

St. Michaels
University School
Junior School

Junior School VIEWBOOK



St. Michaels
University School

Welcome to St. Michaels University School!

“

You get to do so many things in Kindergarten. The teachers are really nice and come out at recess. They make sure we are safe and they always help us. I know you will love it here.

”

Victoria

“

I know you'll like it here because there's so much here to like – all the different subjects and spaces to work. The teachers are like family and really connect with you. I feel that we have a good way of learning here.

”

Jacob

and pro
chan



St. Michaels University School

St. Michaels University School is an independent, not-for-profit day (Kindergarten to Grade 12) and boarding (Grades 8 to 12) school located in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. This viewbook provides an overview of the Junior School (Kindergarten to Grade 5) program and experience. All information is current as of publication in August 2021.

Our Mission

Our school seeks the excellence in all of us, with passion and compassion. We are a community shaped by the pursuit of truth and goodness, providing outstanding preparation for life.

Our Vision

To learn, to lead, to serve.

Our Values

Respect | Courage | Honesty | Service

We acknowledge that our school rests in the heart of Straits Salish territory, a living culture with its own rites, ceremonies and unfolding history. We honour the Esquimalt, Songhees and WSÁNEĆ peoples, whose homelands we share and whom we recognize as our neighbours.

CONTENTS

Key Features of the Junior School	2
The Junior School Program	4
Supporting Young Learners	8
Character Education	9
Teachers and Parents Working Together	10
Becoming a Lifer	12
How to Apply and Financial Information	13

Key Features of the Junior School

The Junior School is a place of joyful learning. We are a community that creates a culture of excellence, thinks critically and creatively, and is nurtured through supportive relationships. We are your partner on your child's journey.

You will find more about the Junior School program and the life of the school on the following pages. We also encourage you to visit the school at one of our open houses, our information evening, or by contacting us and making an appointment. The best way to truly understand what makes the Junior School special is to meet our staff and students in person.

“

We recognize that you're coming to us for a strong beginning for your child. Children are innately and naturally curious, have a love of learning and appreciate a joy of learning. From Kindergarten all the way through the grades, we nurture and sustain that same level of joy and curiosity and desire for learning in your child.

- Mrs. Becky Anderson, Director of Junior School

”

Reggio-Inspired

The Junior School program is inspired in the early years by the Reggio Emilia approach. This globally recognized educational philosophy grounds us in our belief that children are competent and capable learners who can express their understanding in many ways. Learning is experiential and aligns with the interests and passions of children.

Experiential Education

The Junior School follows the BC curriculum and goes above and beyond. Ours is not a textbook program. We prioritize student engagement, which often means getting out of the classroom or using the Imagination Lab (*see page 7*) so students can learn in different settings and with a variety of materials. These experiences are connected to in-class lessons to extend student learning.

Personalized Learning

SMUS is a leader in personalization. This means teachers get to know your child as a unique person and as an individual learner. In conjunction with personalization, the school focuses on developing seven important characteristics known as the Portrait of a Learner. These seven qualities (curiosity, resilience, integrity, balance, initiative, collaboration and empathy) are a framework by which students develop into lifelong learners.

The Virtues

A focus of the Junior School is character education, which is designed to reinforce the work of parents at home. To support success in school and life, The Virtues Project introduces character traits we encourage students to embody. Examples of virtues include courtesy, gratitude, joyfulness, trust and kindness. A different virtue is highlighted every month and the whole school works together to model that virtue so that virtues become stronger through use.

The Importance of Play

In an academic context, the role of play can sometimes be overlooked and yet it is vital to development. Play is when children grow their social and emotional skills through creativity, cooperation and critical thinking. Play is part of daily life at the Junior School and that play often inspires classroom experiences, giving opportunity for children's natural curiosity to lead the learning.

Small Class Sizes and Specialist Teachers

To be able to provide a personalized learning environment, we keep our class sizes deliberately small with a ratio of one degreeed teacher for every six students. Specialist teachers add their expertise in many subjects, including French, visual arts and music (*see page 4*). All teachers engage in professional development and incorporate the latest research into their teaching practice to provide the best possible learning environment.

Everything Under One Roof

SMUS parents love the wide variety of opportunities offered in one place. With after-school and weekend sports and clubs, you won't need to drive all over town to give your children a variety of experiences.

Joy of Learning

The highest priority of the Junior School is to foster a joy of learning. Our Junior School exudes warmth, and parents tell us that their children love coming to school and love being a part of our community – and, in turn, teachers and staff love having them at our school.



The Junior School Program

The educational program at the Junior School is inquiry-based, meaning students drive their own learning. We are committed to academic excellence and effective approaches to teaching and learning. As these are the first years of your child's schooling, the program is balanced so they receive a variety of academic, artistic and athletic opportunities. In every grade and at each stage, your child will be individually challenged in an enriched learning environment, by core and specialist teachers.

Students spend much of their day with their core homeroom teachers, who teach foundational subjects:

- Language Arts
- Life Skills
- Math
- Science
- Social Studies

Additional specialist teachers work with students for:

- French
- Music
- Strings
- Choir
- Drama
- Visual Arts
- Digital Skills
- Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies
- Library and Information Literacy
- Outdoor Education
- Physical Education



The Junior School strings program teaches skills through ensemble playing



Students are encouraged to express their ideas in different ways, including public speaking



Visual arts is one of many subjects taught by specialist teachers

Language Arts

Students gain a love of reading and develop their literacy, writing, listening and speaking skills through engaging and creative activities. These communication skills – especially as they apply to writing and speaking/presenting skills – are woven into their other subjects like social studies and science. The teaching team provides one-on-one and small-group support to instill a passion for reading, develop literacy skills and ensure each student is reading at a level that challenges them.

Math

Students learn and understand mathematical concepts by engaging in a variety of problem-solving experiences that are relevant and challenging to them as learners. At SMUS, we value accuracy, flexibility and efficiency in the process of finding a solution. Young children develop critical and creative thinking skills as they move from concrete to pictorial to abstract. Reasoning, communication and collaboration make successful mathematicians and set the foundation for further learning.

Science and Social Studies

In science and social studies, we embrace your child's natural curiosity about the world. We encourage them to explore, and in doing so they develop observation and research skills. Field trips, guest speakers, scientific labs, class discussions and research projects help students learn these subjects and provide context for their newfound knowledge. Giving students the opportunity to see how lessons apply to the real world is an important part of the program. For example, in science class, students work with local organizations such as the Georgia Strait Alliance to see how what they learn in class relates to the work of scientists.

Arts

Creativity and self-expression are important skills for children to develop. At the Junior School, students are introduced to a wide range of arts subjects, including music, choir, strings, drama and visual arts.

The arts are an integral part of our school community. Student artwork is honoured and visible in our hallways, foyers and classrooms, and we regularly host concerts and performances. Every year, the Grade 5 classes put on a large performance – either an opera or a musical – at the McPherson Playhouse in downtown Victoria.

French

Students begin learning the French language in Kindergarten. Using story, theatre, drama and music to put the language into context, students learn to speak, write and read in French. At SMUS, we recognize the value of multilingualism in helping our students become more culturally aware and to have a global outlook.

Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies

The ability to bring ideas to life through design and technology skills is key to students' education and future goals. The Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies curriculum is integrated into all our classes to foster creative problem-solving and innovation skills. Using our Imagination Lab, students learn design thinking principles and build on their natural curiosity, empathy and creativity to develop thoughtful responses to everyday needs.

Digital Skills

Technology is introduced gradually, in a safe, developmentally appropriate way. Students acquire skills related to the use of different technologies, including coding, clay animation, robotics, green screen, laser cutters and 3D printing.



The natural environment is an important classroom at the Junior School

Outdoor Education

Outdoor education is a priority of the Junior School experience. We have a dedicated outdoor education specialist who works with homeroom and specialist teachers to connect classroom learning with the natural world. Students have at least one half-day of designated outdoor education time each week, and take advantage of our school's proximity to nature. Our program provides time for students to develop outdoor skills, gain an appreciation of nature, and learn about First Nations culture and history.

Library and Information Literacy

To complement language arts, library and information literacy is designated class time for students to focus on their reading, writing, speaking and research skills. There is a strong correlation between a love of reading and achievement at school. This is why the Junior School library is the heart of the school.

Life Skills

Social and emotional development play just as large a role in success as academic achievement. Through weekly assemblies and in-class lessons, students develop life skills such as learning to make good choices and set goals. See page 9 for more on how we help students build skills, including leadership and service, along with our focus on character education.



LEGO Robotics is just one of the clubs that supports the academic program



The Junior School has a partnership with the International Olympic Committee and helps pilot IOC educational programs

Physical Education

Athletics at the Junior School emphasizes participation, fair play and healthy living. Our goals – through physical education class and extracurricular sports and clubs – are to provide a variety of opportunities, create positive athletic experiences, develop a passion for physical activity and prepare students to play sports at the Middle School.

Extracurricular Sports

Starting in Grade 3, students can play a variety of extracurricular sports, including:

- Basketball
- Cross Country
- Dance
- Rugby
- Soccer
- Squash
- Swimming
- Track and Field

Clubs and Activities

In addition to our extracurricular sports, we offer students fun, enriching and inclusive opportunities outside of the timetable in art, music, science, culture, service and other areas. Some of the clubs and activities they can join include:

- Art Club
- Buddy Reading
- Design Challenge Club
- French Club
- Gardening Club
- LEGO Robotics Club
- Maker Club
- Mandarin Club
- Master Chef Club
- Public Speaking Club
- Sewing Club
- Yoga and Mindfulness Club



“

We really believe that the environment helps to inspire students to go deeper into their learning. We strive to create learning environments that are child-friendly, that spark curiosity and that encourage children to explore their own pursuits and their passions.

”

- Mrs. Alison Galloway, Imagination Lab coordinator and ADST specialist

Imagination Lab

An important part of the Reggio Emilia approach is the role of the environment in ensuring that students have the space and the tools to learn. The Junior School's Imagination Lab is a space intentionally designed to nurture children's wonder, imagination and curiosity. The lab is stocked with a variety of materials – bottle caps, fabric, feathers, wire, spools – loose parts that can become anything in a child's mind. It's also a place where technology meets creativity and where students are engaged in the design thinking process, clay animation projects, robotics and more.

Supporting Young Learners

The transition to a school experience is a significant one for families. Rest assured that supporting this adjustment is what we do well.

Safety, Care and Management

The school sets very high standards for safety and care of children. This includes the important moments of transition when teachers greet and dismiss children as they arrive and depart with their parents. The campus is gated with a secure front entrance, and we have a member of staff responsible for risk management. We provide clear routines and guidance for drop-offs and pick-ups, and parents assist us in ensuring these routines are respected. The playground is supervised by teachers at the school and we have a high ratio of staff to children at all times.

Homework

We believe in a healthy homework balance which creates a link between home and school. Homework at the Junior School is about building routine and responsibility. It usually involves some reading, targeted skill development (like practising a musical instrument) and sharing of learning at home.

Health and Wellness

At SMUS, the health and wellness of our students and faculty is a priority. It's important that students have the skills to practise self-care and mindfulness, that they can be resilient during difficult times, and make connections to find support when needed. Although these sound like grown-up concepts, their roots start in Junior School with engaging activities like taking a yoga class or planting a garden.

Social and Emotional Support

The Junior School community is close-knit and everyone knows each other. This means that teachers can anticipate needs and support students as challenges arise.

In addition, a counsellor is available at the Junior School four days a week to promote healthy, positive adjustment for students as they navigate school and family life in their early years. Our counsellor is also actively involved in classes to equip children with necessary tools for their social and emotional learning. They provide support to parents too, with regular open-invite coffee mornings on a variety of topics.

Academic Support

There are many layers of support in place if a student needs some additional help. This starts in the classroom where there are often additional teachers, allowing each student to be known and supported as individual learners. When and if more targeted instruction is needed, associate teachers work one-on-one with students and in small groups to meet their needs.

We also have a Learning Support team that works with individual students and small groups of students to provide additional support as needed. A reading tutor is on staff to provide targeted support in reading.





Character Education

Character education is as important as academics. The most important expression of character education at the Junior School is The Virtues Project, which is not just about ensuring good behaviour at school but about ensuring that students build skills for life. Examples of virtues include honesty, perseverance, compassion and empathy.

Each month, we highlight a different virtue, and the whole school works together to reflect and act upon that virtue and how it impacts others. The virtues bring out the best in each child and help them understand how to live a life guided by good character traits.

Leadership

Starting in Kindergarten, we begin fostering the skills that lay the foundation for being a good leader. It's important that we help all students understand how to collaborate with, support and encourage others effectively. At SMUS, we know that students of any age can play a leadership role at our school and in our community. The Junior School leadership program culminates in Grade 5 when students take on roles at the school, including becoming student ambassadors. One of our leadership opportunities is the buddy program, where older Junior School students are partnered with younger schoolmates to work on projects together.

Service

Service at the Junior School is about putting virtues into action and showing students they can impact their community and the world. Junior School students support a number of service projects each year. For example, every year Grade 2 students raise money for non-profit organizations at Christmastime by baking and selling gingerbread cookies.

Chapel

Every Monday morning, a chapel service is held at the Junior School. Chapel at SMUS is non-denominational, incorporating faiths and philosophies from many religions and cultures. The focus is on vision and values, rather than a particular doctrinal approach.

Chapel time at the Junior School is usually centred around a story, most often connected to the virtue of that month. Parents are always welcome to attend.



Service programs show students how they can make a difference in their local community and the world



“

The staff and the students create this culture that your child belongs here. That sense of belonging is passed on from one person to another. Everyone feels loved because you're part of this community.

”

- Mr. Matt Keil, Grade 5 teacher

Teachers and Parents Working Together

Children are always learning, not just during the hours when they're at school. That's why our teachers build close relationships with parents to ensure that we work together. We want the same things you do for your child: we want them to learn and love learning, we want them to excel, and we want them to grow into wonderful people. We, as teachers, and you, as parents, are partners in helping your child achieve this.

Teachers as Facilitators

With students often driving their own learning, our teachers play more of a facilitator role rather than being a lecturer at the front of a classroom. For children to become academically strong, they need to construct their own meaning and gain knowledge themselves, not simply absorb or memorize information. Our teachers research each child: listening, observing, documenting learning and knowing your child as an individual learner and as a person.

Teachers as Learners

Instilling a lifelong love of learning is important, and our teachers believe the best way to do that is by walking the talk. Professional development is a big part of our teaching culture. Our teachers know that the work they do to improve their practice translates back to a better learning environment and a better experience for our students.

Parents as Partners

The first teachers in a child's life are their parents. You play a vital role in your child's success. We want you to be engaged in your child's learning and school life because we all have the same goals for them: to grow, to learn, and to develop a sense of well-being. Research shows that students achieve more academically when their parents are engaged with them at school.



Parents are encouraged to get involved at the Junior School

Communicating with Parents

Effective communication between home and school is essential for your child's success. We provide and maintain regular communication about your child's progress and learning through formal meetings and conferences, report cards and portfolios. Teachers and directors are always willing to meet with you. At SMUS, we ensure that there is open and continuous dialogue.

Parent Community

Our school really is a family, and our parent community plays a big role in the joy and success of the school. Parents and grandparents are invited to our many community events throughout the year. You are also encouraged to get involved. There are lots of opportunities to help out, including volunteering in the library, helping with costumes, props and sets for our productions, attending field trips, and joining our school welcome committee.



The Junior School provides free Saturday sports activities

Supporting Parents Outside School Hours

One of the main benefits of joining SMUS is that it is designed to provide everything under one roof. Optional after-school and weekend activities means that families have the opportunity to access fun, engaging and diverse activities without needing to go to several locations. SMUS also provides bus services before and after school.

After-School Care Program

We run an After-School Care Program (3:15-5:30 pm) on all school days and day camps on professional development days to provide flexibility for our families. Our licensed day care is run by school staff who provide a fun and safe environment for students to complete their homework, play outdoors or in the gym, and do arts and crafts.

Saturday Sports

Most Saturdays throughout the school year, we host free weekend sports activities for Kindergarten to Grade 6 students at our Richmond Road campus. These fun sessions allow students to continue to stay active and further develop their skills in sports such as soccer, squash, basketball and volleyball.



Becoming a Lifer

A Lifer is a student who begins at SMUS in either Kindergarten or Grade 1 and graduates from SMUS in Grade 12. Starting early is the best way to prepare students for the academic, social and developmental experiences that come at the Middle School, Senior School and after graduation.

Cross-Campus Connections

From Kindergarten, students immediately build connections with their older schoolmates at the Junior, Middle and Senior Schools. While the younger students look up to their peers, older students get to experience being in leadership and role-model positions.

We host many activities and events that include Middle and Senior School students. This strengthens bonds between students of all ages and ensures connections between all three schools. For example, there are all-school performances, special assemblies and a reading club that partners Junior School students with Senior School students.

Transitioning to Middle School

Students have many opportunities and consistent support to help during the transition from the Junior School to Middle School, and again from the Middle School to Senior School. While the Junior School is located on a different campus, we ensure that students are prepared and supported for the changes and challenges that come with being in a new environment. In Grade 5, students begin visiting the Middle School to help with the transition.

Matthew in Kindergarten



“ You form a unique bond with your Kindergarten class. You get to know your classmates’ families and share in many experiences as part of the SMUS community. As you move through the grades you meet new friends and pursue different interests, however you always have a strong connection with other Lifers through shared experiences at the three schools. ”

- Matthew Owen-Flood '19



Sarah, Becky, Katherine and Kathleen

Thank you for considering St. Michaels University School.

Choosing a school is an important decision and we hope this viewbook has answered your biggest questions. The Admissions team is here to guide you through the application process. Please contact us at any time if we can assist you. We look forward to connecting soon.

Junior School Admissions office

Becky Anderson, Director of Junior School
 Kathleen Cook, Assistant Director of Junior School
 Sarah Lund, Admissions Associate
 Katherine Cathrea, Admissions Assistant

Phone: 1-250-519-7301

Toll-free in North America: 1-800-661-5199

Email: admissions@smus.ca

Web: smus.ca/admissions

Annual Giving

We can offer many of the opportunities in this viewbook because of the generous donations to our Annual Appeal by parents, alumni, staff and friends. Our students benefit every day from this community giving. If you join our school, you will be asked to contribute at a level that's meaningful to you and your family. As a not-for-profit organization, we thank you for your support.



Student success is at the heart of everything we do. Learn more about our approach through Floreat, the school's 2020-2030 strategic plan, at floreat2030.ca.

How to Apply to St. Michaels University School

There are very few spaces that become available for Grades 1 to 5. Therefore the recommended entry year for the Junior School is Kindergarten.

Demand for spaces at the Junior School is high and spaces are always limited. You are encouraged to complete an application 12 months in advance. For more information on deadlines, please visit our website.

Step 1: Complete an online application

You apply to St. Michaels University School on our website using the Online Application Centre.

Start at smus.ca/apply and follow the instructions. You will be asked some questions about why you are interested in SMUS and about your child's involvement in arts and athletics, as well as their hobbies.

Step 2: School Visit and Assessment

For Kindergarten

Your application is reviewed by the Admissions team, who then invite families to visit the school for the first meeting, a tour and an individual assessment for your child. This visit usually takes place between September and December. The second visit to the school is for a Play Workshop, where your child plays with other children their age. This workshop helps our Admissions team assess the readiness of your child for SMUS and whether the school is a good fit for them.

For Grades 1 to 5

Your application is reviewed by the Admissions team in January prior to the school year for which you are applying. Qualified applicants will be invited to our school to participate in an assessment.

Step 3: Admissions notifies you of the decision

If you receive an offer of admission, you will need to accept the offer by the deadline provided by the Admissions office. To accept the offer and hold your place, you will also pay a non-refundable registration fee.

Financial Aid

SMUS offers financial aid to help families that need extra help with meeting the cost of tuition. More information, including conditions and deadlines to apply, is available on the website.

Financial aid is confidential, needs-based and open to all students. Last year, approximately \$2.8 million was awarded annually in financial aid and scholarships to assist more than 20% of the student body. If you feel the cost of a SMUS education is prohibitive, you should ask about financial aid.

Fees

In addition to the school fees there will be some small extra costs for Junior School families. Because teachers purchase school supplies for each student at the beginning of the year, a fee will be charged to your account. Other costs include uniform and optional participation activities.

The cost of a SMUS education varies by the location of the primary residence, as do the options for paying your fees. Please see the website for further information.

2021-22 Fees

Below are the Junior School fees for the 2021-22 year. Fees for the 2022-23 year will be available in January 2022. Historically, Annual fee increases have been of 5%.

Location of Primary Residence	School Fees
British Columbia	\$21,095
North America	\$26,955
International	\$43,995



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St. Michaels University School

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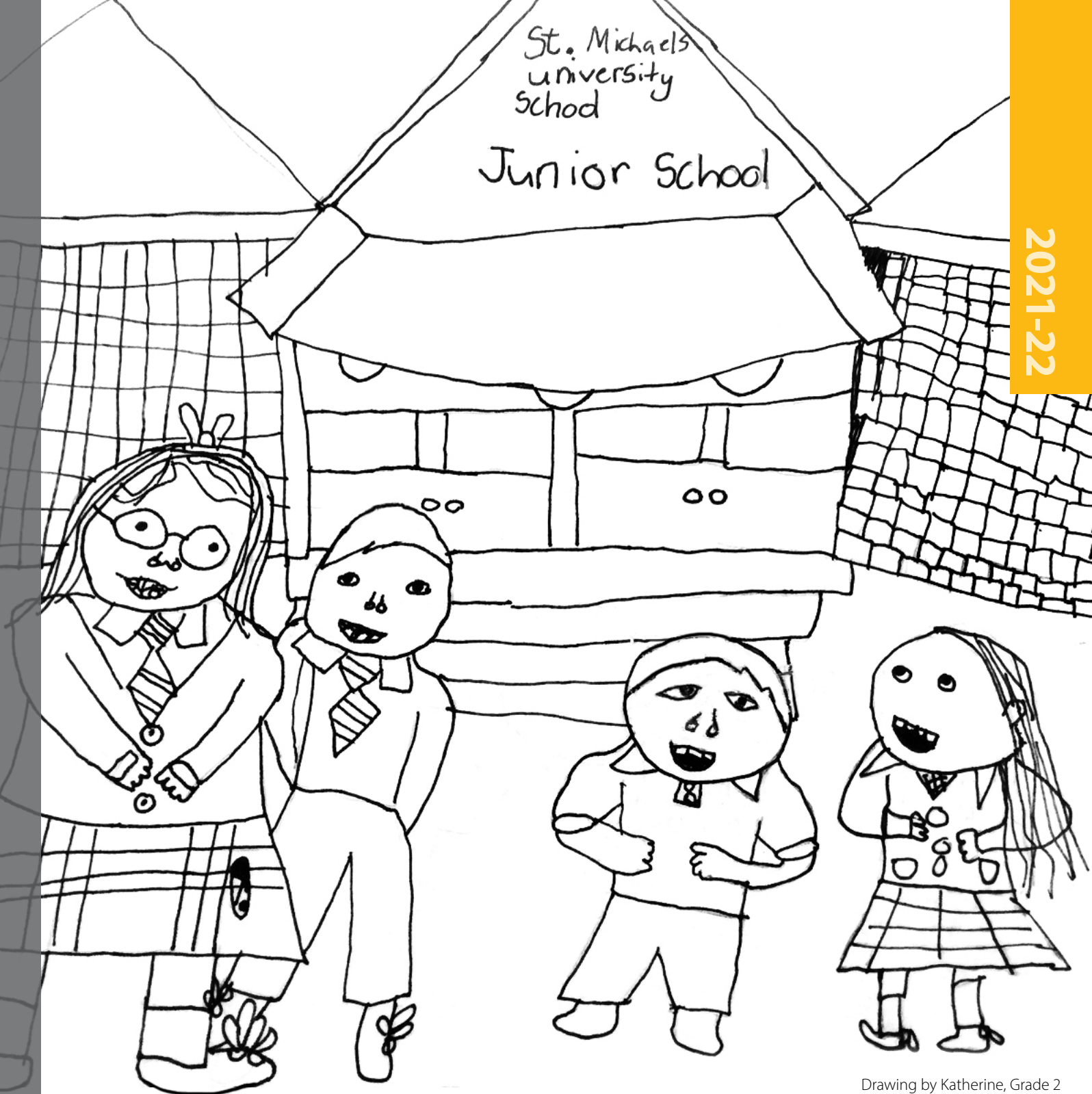
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Scan for a Virtual Tour



St. Michaels
University
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2021-22

Drawing by Katherine, Grade 2