

James Gill

Class of 2003

Banker



James's Story

Note to younger self: "Learn a skill consistently; even if you do a little bit every day, it'll add up. For example if you learn a language you won't just learn a language; you'll learn to understand the culture of a language."

When James attended St John's College, there were no hockey fields and the science block wasn't there either. The student roll was around 300 - a size that suited him just fine. It allowed for building connections with peers, the principal, and staff - everyone knew each other well.

"Building positive relationships and the ability to talk and relate to people from all walks of life and different cultures is important in life, and especially valuable in business."

Looking back at his time at St John's, James emphasises the impact the school's values and culture had - and continues to have - on his life. Everyone was seen as equal; there was no racism and no stigmas. He also notes receiving a well-rounded education and the tools to problem solve and articulate solutions - all transferable skills that remain highly valuable in the business world.

James had started playing golf before high school, but his golfing career really took off while at St John's - he missed quite a few classes. He is grateful for the flexibility the school showed. Then Principal Ray Scott allowed him to reduce the number of subjects he took and ultimately wrote to NZQA to support his request to leave St John's after 6th form and enter the University of Waikato a year early.

His study at Waikato was followed by a Master in Finance at St Andrew's in Scotland. But it was his golfing that took him all over the globe.



After playing golf competitively for a few years, he had a bad back injury and had to regroup. However, his work took him to London, back to Auckland, and now to Hong Kong, where he's worked for HSBC for the past five years.

Hong Kong is home for now. He's busy learning Chinese and admits it's a bit harder to pick up another language later in life.

"Golf enabled me to travel the world and compete at a higher level. It helped pay for my education at Waikato and my Masters at St Andrew's. It also taught me how to talk to people and relate to people from many different cultures and backgrounds."