



PORTSMOUTH ABBEY SCHOOL

Covid-19 Related Changes

The following information details how Portsmouth Abbey School made adjustments to respond to difficulty incurred by the pandemic.

Academic Program and Grading 2019-2020: The Abbey is on a trimester system, thus 2/3 of the final grade for each class during the 2019-2020 school year was completed under normal educational circumstances (two ten-week terms, two final exams). The Abbey moved to distance learning for the final trimester after spring break 2020 in response to Covid-19 related restrictions. Students continued to take all of their respective courses and complete both synchronous and asynchronous work through various online platforms through the end of May, concluding instruction at the same time they would have done so under normal circumstances. While students did not take final exams, those taking AP courses were expected to take the AP exams offered online by the College Board. The Abbey maintained a full grading policy (A-F scale), and the spring trimester made up the usual 1/3 of the final year-end course grade.

Co-curricular Program 2019-2020: Student leaders continued to work with classmates through on-line platforms. The Student Life Office held class elections: candidates wrote speeches, posted videos, and elections were held online. Prospective prefects, International Student leaders, and captains went through application and interview processes. While nearly all off campus/summer opportunities were cancelled, those students awarded Haney Fellowships were invited to revise and resubmit new plans in response to pandemic related hardships.

Fall 2020: The Abbey plans on holding full in-person school and running the full range of co-curricular programming for those students who can come to campus. For those unable to travel to Rhode Island, the school will also host a robust synchronous and asynchronous online program. We will maintain a full grading system and the trimester will end before Thanksgiving break. All students will shift to distance learning for the time after Thanksgiving and before Christmas (which marks the start of winter term). We plan to resume in-person learning after Christmas break for those who can return to campus.



PORTSMOUTH ABBEY SCHOOL PROFILE 2020 - 2021

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CEEB Code: 400130

THE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY - Founded by the Rev. Dom Hugh Diman in 1926, as an independent Catholic preparatory boarding school under the auspices of the English Benedictine Congregation, Portsmouth Abbey School is located in Rhode Island, on Aquidneck Island, overlooking the Narragansett Bay, eight miles north of Newport. The school immerses students in a rigorous study of the foundations of Western civilization, intellectual tradition, and culture to instill in its students the Benedictine love of knowledge, study, discussion, and the exchange of ideas. The mission: to help young men and women grow in knowledge and grace by fostering reverence for God and the human person, respect for learning and order, and responsibility for the shared experience of community life. While the student body is predominantly Catholic (about two-thirds), students from all faiths find a warm welcome at the Abbey. Forty-nine percent of the student body receives \$5.6 million in financial aid. Portsmouth Abbey regularly enrolls students from such programs as The Wight Foundation, A Better Chance, New Jersey Seeds, and other community-based organizations dedicated to providing an education for underserved populations. The Abbey also serves as a "prep year" for students entering the U.S. Military and Naval Academies. There are 46 lay teachers and three monks on the faculty; 38 faculty members, or 78%, hold advanced degrees, nine of them at the doctorate level. The school operates on a trimester system and classes are conducted six days a week. Finally, the school names class years using the British National system: Third Form is freshman year; Fourth Form, sophomore; Fifth Form, junior; and Sixth Form, senior year.

STUDENT BODY:

Students come from 25 states, Puerto Rico, D.C., and 14 foreign countries. **There are 87 students in the Sixth Form**, all of whom are expected to attend college.

	Boys	Girls	Total
Boarding	119	100	219
Day	45	49	95
Total	164	149	313

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- If schools ask about discipline issues, students are expected to self-report; counselors confirm the accuracy of the details and outcomes.
- By school policy, counselor and teacher recommendations are confidential.
- Students are counseled not to list other schools to which they are applying.
- Students are counseled to list schools in alphabetical order on the FAFSA.

ACCREDITATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS:

Portsmouth Abbey School is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. The Abbey holds memberships in many organizations including the National Association for College Admission Counseling, New England Association for College Admission Counseling, National Association of Independent Schools, and Association of College Counselors in Independent Schools.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF OUR PROGRAMMING:

- Students entering the Third Form are required to study Latin for one year.
- Students are required to take a religion course each year. The religion courses include an academic exploration of theology, church history, and ethics, and an examination of the application of Catholic doctrine and ethics in such areas as public policy and biomedical issues.

Daniel McDonough, Headmaster

COLLEGE COUNSELING OFFICE

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-The comprehensive writing instruction, which takes place across all Forms and disciplines, culminates in two major assignments: a formal US History paper using the Chicago Manual of Style; an Independent Sixth Form Thesis in MLA doing an extended critical analysis of a major work of literature.

- During the Fourth-Form year students enroll in Humanities: a double-block, double-credit, interdisciplinary Great Books course, which provides students with an intensive grounding in the language, literature, history, theology, and philosophy of western civilization. Students study such foundational texts as Augustine's *Confessions*, Dante's *Inferno*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Shakespeare's *Macbeth* as well as works by Descartes, Pascal, de Tocqueville, Kierkegaard, Freud, and others. Seminar work is supplemented by plenary sessions discussing unifying themes and issues. Twice per week students meet to work on creative and expository writing.

-Portsmouth Abbey runs a Physics-First sequence that allows the scientific process to evolve from the fundamental laws of our universe (Physics), to the changes of matter in response to those laws (Chemistry), to the emergence and behavior and interaction of lifeforms made up of that matter (Biology). Each course translates theory to practice and experimentation in the laboratory where students are required to test and prove ideas in guided and open-inquiry experiments that highlight the importance of failure, refinement, and effective scientific communication.

- The Mathematics Department's objectives are to develop critical thinking skills, train students to become problem solvers, and foster concise logical reasoning skills. To achieve this goal, the Department places an emphasis on problem solving in formative courses (Algebra, Geometry, Algebra II), where students develop the strategies and skills needed to solve challenging word problems and to learn to express solutions in a logical manner. Upper-level math opportunities at Portsmouth include four AP courses, AB and BC Calculus, Statistics, and Computer Science. Advanced students can select from a rotating set of college-level, post-AP courses. In recent years we have covered Multivariable Calculus, Linear Algebra, Real Analysis, Differential Equations and Number Theory.

- Portsmouth Abbey does not offer an honors track in History, Humanities, or English. The rigor of the curriculum in these courses serves to challenge our very best students while the small class sizes and conference periods offer support for students who struggle and opportunities for advanced avenues of study for the most skilled. The humanities, as the name declares, is the study of what makes us human—our ideas, beliefs, emotions, culture, and history. So sweeping a subject demands a full response from its students, as well. The ideal humanities seminar asks us to read with both our heart and our head; to draw upon our experience, not just our intellect.

Every individual, not just a select few, can contribute to the group project of understanding our human condition.

-Students are required to be involved in a co-curricular, after-school program each term.

-Because of the inherent rigor of the curriculum and the unique graduation requirements, students are limited in the number of honors and Advanced Placement courses in which they can enroll. Therefore, it is extremely rare for a Portsmouth Abbey student to take an AP course before Fifth Form year; our top students will graduate with 6 to 8 AP courses.

-The presence of Benedictine monks in the monastery on campus exerts a profound influence on our community. No matter a student's religious beliefs, he or she cannot help but benefit from daily interaction with a community of men who have chosen to live their beliefs.

SCHOOL-WIDE LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

Student Government: the Head Boy and Head Girl are elected by the student body and together function as student body presidents. In addition to the Head Boy and Head Girl, student government is made up of the president and vice president of each Form (grade), as well as one elected representative from each house (dorm).

Prefects are chosen through an extremely competitive process to serve as liaisons between house parents and students. Their primary role is to set a positive and healthy tone in the dorms. Their responsibilities include everything from daily tasks—proctoring study hall, taking attendance, keeping order—to acting as mentors and role models in their dorms. Prefects are some of the best, most respected students on campus.

The Abbey's **Honor Committee** and **Discipline Committee** are both comprised of three student members and select faculty. Selection to either committee is an indication of the high regard in which the student is held by the faculty, administration, and peers.

Red Key Heads are chosen by the Admission Office to mentor tour guides, help with admission functions, and assist with student recruitment.

International Student Leaders are a select group of Sixth Formers chosen from among our international student population to act as liaisons and mentors to our international community.

Other leadership opportunities include but are not limited to editors of the school's major publications (yearbook, Gregorian; literary magazine, The Raven; and newspaper, The Beacon); captains of athletic teams; and in the performing arts, stage manager, section leaders, directors, arrangers, choreographers.

CO-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES:

Portsmouth Abbey students are required to be involved in a co-curricular, after-school program each term. Other clubs and activities are offered during the school day, in the evenings, and on weekends.

Academic: Activities and competitions (generally conducted during the school day, evenings, and weekends) include Model United Nations, New England Math League, American Mathematics Competition, National Latin Exam, Poetry Out Loud, various robotics and computer programming competitions, The Art and Science Expo, and the Physics Department Build-a-Boat-Competition. The Portsmouth Abbey Science Department funds up to 10 proposals (maximum of 500 dollars/proposal) per year modeled on the National Science Foundation's (NSF) pre-doctoral fellowship to encourage and incentivize professional, open-inquiry, and outside-the-box scientific experimentation and communication at an early stage in the student's academic career.

Community Service: All students are invited to perform community service. Students may participate in one or more of the after-school service

internships that provide support for local aid organizations and schools. Expanded service projects include the Clothe-a-Child program, the DC March for Life, and the local Walk for Cancer. Students are welcome to, and often do, create new opportunities for service.

Visual and Performing Arts: The Visual Arts Department's after-school program allows students to pursue independent projects under the mentoring of the art faculty. Many students submit work to and receive recognition from regional art competitions.

The Performing Arts Department offers after-school programs that include opportunities for the study of, participation in, and leadership in drama, vocal and instrumental music, dance, and stage crew. Music students have successfully participated and/or competed in the Rhode Island All-State Music Festival.

Athletics: Most Abbey students compete in at least one sport each year; many compete in two or three. Portsmouth Abbey fields 25 varsity teams in 18 sports, with JV teams available in most sports. In the past year, 39 athletes were selected All-League, nine were selected All-New England, and one was selected "Player of the Year."

Publications: Abbey students are involved in the planning, writing, editing, art and photography, layout, graphic design, and publication of the school newspaper, literary magazine, and yearbook.

SUMMER PROGRAMS:

Grants from the **Haney Fellowship** fund four or five students per year to pursue independent projects of their own creation over the summer before their Sixth Form year. Applicants must present a proposal for a project that will deepen a particular academic, artistic, or cultural interest, and competition is fierce. Recent grants have funded coaching a community baseball team in the Dominican Republic and Chelsea, MA; work as a tutor in a Navajo Nation; teaching women English and computer skills in Nepal; building sanitation facilities in Cambodia; and volunteering at an Asian American Civic Association in Boston.

The **Ali Sacco Internship** funds 1 student a year to spend two weeks during the pre-Sixth Form summer in Boston shadowing pediatric cardiologists at Boston Children's Hospital.

The **Lourdes Pilgrimage** sends a small, select group of Abbey students to Lourdes, France each summer for a week of assisting pilgrims with physical disabilities.

Students joining the **Spain Study Program** spend three weeks earning six credits at the Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca studying the language and culture.

There are also many summer cultural enrichment programs including the Humanities Rome Program and Ireland/England Trip for Theater and Music.

TESTING DATA:

The following scores are for the class of 2021 as of June 2020. This data includes students whose native language is not English.

SAT Scores—Middle 50%

Students tested	EBRW	Mathematics	Total
60	580-650	570-630	1140-1280

ACT Scores—Middle 50%

Students tested	English	Math	Reading	Science	STEM	Composite
12	23-28	24-26	25-30	24-27	25-26	26-28

GRADES: Grades are reported on a letter scale: A+ through D; F is a failure. GPAs calculated on a 4.0 scale; no courses are weighted; no cumulative GPA is reported; we do not rank students.

For the purpose of computing grade point averages, quality points are assigned to letter grades as follows:

A+ = 4.3 A = 4.0 A- = 3.8 B+ = 3.5 B = 3.0 B- = 2.8
C+ = 2.5 C = 2.0 C- = 1.8 D+ = 1.5 D = 1.0 F = 0

PROGRAM OF STUDY:

Calendar and Credits: Trimesters; fall term grades are mid-year grades. A student will carry a 6-credit course load. All courses are year-long and earn 1 credit with the exception of: Ancient History and Basic Theology each of which carry a half a credit in the Third Form year; and Fourth Form Humanities, a double-block, two-credit Great Books course which satisfies both English and European History requirements.

Graduation Requirements: theology, 4; English, 4; math, 3; laboratory sciences, 2; history, 2; foreign language, 3 in 1 language or 2 each in 2 languages; visual or performing arts 1; students entering in the Third Form must take a year of Latin; 95% of students graduate with 4 or more years of mathematics and 3 or more of laboratory science.

Course Offerings: The School offers a broad range of Advanced Placement courses, which vary from year to year based on interest. For the academic year 2020-2021, 16 AP courses are offered. Due to the inherent rigor of the curriculum and the unique graduation requirements, students are limited in the number of AP courses in which they can enroll. Therefore it is extremely rare for a student to take an AP course before Fifth-Form year; our top students will graduate with 6 to 8 AP courses. Honors courses (H) are offered in math, science, and languages. Well-qualified students who have excelled in and exhausted our curricular offerings, including AP courses, in a subject area may be invited to participate in courses developed to provide college-level instruction in that area. These post-AP courses are marked with an asterisk (*) on transcripts. The Advanced Topics in Mathematics course may include Multivariable Calculus, Linear Algebra, Real Analysis and/or Number Theory.

Portsmouth Abbey School is a member of the Cum Laude Society, which recognizes high academic achievement by secondary school students. Cum Laude members are chosen and inducted in Sixth-Form year.

While course offerings may vary slightly from year to year, Portsmouth Abbey School generally offers all or most of the following:

Religion

Basic Theology, Advanced Theology, Topics in Theology, Schola

Humanities

Humanities (English, European History, and Theology; 2 credits awarded)

English

Introduction to Literature (Form 3)
Humanities (Form 4)
American Literature (Form 5)

English Seminar and Thesis (Form 6)
Creative Writing (elective, Form 4, 5 or 6)
English Literature AP (Form 6)

Classical Languages

Latin 1, 1H, 2, 2H, 3, 3H, AP
Greek 1, 2, 3H, 4H

Modern Languages

French 1, 2, 2H, 3, 3H, 4H, AP French Language
Spanish 1, 2, 2H, 3, 3H, 4, 4H, AP Spanish Language
Chinese 1, 2, 3, 4H, 5 AP

History

Ancient and Medieval History
Humanities
U.S. History, AP U.S. History
AP European History
Political Science/Economics/International Relations
Rhode Island History H

Mathematics

Algebra 1
Geometry
Algebra II/Analysis, Algebra II/Analysis H
Pre calculus, Pre calculus H
AP Calculus AB
AP Calculus BC
AP Statistics
Advanced Topics in Math* (Post-AP)
AP Computer Science

Science

Conceptual Physics, Conceptual Physics H, AP Physics C: Mechanics,
Independent Study in Physics* (Post-AP)
Chemistry 1, Chemistry 1H, AP Chemistry
Biology, Biology H, AP Biology
Infectious Diseases
Medical Physiology
Environmental and Marine Science

Visual Arts

The Fundamentals of Art
2-D Art
Ceramics
Photography
Advanced Art
AP Art History

Performing Arts

Music Technology
AP Music Theory
Theater
Drama Workshop

MATRICULATION LIST – Members of the class of 2020 were admitted to over 190 different colleges and universities and choose to attend the following 62 schools:

American University	Fairfield University	Rhode Island College (2)	University of Illinois at Chicago
Babson College	Fordham University	Salve Regina University	University of Illinois at UC
Boston University (7)	George Washington University (2)	School of the Art Institute of Chicago	University of Michigan
Brown University	Grove City College	Sewanee (2)	University of Notre Dame (2)
Bucknell University (2)	Harvard College	Smith College	University of Pennsylvania (2)
Catholic University of America (2)	Howard University	Southern Methodist University (3)	University of Rhode Island (3)
Colby College	Ithaca College	Stonehill College (2)	University of San Diego
Colgate University	Johns Hopkins University (3)	Syracuse University	University of San Francisco
College of the Holy Cross (2)	Kenyon College	Trinity College (2)	University of South Carolina
Colorado School of Mines	Lindenwood University	UNED	University of Southern California
Connecticut College (3)	Loyola University New Orleans	US Merchant Marine Academy (2)	University of St Andrews
Cornell University	Marist College	US Naval Academy	University of Virginia
Dartmouth College	Northeastern University (2)	University College Dublin	Villanova University
Davidson College	Pace University-New York	University of Cincinnati	Washington University St Louis (2)
Emmanuel College	Providence College (3)	University of Georgia	Worcester Polytechnic Institute
	Purdue University	University of Houston-Clear Lake	

