

# Merchiston Castle to offer co-ed pre-School and Junior School places

Independent boys' school, [Merchiston](#) has announced it will open a co-educational forest Pre-School and Junior School to meet the booming demand for outdoor learning for younger children.

Merchiston has a large wooded campus, and *The Forest* pre-school will open in September 2024 for children aged 3-5.

At the same time *The Forest* co-educational Junior school will accept Primary 1 to Primary 3s in Sept 2024 (with the Junior School being fully co-educational by 2030).

The announcement comes in the wake of Forest Schools Association ([FSA](#)) [research](#) which states that two-thirds of UK schools had experienced an increase in demand for places at forest schools as parents seek alternatives paths to traditional education following the pandemic.



Merchiston School, Edinburgh.  
Forest School images.

Pic PHIL WILKINSON

### ***Where learning happens naturally***

Under the banner '*Where learning happens naturally,*' *The Forest* brand mirrors the core aims of Merchiston, with a focus on wellbeing and developing the potential of every individual so that they thrive. Its nurturing approach and stunning, wooded environment will give children the physical freedom to learn and grow in a natural environment underpinned by the very best educational methodology.

*The Forest* at Merchiston will be a unique offering within Edinburgh focussing on learning through play, the natural environment, limitless adventures, and child-led learning all with a foundation in academic excellence. Teaching will be child-centred with high staff/child ratios and small class groupings. As well as an idyllic start to their education,

the boys and girls will receive the very best academic start.

Jonathan Anderson, Headmaster said: “Merchiston has provided a world-class, outward-looking education for boys and young men for nearly 200 years. Since our establishment, we have continuously evolved our offering, through bold and innovative approaches that are at the cutting edge of education.

“With the introduction of *The Forest* Pre-School and Junior School, we will meet the huge demand for alternative approaches and offer the very best in the formative early years of education.

“Our Forest pioneers will embark on a nurturing educational journey immersed in and surrounded by nature, allowing them to flourish as individuals throughout their academic years and beyond.

“It is a momentous occasion for Merchiston, as we extend our exceptional educational offering to girls as well as boys for the first time in nearly 200 years.”



Merchiston School, Edinburgh.  
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## Pre-registrations are open now

Places at *The Forest* at Merchiston are extremely limited and anticipated to be in high demand from Edinburgh families due to the unique, ground-breaking approach that reflects the educational desires of modern families.

Prospective families of boys and girls are invited to register their interest by contacting *The Forest* admissions team to learn more about their son or daughter joining by emailing [TheForest@merchiston.co.uk](mailto:TheForest@merchiston.co.uk)

A series of family-friendly information events will take place from Autumn 2022 and early registration is recommended.

## Merchiston Castle School remains all-boys

Merchiston Castle Senior School will remain Scotland's only all-boys independent boarding and day school, providing exceptional education for boys aged 12 -18.

With the opening of *The Forest* at Merchiston, girls will be able to join from Pre-School (aged 3) up to aged 12, at the end of the Junior School. All girls will be supported at that time in choosing the next step of their education.



Merchiston School, Edinburgh.  
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