

# Growing Stronger Together

Project 25



ST  
COLUMBA'S  
SCHOOL



# Growing Stronger Together

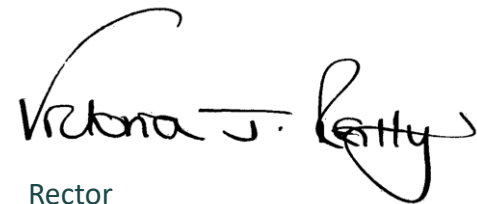
We are excited to announce that we will be bringing together our Junior and Senior schools to create a single united school campus in 2025. This strategic move is one step in our long-term plans for securing the future of our school, and providing a superior educational experience for all of our students.

## Evolving to meet the future needs of all of our students

Our priority is to continue to provide an affordable independent education in Kilmacolm which offers excellent teaching and delivers outstanding pastoral care in the best possible facilities and our move to one school on one campus will support that goal.

## Creating a Seamless Experience from Early Years to Senior School

With this ambitious project, we will be able to create an unparalleled education and school experience for our pupils of all ages and stages.

Victoria J. Kelly

Rector



# Our Purpose & Strategy

St Columba's Board of Governors has focused much of its work over the last 12 months on planning for the future of the school at a time of uncertainty for the independent school sector. Our priority is to continue to provide an affordable independent education in Kilmacolm which offers excellent teaching and delivers outstanding pastoral care in the best possible facilities.

Over a period of several years the Board has reviewed every aspect of the business to consider measures that can be put in place to increase the resilience of the School in the face of so many economic headwinds.

1

As one school on one site our operational costs will reduce significantly and the School will be in a much stronger position to keep future fee increases as low as possible and to plan further improvements to our estate when the economic climate improves.

2

A distinct Junior School is a valued feature of St Columba's educational offering, however the current facilities in our Knockbuckle Road Site need extensive improvements to meet the future needs of our students. By bringing our Junior School pupils into our state-of-the-art Girdwood Building we will be able to expand the opportunities available for every child.

3

The improvements to our school buildings will further strengthen our existing high standards of accessibility, creating a more inclusive community for all of our children.

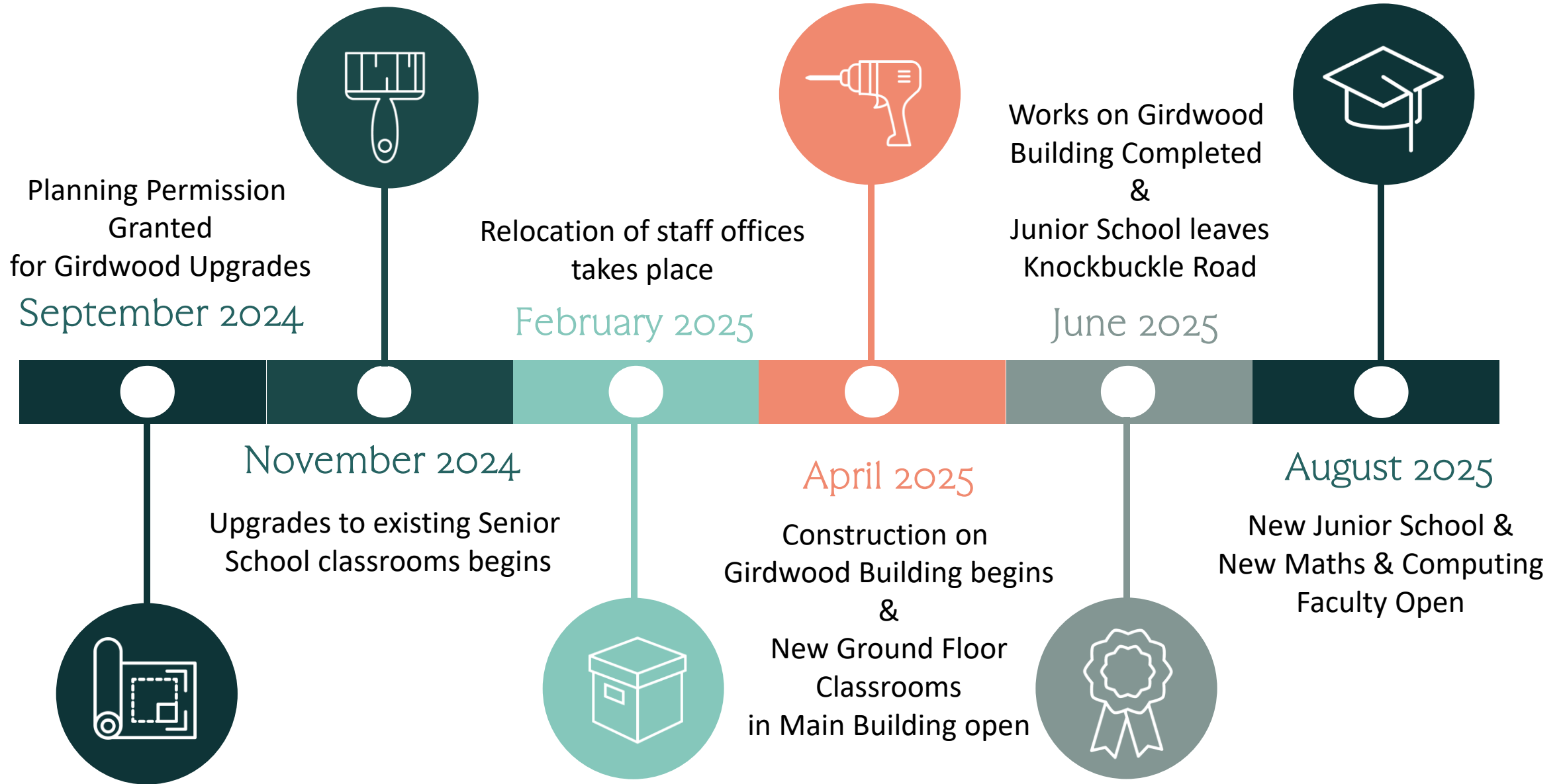


# Challenges & Solutions

- The Shalott building has long been the heart of our two school campuses, but its upkeep is no longer financially viable while it is largely unused by the School. The Board has explored many options, using detailed financial modelling and seeking professional advice for each possibility. The choice has ultimately been made to sell the building and part of the surrounding site.
- The move will also further integrate our two schools, creating more opportunities for senior pupils and furthering their growth into future leaders.



- The costs to operate and maintain the Junior School Buildings (Knockbuckle Road Site) have become excessive, and the improvements we would like to make to ensure these buildings are fit for use into the future have costs which are disproportionate to the benefits we would receive.
- The improvements to the Senior School site will create an even more inclusive and adaptable learning environment that will meet the highest accessibility standards.
- Managing two separate campuses brings logistical, security and supervision challenges, especially when the majority of support staff are located in the Senior campus.
- Our specialist music, art and science classrooms are based within the Senior School and by creating a single school campus, we will create an unparalleled learning experience for our Junior School pupils.
- We will retain part of the Wild Woods so that Junior School children can still learn in the outdoors and develop their resilience through exploring.



# Construction

Inverclyde Council has now granted planning permission for minor alterations to the Girdwood Building, including creating a new entrance and changes to the toilet and handwashing facilities. This work is scheduled to begin in April when senior pupils are on exam leave, creating space for Transitus and English lessons to be relocated to the main building

Work to upgrade classrooms for the new Maths and Computing Faculty on the ground floor of the main building is well underway and we aim to complete this in plenty of time for the new classrooms to be used in the Summer Term. New office spaces for the DMA and IT teams have also been agreed.

SQA examinations will mostly take place at the Junior School this year to avoid any possibility of noise disruption due to the work taking place in the Girdwood Building.

We have been assured that the noisiest work will take place during the Easter Break.

# Honouring a Legacy

The Shalott building is a highly valued part of our school and community. It is intertwined with the history of our school having been home to the school's boarders when it opened in 1930, and continuing to do so for over 40 years until being developed as our Junior School.

We are committed to keeping the legacy of Shalott as part of our history and identity as we move into this new chapter for our school.





# Questions

Q

**How will you ensure the safety of Junior School children on the Senior School site?**

A

The Junior School will be entirely separate to the Senior School with separate toilet facilities and safe play areas. New fences and gates will be erected to ensure that the area is completely safe. The use of shared facilities such as the assembly and lunch hall will be scheduled to protect Junior School children and ensure that they are not moving around the school during Senior School transition times. The safety of all pupils will always be our priority.

Q

**How will you make up for the loss of teaching space for Senior School Children?**

A

Senior School will lose the use of seven classrooms in the Girdwood Building. These will be replaced by repurposing rooms on the ground floor of the main building which are currently either un-used or used for office space. In this way, we will be able to locate a full Faculty on the ground floor of the Senior School's main building

Q

**Will this plan affect class sizes and the range of subjects offered?**

A

Class sizes will not be affected. Specialist teachers will continue to work with Junior School children and there will be no reduction in subjects offered to Senior School pupils.

# Questions

**Q** How will you manage increased traffic and parking around the Senior School Buildings?

**A** Careful planning and consultation is needed on this matter. We have been in contact with Inverclyde Council and we will work with them to discuss traffic management around the school. We will work with parents to discuss transport to and from school and explore the possibility of introducing safe drop-off zones or other alternatives.

**Q** What about the library? Where will pupils study?

**A** The library will become a multi-purpose area for the Junior School. The Senior School library has not been used as a lending library since the librarian retired in 2020. Sixth year pupils are able to study in their spacious Common Room or in the study room beside it and Senior V pupils who have free periods will be allocated classroom space for study periods. Room 1 – the original library will be an English Classroom and our Library Collection will be relocated there.

**Q** Outdoor education is invaluable to the development of our children, how will you compensate for the loss of the Wild Woods?

**A** We are happy to share that we will be retaining the Wild Woods as part of the school grounds. St Columba's School is absolutely committed to outdoor education at all stages, and we understand its importance throughout childhood and adolescence. Our rural setting enables us to access the outdoors easily.

**Q** Where will PE Lessons take place?

**A** Prior to the opening of our Games Hall, PE lessons were held in a gymnasium on the Senior School estate. This room was subsequently repurposed, but as part of the renovation, it and the surrounding area will be a gymnasium where Junior School pupils will have indoor lessons. School minibuses will be used to take children to the Games Hall or Birkmyre Park for athletics, rugby and other sports.

**Q** Will this affect outdoor areas for Senior School pupils?

**A** Senior School pupils will still make use of the rota for the use of the astro-turf and the two playgrounds at lunch time. They will lose the area in front of the Girdwood Building which, since COVID, has been allocated to Senior III. We will involve pupils in reviewing the use of our outdoor spaces during next session.

**Q** How will you ensure that Senior School pupils can sit exams without disturbance from Junior School children?

**A** Currently most pupils sit their SQA exams in the Junior School hall which is beside the Junior 1 and 2 classrooms. In future, exams taken in the Senior School main building will be further from the Junior School children.

**Q** Will there still be a Wellbeing Room?

**A** Yes, the Wellbeing Room and Listening Room will remain on the ground floor of the main building. Nurse Lynne will be able to support Junior School staff and children much more readily when we are all on one site.





# ST COLUMBA'S SCHOOL

St Columba's School, Duchal Road, Kilmacolm, PA13 4AU

**Email:** [admissions@st-columbas.org](mailto:admissions@st-columbas.org) **Telephone:** 01505 872238

[st-columbas.org](http://st-columbas.org)

~

Registered Charity No. SC012598