, you will be put in touch. We ask that you and your parents email your exchange student and her family and begin building a positive relationship with them. Things to discuss will include flight bookings, airport-pickups, what kinds of activities you are planning for her stay, advice on what you need to take with you, and what she should bring with her, dietary requirements and more. Don’t forget to email photos of yourself and your family – this will also help you to recognise each other at the airport.

When your exchange student arrives in Perth, please be in good time to collect her from the airport. She will normally stay with you and your family until it is time to move into the St Mary’s boarding house. For ‘home stays’ she may be staying with you throughout her exchange – this will depend on places available in the St Mary’s boarding house and in discussion with families.

For students coming into boarding, during the afternoon prior to your exchange student commencing school, you should bring her into the boarding house so she can unpack and settle in. At this time she can also be fitted out with a St Mary’s school uniform, available from the boarding house. You may even have some spare items of uniform you could loan to her. It is a requirement that all exchange students wear the St Mary’s uniform whilst on exchange with us. For exchange students residing with host families, the boarding house should still be able to assist with uniforms.

On the first morning your exchange student commences school, it is important that you introduce her to Mrs Thomson, Ms Herron, Ms Karmelita, Mr Thompson and Mrs Gracias, and then take her to see Mrs Birkin or Ms Bahen in Marketing to have her photo taken. Ms Herron will chat to her about her timetable, provide her with a school diary and assist her with school books. Your exchange student will follow you to your classes for the first timetable cycle. At the end of this period, she should see Ms Herron again to select her own optional subjects.

Expectations of, and advice for, St Mary’s Students whilst away

As an exchange student it is expected that you will:

- take the initiative to consult your teachers before you depart with regard to the Year 10 St Mary’s work that you will miss whilst on exchange, and also meet with Mr Thompson to discuss academic arrangements. It is expected that you will take some additional St Mary’s work with you. St Mary’s work that needs to be done while on exchange is typically in Mathematics, Science and LOTE. Doing so requires dedication and organisation. You may communicate with your teachers through email or fax as necessary to gain additional support whilst you are away.

- email Mrs Thomson and Mr Thompson during your first week away to let them know that you have arrived safe and well. Then send them occasional emails (with a photo or two) during your stay.

- be a good ambassador of St Mary’s. You will be representing St Mary’s and Western Australia and will be a guest at your host school and with your host family. Exemplary behaviour is therefore expected at all times.

- be an active participant in the life of the host school - both academically and within the co-curricular programme

- attend all scheduled classes and do the academic work assigned by the exchange school
- be sensitive to the cultural environment in which you are living
- observe the dress code of your host school
- abide by the rules of your host school and host family
- help around the house - make your bed, help with the dishes, be supportive of the family, do your own laundry
- observe the rules and guidelines set out by the boarding school
- be bright and cheerful in all that you undertake. This is a great opportunity to make lots of new friends
- try to get to know all the members of your host family and be involved in family outings and celebrations as much as possible

The use of alcohol or drugs is strictly prohibited and would result in you being sent home at an additional cost to your parents.

If you enter the exchange programme with an open mind then you will find yourself willing to learn more from the experience. Be positive from the outset and your exchange experience will undoubtedly be a success.

Be cheerful and friendly in your demeanour and always be interested and excited by the many different experiences that you will face whilst living as a student overseas.

Participate fully and try new experiences - new foods, new sports, new events, new school subjects. Remember that the eating habits of other people in different countries may initially seem unusual or different. Try to accept and embrace these differences but discuss politely with the host family or boarding house if you are finding the food difficult.

Your behaviour at your host family should be governed by their rules and expectations at all times. The host parents will have full authority for your care and safety since they are responsible for you during your visit. Try to fit in with their requests as much as possible and respect their values and beliefs whilst also staying true to your morals and values.

You should make your own bed, keep your room neat and tidy and ask before using the host family’s telephone or computer. Offer to help with additional household chores, just as you would around your own home.

Try to spend time with other people as well as your exchange partner to widen your friendships and exchange experience.

You are expected to use common sense and be respectful of the rights and opinions of others - their views and ideas might be different to those you have experienced within your friendship groups at St Mary’s.

As you are out of your usual environment, it is important to be more alert and aware of your surroundings for your personal safety.
It is normal to feel homesick at some point whilst you are away. Try to keep a travel journal since this will allow you to look back on good times when you are feeling sad. Communicate with your family often and take some photos of your family and friends with you.

Do not hesitate to ask questions if you need help or support at any time. There will be many adults to whom you can turn for support - host parents, head of boarding, head of year, exchange co-ordinator. If you are seriously worried about something or have concerns, contact your own family, who will then contact Mrs Thomson.

Before you go on exchange, do some reading and background research into what you might expect at the school. What is the school like? How many students does it have? What is the campus like? And the local town? Try to involve your whole family in this research since then everyone will understand your exchange partner a little better and also have an idea of what adventures you might have whilst away. Don’t forget to send a photo of yourself to your host family so they will easily recognise you at the airport.

Whilst on exchange you may be asked to speak at an assembly about St Mary’s and your exchange experience. Try to think about this early so that you do not leave the planning of such a speech until the last minute. It is a good idea to prepare a PowerPoint presentation about St Mary’s and Perth before you leave home. You should brush up on information regarding our history, population, traditions, etc.

Returning home might be difficult as you settle back into the normal routines at St Mary’s. Think about the positives of St Mary’s and what you love about the school and start telling your friends in small doses about your amazing experiences. Perhaps create a report about what exchange life was like for you, thinking about the differences between St Mary’s and your exchange school. It will be useful when it is your turn to help next year’s Year 10s decide if they want to go on exchange.

Overall, the greater your efforts, the richer your experience will be. The exchange experience changes everyone - revel in that change and growth and you will most certainly have an experience of a lifetime.

Advice to Parents of Exchange Students

A meeting will be arranged at the start of the year with last year’s exchange families and this is an ideal time to ask all the questions that only someone who has experienced the exchange can answer. Practical issues such as money, packing, gifts and travel can be clarified at this time. It might also be an opportune time to obtain their contact details so you may contact them later if needed.

If more than one student is travelling to an exchange school, where possible, they should travel together. It is the responsibility of parents to make the necessary travel arrangements in consultation with Mrs Linda Gracias and the exchange school. Parents are also responsible for ensuring that their daughter has the required travel visa for her visit. Visa requirements will vary depending on each student’s nationality and destination. Parents should refer to their travel agent or the appropriate consulate if they are unsure. All students must have travel and medical insurance prior to departure. A discussion with previous exchange families can help clarify exactly what is necessary for each country or exchange school.

Try to convince your daughter to pack half of what she thinks she needs. She may purchase a lot overseas and therefore needs to have space in her suitcase for this. Discuss the luggage allowance and needs with the family who have recently had daughters at the same exchange since this will always be the best advice. The girls will also need hand luggage and bags to be used at the schools. At some
schools, St Mary’s girls will wear their own school uniform and at others they will wear the uniform of their host school.

It is vital that if your daughter feels uncomfortable she knows who to contact at the exchange school. This information is available from Mrs Linda Gracias. She may also contact St Mary’s should she feel the need, and should take these contact details with her. Should there be significant issues or concerns, Mrs Thomson should be contacted.

Make contact with your daughter’s host family before she departs. This will help break the ice and begin the relationship between yourselves and them as they look forward to caring for your daughter as you will care for theirs. It is very reassuring for parents to know that their daughter will be well looked after.

It is important that you are fully involved with the exchange programme since this ensures its success. Discuss with your daughter about how to manage new situations and experiences, support her in finding out some of the cultural and social differences that she might meet whilst away from home, and think about how you are going to manage communication with her whilst she is away. It is important to discuss how to manage homesickness.

Also discuss and confirm your values and beliefs and therefore your expectations of your daughter whilst she is away.

Be prepared for a period of readjustment when your daughter returns from exchange. Change and growth often accompany any exchange experience and she will come home with some new ideas and also much excitement about her many adventures.

What to Pack

Find out about the climate before departing and talk to your host family or previous exchange student about the school’s expectations and guidelines.

Ask for advice from your host family as to whether there is anything particular that they suggest you take with you – they may have made plans that require you to have certain clothing.

Make sure you have your electronic ticketing, visa, travel and medical insurance, passport and some foreign currency before you leave home. You can usually check-in online and print out your boarding pass 24 hours prior to your departure.

If you are required to take your school uniform with you (whether summer or winter), make sure that all your uniform items are clean and tidy and fit you well, and that your shoes are polished. The St Mary’s school uniform should always be worn correctly.

Take a file with paper, pens etc, which you can take to each class.

You should also take a travel journal so that you can make notes about the many exciting experiences that you will have.

You will need to take pocket money with you sufficient to cover personal expenses, gifts and special excursions. Divide your money up evenly over the time that you are away to ensure that you do not spend it all at the beginning. Decide upon an acceptable amount with your parents.

Take a travel adaptor so that any electrical items that you take will work.
Take a small gift with you for your host family and something for your exchange school too. These might be souvenirs of Perth or of St Mary’s and should be presented at the conclusion of your stay.

Take some photos with you of your home, family, friends and school, to show your exchange student and host family. Don’t forget to take your camera!

**What if something goes wrong?**

If something goes wrong whilst you are away from home, try to work things out for yourself first. However, do not hesitate to contact the exchange co-ordinator at your host school if you are unsure of how to manage a situation. Or you may speak to your host family or the appropriate school staff. The next step is to talk to your parents or Mrs Thomson. Above all don’t worry, as no problem is unsolvable!

**After the Exchange**

- You should make a time for you and one of your parents to see Mrs Thomson to tell her about your exchange experiences.

- You should also see Mr Thompson in the Year 10 office.

- You will be asked to complete a feedback form. This will help us to find ways to improve the Year 10 Exchange Programme for those who follow.

- The following year, you will be asked by Mr Thompson to speak to the current Year 10 students at an assembly about your exchange destination and what it meant to you to have had that experience. This encourages the programme to continue to flourish.

- Once the new exchange students have been selected, you will be invited to attend an information session to share your thoughts and experiences, and bring along some photos too. Your attendance at this session is greatly appreciated by the school and by the new exchange families planning their exchange and eager to find out more.

**Expectations of, and advice for, St Mary’s host students and their families**

As host to your incoming exchange student you will be expected to make her feel welcome. Visit her each day in the boarding house, introduce her to your friendship group and support her as your ‘buddy’ in your classes. Introduce her to your teachers and make sure she knows what is happening and where she needs to go at recess and lunchtime to get boarders’ food. Make sure she is not on her own during breaks and that she feels at home within the boarding house and, at weekends, at home with your family. Any problems that your exchange student has within the boarding environment should be discussed with Mrs Campbell.

Participation in a student exchange should be a memorable and rewarding experience. Make sure you are prepared as an ambassador of St Mary’s and know sufficient detail about our school, Perth and Western Australia before your exchange visitor arrives. Think outside the box with regard to new and different places to visit to enrich the experience of your exchange student. Remember she also wants to
experience the Australian family lifestyle, and therefore a BBQ on the beach may be a fun and different experience for her. Try to plan some weekend adventures before she arrives.

Host parents are expected to collect their exchange student from the airport on her arrival, and see her safely depart at the end of her stay. You will act ‘in loco parentis’ during her exchange and are expected to accept the exchange student as a member of your family.

The exchange student may be in a shared room environment and will be resident with your family most weekends. At times she may choose to be involved in the boarding recreational activities at weekends and your daughter is welcome to join in these as well.

We encourage parents to take the exchange student home for the first few nights to allow her to rest fully and get to know the family before entering the boarding house. This provides an easier transition and adjustment into the St Mary’s family. The timing is dependent upon her arrival date and most students would come into the boarding house at the start of the school week.

Most exchange students to St Mary’s become boarders and reside at the school during the week. All bedding and uniform are supplied by the boarding house, although each individual student would be expected to provide her own stockings, plus school tie and scarf if she is here during the winter months. The uniform is on loan to her and must be returned to the boarding house after her departure, duly washed and ironed ready for re-use.

At the weekend, it is expected that you will take responsibility for your exchange student as though she were a member of your own family. Try to make contact early with her parents to clarify any health, dietary or behavioural needs and feel free to discuss these with the school nurse should you have any concerns.

You will be her guardian during her time in Perth and therefore it is essential that you let the boarding house know of all arrangements that you make for her during her stay – via email: boarding@stmarys.wa.edu.au or through direct contact with Mrs Tina Campbell by phone: 9341 9200 or mobile: 0407 476 343.

It is generally expected that exchange students are at school on school days during the duration of their exchange. Boarding school rules and procedures apply and any special permission would need to be discussed with the Head of Boarding or the Principal. All things are possible as long as there is communication with the boarding house for any leave during the week to accommodate special outings or shopping trips in the evening.

If your exchange student is unwell or has an accident, please let the Head of Boarding know. In the event of illness you are expected to act on behalf of the exchange student’s parents. Extra loving care is always needed if the exchange student is unwell and away from home.

Homesickness is often a distressing time for the exchange student and can usually be overcome by care and compassion. The school counsellors and boarding staff are experienced in dealing with these concerns so please ask them for support should you feel that your guest is struggling.

Excursions to places of interest in and around Perth should be arranged. However many exchange students want to experience what life is like in an Australian family, and therefore day trips to the beach are always appreciated. As the exchange student is part of your family, most host parents pay for any meals or admissions for students while on family outings or for public transport to and from an event (this will usually be reciprocated when your daughter is hosted). The student, however, should have her own money for personal needs, extra trips and gifts.
Exchange students are not permitted to do things on their own, such as going out in the evenings, and any activities would always require the host family’s permission.

Host families are asked to make available reasonable use of telephone, email and internet facilities for the exchange student during their stay with them.

With regard to curfew requirements, household responsibilities and rules for attending parties or outings with friends, you should treat the exchange student as one of your own children and make these decisions accordingly. If a student is difficult and refuses to accept your house rules please contact the Principal, Mrs Thomson.

When it’s time for your exchange student to return home, please check her flight details and ensure that she has her ticket, boarding pass, passport and belongings ready in good time for departure. It is also a good idea to check her luggage allowance and ensure any excess baggage is considered prior to departing for the airport.

**Exchange Students and the Boarding House**

Most exchange students live in the boarding house during the week whilst at St Mary’s. This enables them to have both a host family and boarding experience and has proved to be beneficial to both families and the exchange student in the past.

**Contacts at Anne Symington House**

**Tina Campbell - Head of Boarding**
Available 8.00am – 8.00pm Monday – Friday and in all emergencies
0407 476 343 or 9341 9201 (from overseas +61 407 476 343 or +61 8 9341 9201)

**Julie Pendergrast - Boarding Administrator**
Available 8.30am – 4.30pm Monday – Friday
9341 9200 (from overseas +61 8 9341 9200)

Please email all leave requests for your exchange student to boarding@stmarys.wa.edu.au by 8.30am on the Thursday before the weekend leave. Weekend leave commences from 3.35pm Friday to 8.00pm Sunday, or 7.00pm if there is a Boarders’ Chapel scheduled. Chapel dates are in the school diary and exchange students are expected to attend these services. All leave for your exchange student will require your approval and you will need to sign her in and out from the boarding house office when taking and returning her to school. If your daughter catches a bus to and from school and you wish the exchange student to do so, you will need to advise us of this via the leave request. Approval may be obtained via email or faxed parental leave form available on the school’s website in the boarders’ section.

Special leave may occur Monday to Thursday after school and as her guardian you would be expected to complete a green special leave form for these occasions. The forms are available on the school’s website as well as from the boarding house reception. Any leave during school hours requires the permission of the school, and such requests must be made to Ms Karmelita.

Your exchange student may be in or out of Anne Symington House whenever it is convenient for you as long as the school is aware of where she is and you and your daughter are happy with these arrangements. Most exchange students enjoy the balance between time in a family home and time in the boarding house and this has proven to be the most beneficial arrangement for everyone over the many years of hosting exchange students at St Mary’s.
Your exchange student and your daughter may join in our weekend recreational schedule, and your daughter is more than welcome to become a boarder at the weekend should she wish to. The recreational schedule for the term is published at the start of each term and is available on the school’s website under the boarding section. It is also available from the boarding house office. Any events that involve a cost can be added to your account for your daughter and the exchange student would normally pay for her own participation.

School uniforms are available from the boarding house to borrow for the duration of the exchange student’s stay. They should be signed out with Mrs Julie Pendergrast at the boarding reception and then washed and returned to us once the exchange student has returned home. The boarding house is open after 3.00pm on the first day of each term to welcome the girls and organise uniforms and the like. Exchange girls are expected to purchase their own socks in the summer and tights, a scarf and a tie in the winter.

All bedding and towels will be provided for the exchange girls whilst they board with us.

Any special dietary needs can be accommodated on arrival, with full written details of their daughter’s specific needs being provided by the exchange family. This will be passed onto our Head Chef, Mr Eric Barlette.

Rooms for exchange students are allocated at the beginning of each term in a shared-room arrangement. The rooms have reverse cycle air-conditioning, a bed, wardrobe, chest of drawers, a desk and a chair. All rooms have pin up boards which the girls often cover with a multitude of reminders of home and this might be something your daughter encourages the exchange student to bring with her.

Any questions/queries connected to boarding should be made directly to Mrs Tina Campbell, Head of Boarding.

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

This is a general guide only. Your exchange school, host family or the family of last year’s St Mary’s exchange student will be able to provide you with more detailed information on any questions you might have.

Text books
*Do I need to purchase school text books at my exchange school?*
Text books are usually loaned to you by your exchange school for the duration of your stay.

Uniform
*Which school uniform will I wear whilst on exchange?*
This depends on the exchange school. In most cases you will wear your St Mary’s uniform whilst on exchange. Remember to make sure that your uniform is in good order and fits you well before you pack it for travel. Whilst you are away, wear your uniform neatly and correctly and do not mix and match summer and winter pieces. Note that the seasons are reversed in the northern hemisphere and also the climates vary.

Health and Travel Insurance
*Do St Mary’s students need to take out health and travel insurance?*
It is strongly recommended that St Mary’s students take out travel and health insurance policies to provide adequate cover for the duration of their exchange. Parents should check with their insurance company or travel agent about the most appropriate policy for the country of their daughter’s exchange school. Some exchange schools require proof of health insurance prior to the exchange. At Westover
(USA) the school asks that you take out a health policy through their school and that you deposit funds to cover this. In New Zealand and the UK there may be reciprocal medical agreements with Australia but this would need to be checked with your health insurance provider.

**Visas**
*Do I need to apply for a visa?*
Depending upon your nationality and the immigration policies of the country you are travelling to, you will most likely need to obtain a visa (usually a tourist visa is sufficient). Your exchange school will provide you with the information and any necessary paperwork to assist you in this process. It is important to apply for visas early as they can take time to come through.

**Airport pick-up**
*Who will collect me from the airport?*
Confirm with your host family well ahead of time to make sure that they will pick you up from the airport on your arrival. Exchange photos so you can easily recognise each other at the airport. Email your flight details to your host family and to Mrs Gracias at St Mary’s (who will forward a copy to the exchange school). If your host family is not in a position to collect you from the airport, your host school will arrange for someone to collect you. Make sure you know the name of this person and ask for a photo. Take contact details for them so that if something goes wrong you have a person to call.

**Academic studies**
*Will I need to keep up with my St Mary’s subjects whilst I’m away?*
You should speak to your teachers and in particular, the Head of Year 10 (Mr Thompson), the Head of Mathematics (Mrs Taylor), the Head of Languages (Mrs MacRae), the Head of Science (Mrs Tyson), and the Head of English (Mrs Richards) about work that needs to be completed whilst you are away. Make sure that you take with you any text books required and make a note of your teachers’ email addresses so you can keep in contact. If you are away during Work Experience Week, you should arrange with Mrs Banting to do your work experience at another time.

**Gifts**
*Should I take any gifts with me?*
Yes, it’s a good idea to have a gift already purchased and wrapped that you can give to your host family, and one for the school. They will be delighted to receive something from your home country. These could be gift items purchased from the St Mary’s uniform shop or objects indicative of or unique to Western Australia. Gifts should not be expensive.

**Comments from previous St Mary’s Exchange Students**

“Going on exchange to Havergal College in Toronto was a lot of fun. I experienced so many new things and gained so much from it! I was able to make new friends with whom I’ll definitely stay in touch, and have new experiences like seeing snow for the first time, which was amazing! Boarding life was so much fun and something I’ll definitely remember. I had a great time with my host family too. Experiencing life in a school on the other side of the world was a truly unique experience, and though at times it was hard, overall it was really worthwhile, exciting, and heaps of fun! I’m so glad that I had the opportunity to go!”

Gemma Jongeling on her exchange to Havergal College, Ontario, Canada, Term IV, 2011
“Going on exchange to Havergal College, Toronto was a truly amazing experience! Being away from home in a different country, that is freezing cold, living in a boarding house and knowing almost no one seemed exciting but quite daunting at first! But from the moment I jumped off the plane all my doubts disappeared! Havergal is an amazingly beautiful school filled with friendly and welcoming students! Being a boarder was a lot of fun, and helped me to become more independent and competent in difficult situations. Toronto is a beautiful city, especially in the snow and visiting Niagara Falls and the CN tower were some of the amazing things my host family arranged for me to do. I met some wonderful people and get to see the world from a completely different viewpoint. Joining in new activities, trying new subjects and making new friends could not have been more fun and I never thought that four weeks could go that quickly! Exchange was an incredibly enjoyable and worthwhile experience that sent me home a more confident, independent and worldly person.”

Jessica Ryall on her exchange to Havergal College, Ontario, Canada, Term IV, 2011

“Exchange to Scotland was the most amazing and memorable experience! Loretto is a wonderful school that is full of so many happy people, who all want to be your friend. The school has a lot of Scottish tradition, you can always hear bagpipes being played somewhere, see the students wearing their kilts and tartan skirts to chapel and girls going to highland dancing. I loved every minute of everything, from the red blazers to the confusing keypad codes on the doors, going to the high street at lunch, lessons, the squirrels that were everywhere and especially all the amazing friends that I’ve made. Cherish every moment of exchange, because it is an experience that you will never forget.”

Jessica Zheng on her exchange to Loretto School, Scotland, UK, Term IV, 2011

“Have absolutely no fear - being chosen to attend Westover School on exchange will be the best experience you’ll ever have. You’ll be challenged in so many different ways – socially, academically and physically – but you’ll come out the other end a much stronger, independent and more knowledgeable person. You will meet fascinating people and learn so many new facts and life skills; and don’t worry, Westover, its students and teachers will help you along the way. As long as you’re diligent, sociable and embracing of change and culture, you’re guaranteed to have an amazing time.”

Bridget Rumball on her exchange to Westover School, USA, Term IV, 2011

“I am sure everyone who has been will tell you that exchange is the most incredible and memorable few months of your life. Sorry, but I am not going to be any different. The experience varies from person to person because it really is what you make it. You are in a completely different country with people you have never seen and surrounded by so many strange things, but it’s how you react to this that will make it great. For any girl going on exchange, be confident in yourself, don’t be afraid to put yourself out there and enjoy it. I loved every second of my exchange and experienced things that I would never be able to do at home. Exchange has changed who I am, has taught me to cope with difficult situations and has left me with so many great memories. Never again will I wake up to the sound of elephants, have to climb up a mountain to go to school or be surrounded by so many amazing people. I am so grateful to have had this opportunity and highly recommend it to future students.”

Melissa Dodd on her exchange to Stanford Lake College, South Africa, Term III, 2011

My exchange to Samuel Marsden was truly one of the most incredible experiences of my life! Being taken out of my comfort zone and experiencing life in a whole different country has allowed me to grow so much as a person and gain a better insight of the world and its many different cultures. I’ve made so many lifelong friends and tried many different and new opportunities that have really broadened my horizons. There was never a dull moment at Marsden and I’m so grateful for this amazing and unforgettable experience!

Keely Johnson on her exchange to Samuel Marsden Collegiate School, Wellington, NZ, Term IV, 2011

“The chance to participate in this type of exchange is something you will only ever receive whilst at school. I’ve made unforgettable friends and memories and will definitely look back on my time in Canada as one of the best experiences of my life. Saying goodbye to all the amazing people I met and looking back on everything I did, has made me fully appreciate what a great opportunity exchange is. It’s strange how the world seems bigger, yet smaller at the same time, knowing that there is a place on the other side of the globe where I’ll always feel welcome”.

Rikki Thorne on her exchange to Havergal College, Ontario, Canada, Term IV, 2010
“Don’t be worried if you’re not happy in the beginning, it is totally normal to feel ‘stressed’ as you have been thrown into an unknown environment to which you must quickly adjust. In no time you’ll feel great and see how much you can learn from this amazing experience if you just be yourself, relax, have fun, and try everything that comes your way.”

Miranda Radford on her exchange to Havergal College, Ontario, Canada, Term IV, 2010

“My exchange to Loretto turned out better than I ever could have expected. I got to make lots of new friends, try boarding for the first time, get involved in a big whole-school singing competition called ‘Songfest’ and participate in the school’s Combined Cadet Force, all in a country I’d never visited, half-way around the world. The whole experience also made me learn a lot about myself, like how well I cope with being away from my family and my home for a few months. I am so glad that I chose to apply for the exchange programme and extremely thankful that I was one of the lucky few chosen, as it was such an enjoyable, unforgettable and valuable experience.”

Maddy Zwart on her exchange to Loretto School, near Edinburgh, Scotland, Term IV, 2010

“My exchange experience was everything I could have wished for – but one hundred times better! Loretto is such a beautiful school which is steeped in Scottish tradition. I was amazed when I went to chapel and saw all of the boys in their kilts and sporran and the girls looking so elegant in their floor-length tartans! I loved how the pipe band played for us at assemblies and the choir sang every Friday at chapel. The thing I noticed the most about Loretto was the fact that every student there was so proud to be a part of their school and so proud to be Scottish. One of the many highlights of my trip was being a boarder and making so many friends and becoming so close to them all! We all had a LOT of fun together and cheesy as it may sound, there were lots of memories we shared that I will never forget! I learnt how to handle certain situations without having the help of my parents and learnt to be more independent! It was certainly an amazing experience!”

Taneale Crabbe on her exchange to Loretto School, near Edinburgh, Scotland, Term IV, 2010

“Exchange for me was one of the most amazing things I have ever done. To have been taken out of my comfort zone and put into a place with such a different lifestyle and culture and not know anyone was such an amazing experience for me. I loved every part of my exchange and got to experience things that I wouldn’t have at home. Some of those things included trying new kinds of food, seeing some of the world’s most famous animals, going to school in a completely different environment, and travelling to places I never thought of going to. The experiences I take away with me from my exchange are ones that have benefitted me in so many different ways. I am so grateful to have had this opportunity and would definitely recommend it for each of the coming Year 10s.”

Georgina Beasley on her exchange to Stanford Lake College, South Africa, Term III, 2010

“The St Mary’s Year 10 Exchange Programme really is an amazing opportunity that has changed my life! I have made so many life-long friends from this experience and witnessed huge changes in myself, on the inside and out. It is a time to get out of your comfort zone and try as much as you can because you are constantly surrounded by caring and loving people who will support you through everything and just want to make your time with them as pleasurable as possible!”

Natalya Beer on her exchange to Uplands College, South Africa, in Term II, 2010
CHECKLIST

Before you go

☐ On being selected for exchange, parents and students should confirm to Mrs Thomson their acceptance of the exchange offer

☐ Exchange students and at least one of their parents to attend the information session in Term I

☐ Information about your exchange partner received from Mrs Gracias

☐ Contact made with exchange partner and her family

☐ Exchange arrival and departure dates discussed – to be confirmed by both schools

☐ Student’s passport checked/updated

☐ Visa application submitted

☐ Flights booked and details sent to host family and St Mary’s

☐ Airport pick-up confirmed with host family or school representative and photos exchanged

☐ The exchange school’s forms completed and returned

☐ Health and travel insurance arranged. Copy of insurance certificate sent to exchange school.

☐ Any required pre-payments made to the exchange school

☐ Teachers consulted with regard to St Mary’s work to be completed whilst on exchange. Their contact email addresses noted

☐ Packing list made. (You may wish to consult your Host family about what to take)

☐ St Mary’s uniform to be checked for fit and good repair, and any new items purchased

☐ Spending money organised, and a small amount of foreign currency purchased

☐ Gifts purchased (one for your host family and one for the school)

☐ Take a journal

☐ Students and parents to visit Mrs Thomson prior to departure

☐ Suitcase packed. Don’t forget your camera!
Hand luggage packed. Make sure you have contact numbers for the host family, the exchange school and St Mary’s with you. Plus contact details for your teachers

Travel documents readied and online ticketing completed

**Whilst you’re away**

- Keep in touch with Mrs Thomson and your teachers – this is important!
- Email Mrs Thomson to let her know you arrived safely: lthomson@stmarys.wa.edu.au
- Email Mrs Thomson a few times whilst you’re away to tell her how everything is going
- Enjoy your experiences

**When you return**

- Make an appointment to see Mrs Thomson to chat about your exchange
- Complete a feedback form
- Prepare a talk to give to next year’s Year 10s, encouraging them to go on exchange
Gemma Jongeling, Havergal

Laura Hamblin and Jessica Zheng, Loretto

Kelly Johnson, Samuel Marsden

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Cover image: Bridget Rumball, Westover