



St. Michael's
University School

A young boy with brown hair, wearing a white short-sleeved polo shirt with a small school crest on the left chest, is sitting at a desk. He is smiling broadly and reaching out with his right hand towards a wooden pencil holder filled with various colored pencils. The background is a blurred classroom setting with green plants and other students. In the top right corner, there is a decorative graphic element consisting of a red and blue ribbon-like shape.

JUNIOR SCHOOL

VIEWBOOK



St. Michaels University School
Junior School Campus
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St. Michaels University School

St. Michaels University School, established in 1906, is an independent, not-for-profit day (Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12) and boarding (Grades 9 to 12) school located in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. This viewbook provides an overview of the Junior School (Junior Kindergarten to Grade 5) program and experience.

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.



PROUD TABS MEMBER
THE ASSOCIATION of BOARDING SCHOOLS



SMUS is accredited by Canadian Accredited Independent Schools (CAIS), the national accrediting body for independent schools in Canada.

We are also a proud member of many professional organizations, including HMC (The Heads' Conference), Independent Schools Association of British Columbia (ISABC), National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS), and The Association of Boarding Schools (TABS).



Thank you for taking the time to get to know our school better through our viewbook.

We believe that this time in a child's education is both special and important. Children are innately curious and have a love of learning. Education is not a race; it occurs in many ways and at different paces, and this requires attentive, caring, and dedicated experts guiding the way, partnering with parents. We create the conditions to develop the potential of each student at our school, never underestimating their capabilities. We strive to give all our children the very best start and to prepare them for the future.

From Junior Kindergarten through Grade 5, your child will be supported, challenged, and encouraged in ways that will set them up for success through the Junior School and beyond. Through many opportunities to try new things, develop new interests, and discover new talents, children build confidence and a solid foundation. For our children to learn about themselves, they need to be exposed to these new experiences in a safe and supported way. That is what we provide.

I look forward to welcoming you to the Junior School for a tour so you can experience our joyful learning within the culture of excellence for which SMUS is known.



Becky Anderson
Director of Junior School



Reggio-Inspired

The Junior School program is inspired 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 prioritise student engagement, which often means getting out of the classroom or using the Imagination Lab 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.

Portrait of a Learner

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 are a framework by which students develop into lifelong learners. These traits are empathy, curiosity, integrity, resilience, well-being, initiative, and collaboration.

Social Emotional Learning

Homeroom teachers dedicate time each morning to connect with the children as they start their day. Classes hold morning meetings and check-ins, prioritising that every child feels secure and has a sense of belonging. Children are supported in developing social-emotional skills and executive functioning strategies, such as emotional regulation, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Time is dedicated to teaching these essential skills in all grades, both through a planned curriculum and by addressing relevant needs that arise in the classroom.



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 our campus at one of our open houses or schedule a visit. The best way to truly understand what makes the Junior School special is to meet our staff and students in person and develop a sense of the joy and engagement of our approach.

Small Class Sizes and Specialist Teachers

To be able to provide a personalised learning environment, we keep our class sizes deliberately small with a ratio of one degreed teacher for every six students at the school. Specialist teachers add their expertise in many subjects such as design thinking in the Imagination Lab and Outdoor Education. All teachers engage in professional development and incorporate the latest research into their teaching practice to provide the best possible learning environment.

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.

Joy of Learning

The highest priority of the Junior School is to foster a joy of learning. Joyful learning empowers young minds to explore, question, and imagine without limits. This joy is woven into a culture of excellence that drives our commitment to helping each child reach their full potential. Our school exudes warmth, and parents tell us that their children love coming to school and being a part of our community.

Everything Under One Roof

SMUS families appreciate the wide variety of opportunities offered in one place. With after-school care, before and after school sports, a diverse selection of extra-curricular clubs, and weekend sports, you won't need to drive all over town to give your children a variety of experiences.

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
- Mathematics
- 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

Language Arts

At the Junior School, we believe that mastering essential literacy skills is a vital part of academic success and lifelong learning. Through a thoughtful and balanced approach to instruction, our students develop the skills to become confident and joyful readers, writers and communicators. From essential phonics and decoding strategies to comprehension and critical thinking, our comprehensive literacy curriculum strives to meet the needs of all our learners. Whether it's through author visits, book clubs, or writing workshops, we aim to inspire a love of literacy that lasts a lifetime.

Mathematics

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 our students' 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. Our Outdoor Education program helps

link the curriculum to our local environment. We also partner with various local organizations 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 musical performance at the McPherson Playhouse in downtown Victoria.

French

Students begin learning French in Junior 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.

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 a half day regularly scheduled in their timetable. Our program provides time for students to develop outdoor skills, gain an appreciation of nature, and learn about Indigenous 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 Library Learning Commons 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. Providing the opportunity for students to build these life skills in areas of leadership and service align with our focus on character education.

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 collaboratively engage in the design thinking process, clay animation projects, robotics and more.

Physical Education

Children build physical literacy through movement, play, and developing skills of different games and sports. Skills are developed while establishing a love for activity and healthy living.

Athletics

Athletics at the Junior School emphasises participation, fair play and healthy living. Our goals – through physical education classes 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 be involved in Middle and Senior 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

Extracurricular Clubs

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 they can join include:

- Art
- Board Games
- Buddy Reading
- Chess
- Design Challenge
- Language Clubs
- Gardening
- LEGO Robotics
- Maker
- Master Chef
- Public Speaking
- Scratch Coding
- Sewing
- Sports
- Survival
- Yoga and Mindfulness

Supporting Young Learners

The experience of transitioning to a school 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 the 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.

Home Learning

We believe in a healthy home learning balance which creates a link between home and school. At the Junior School it 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. We aim to build a culture of self care throughout our community in the early years. At the Junior School, this may look like participating in engaging activities such as planting a garden or taking a yoga class.

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, The School Counsellor is available at the Junior School five days a week to promote a healthy, positive balance 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. The counsellor provides 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 Portrait of a Learner, which is not just about ensuring positive choices at school but about ensuring that students build skills for life. The elements that make up the Portrait of a Learner include curiosity, resilience, integrity, well-being, initiative, collaboration and empathy.

Each month, we highlight a different trait, and the whole school works together to reflect and act upon that trait and how it impacts others. The Portrait of a Learner brings out the best in each child and helps them understand how to live a life guided by good character traits.

Leadership

Starting in Junior 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 one of the pillars of our school 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, such as baking and selling gingerbread cookies during the winter holiday season.

Community Time

Every Monday morning, community time is held at the Junior School. Led by Rev. Fletcher, Community Time 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. Community time at the Junior School is usually centred around a story, most often connected to the Portrait of a Learner. Family members and guests are always welcome to attend

School and Families 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 families 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.

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 leading by example. Our teachers are life-long learners. 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 more enriching 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.

Communicating with Home

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 meetings and conferences, report cards and celebrations of learning. Teachers and directors are always visible and engaged in the daily life of the school community. At SMUS, we ensure that there is open and continuous dialogue.

Junior School Community

Our school really is a family, and the adult community plays a big role in the joy and success of the school. Families are invited to our community events throughout the year. You are also encouraged to become involved. There are many opportunities to become involved, including volunteering in the Library Learning Commons, helping with costumes, props and sets for our productions, accompanying on field trips, joining our school welcome committee and being a part of our Parents' Auxiliary.

Supporting Families 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 have a snack, play outdoors or in the gym, and do arts and crafts.

Weekend Sports

Most Saturdays and Sundays throughout the school year, we host free weekend sports activities for Junior Kindergarten to Grade 5 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.





APPLY TO SMUS

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 Office is here to guide you through the application process. Please contact us at any time if we can assist you.

The SMUS Admissions office

Phone: 1-250-592-2411

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

Email: admissions@smus.ca

Web: smus.ca/admissions

How to Apply to St. Michaels University School

The school year at SMUS starts just after Labour Day in September. We strongly recommend you apply one year ahead of the desired entry year.

Step 1: Complete an online application

Applying to SMUS is a multi-step process. Before your child's application is reviewed by the Admissions Office, you will be asked to create an account through our Admissions Portal at smus.ca/apply. This account will manage the admissions and assessment process of your child. Once you have created this account, you will be asked to complete and submit a series of forms and documents. Depending on the program and grade, this may include a questionnaire, a confidential reference, report cards and a verification of citizenship. Once you have gathered these supporting documents, this process should take you no more than 30 minutes to complete. Only parents or guardians can submit applications. There is a non-refundable application fee you will pay at the time of applying.

Step 2: Interview and assessments

After you submit your application and supporting documents, the application will be reviewed by our Admissions office. You and your child will be invited to the Junior School for a campus visit and assessment tailored to the appropriate grade.

Step 3: Admissions notifies you of the decision

The Admissions office will then assess your full application and notify you of the result. Your application will be placed in one of three categories:

- **Offer:** Your application is successful and you have been offered a place at SMUS.
- **Wait Pool:** Your application is placed in the wait pool and you will be notified should a space for your child become available.
- **Non-Acceptance:** Your application is unsuccessful. This can be because of limited space or the Admissions office does not believe the program is the right fit for your child at this time.

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 Information

Information about tuition fees for Junior School is available from the Fees and Financial Support page on the school's website smus.ca.

The school assumes that parents, to the extent that they are able, will bear the primary responsibility for financing their children's education. However, if you need extra help meeting the cost of tuition then you may wish to consider our Financial Aid program. An early application is advised but no offer of financial aid is made until you have an offer of a place at SMUS.

We recognize Patricia Trottier's generous philanthropic support of SMUS, specifically for her gift in support of the Trottier-Morgan Annex at Junior School pictured here.



Becoming a Lifer

A Lifer is a student who begins at SMUS in either Junior Kindergarten, 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 Junior 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.



We can offer many of the opportunities in this viewbook because of the generous donations to our Annual Fund 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.



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