



## PORTSMOUTH ABBEY SCHOOL

### Covid-19 Related Changes

The following details how Portsmouth Abbey School responded to the pandemic.

**2019-2020 School Year:** 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.

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.

**2020-2021 School Year:** The Abbey held full in-person school and ran the full range of co-curricular programming for those students who could come to campus. For those unable to travel to Rhode Island, the school hosted a robust synchronous and asynchronous online program. We maintained a full grading system (A-F). The fall trimester ended before Thanksgiving break, as is typical. All students shifted to distance learning for the time after Thanksgiving and before Christmas (which marked the start of winter term). We resumed in-person learning after Christmas break for those who could return to campus, and ran our full academic and co-curricular programming through the 2021 graduation. While we did not give final exams in each course as is typical, we did run College Board AP exams. We gave 308 AP exams total and only 45 of those exams were taken by distance learners on-line.

While sports teams were restricted to campus, students still participated in daily sport-specific training and frequent intra-squad scrimmages. Students also participated in out of season practice with coaches on weekends. The Theater Department put on three major productions following Covid protocols, one per term (as is typical). The Music and Dance Departments also conducted regular rehearsals and gave performances. Most clubs and organizations met for regular meetings and planned Covid-safe events.

**2021-2022 School Year:** The Abbey will hold full in-person school only with the full range of co-curricular programming.



# PORTSMOUTH ABBEY SCHOOL PROFILE 2021 - 2022

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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. While the student body is predominantly Catholic (about two-thirds), students from all faiths find a warm welcome at the Abbey. Forty-five percent of the student body receives \$5.7 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 44 lay teachers and three monks on the faculty; 37 faculty members, or 80%, 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 23 states and 22 foreign counties. **There are 86 students in the Sixth Form**, all of whom are expected to attend college.

|          | Boys | Girls | Total |
|----------|------|-------|-------|
| Boarding | 137  | 115   | 252   |
| Day      | 40   | 46    | 86    |
| Total    | 177  | 161   | 338   |

## IMPORTANT NOTES:

- If schools ask about discipline issues, students are expected to self-report; counselors confirm the accuracy of the details and outcomes if asked by the college.
- 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 theology course each year. The 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.
- The comprehensive writing instruction, which takes place across all Forms and disciplines, culminates in two major assignments: a formal US History

Matthew Walter, *Acting Headmaster*

### COLLEGE COUNSELING OFFICE

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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. 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. Ex-

panded 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. Abbey teams win championships, successfully compete at a local, regional, and national level; our athletes earn All-League, All-State, All-New England, and All-American honors. Many Abbey athletes continue to be student-athletes at the college level.

**Publications:** Abbey students are involved in the planning, writing, editing, art and photography, layout, graphic design, and publication of the school newspaper, two literary magazines, yearbook, and a scientific journal.

### 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 2022 as of June 2021. This data includes 21 students whose native language is not English.

#### SAT Scores – Middle 50%

| Students tested | EBRW    | Mathematics | Total     |
|-----------------|---------|-------------|-----------|
| 72              | 540-680 | 550-670     | 1090-1360 |

#### ACT Scores – Median

| Students tested | English | Math | Reading | Science | STEM | Composite |
|-----------------|---------|------|---------|---------|------|-----------|
| 4               | 34.5    | 27   | 34      | 28      | 35   | 31        |

**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 2021-2022, 15 AP course are offered. Because of 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:

#### **Theology**

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)  
AP English Literature (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  
European History H  
AP US Government and Politics  
AP World History  
Rhode Island History H

#### **Mathematics**

Algebra 1  
Geometry  
Algebra II/Analysis, Algebra II/Analysis H  
Pre calculus, Pre calculus H  
Economics  
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, Green Chemistry\* (Post-AP)  
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**

Fundamentals of Digital Media Production  
AP Music Theory

#### **Theater**

Drama Workshop

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#### **MATRICULATION LIST –** *Members of the class of 2021 were admitted to over 190 different college and universities and choose to attend the following 66 schools:*

|  |                              |  |  |
|--|------------------------------|--|--|
| Amherst College                            | Drexel University            | Ohio Wesleyan University               | United States Military Academy (3)         |
| Barnard College                            | Elmira College               | Providence College (2)                 | United States Naval Academy                |
| Bates College                              | Emory University             | Purdue University-Main Campus          | University of California-Berkeley          |
| Boston University (6)                      | Fairfield University         | Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute       | University of California-Davis             |
| Bristol, University of the West of England | Fitchburg State University   | Rhode Island School of Design          | University of California-Santa Barbara     |
| Brown University                           | Florida State University     | Rhodes College                         | University of Chicago                      |
| Bryant University                          | Fordham University (2)       | Sacred Heart University                | University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign |
| Case Western Reserve University            | George Washington University | Saint Anselm College                   | University of Miami (2)                    |
| Catholic University of America             | Georgetown University (2)    | Salve Regina University (2)            | University of Rhode Island (3)             |
| Clark University                           | High Point University        | Santa Clara University                 | University of Richmond                     |
| Colby College                              | Johns Hopkins University     | Soka University of America             | University of Vermont                      |
| College of the Holy Cross                  | Lehigh University            | Texas A & M University-College Station | University of Virginia                     |
| College of William and Mary                | Marist College               | Texas Christian University             | University of Wisconsin-Madison            |
| Connecticut College (3)                    | MCPHS University             | Texas Tech University                  | Villanova University                       |
| Davidson College                           | Montclair State University   | The College of Wooster                 | Wake Forest University                     |
| Denison University                         | Northeastern University (2)  | The University of Alabama              | Wofford College                            |
|  | Northwestern University      | The University of the South            |  |

GRADE DISTRIBUTION CLASS OF 2022 – FIFTH FORM GRADES

Portsmouth Abbey School does not report rank for its students; we do supply grades distribution for the final grades of Fifth-Form students.

| COURSE:              | A+ | A  | A- | B+ | B  | B- | C+ | C | C- | D+ | D | F |
|----------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|----|----|---|---|
| Advanced Art         | 1  | 1  | 1  |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Advanced Theology    | 14 | 35 | 17 | 7  | 3  |    | 2  | 1 |    | 1  |   |   |
| Algebra II/Analysis  |    | 1  | 4  | 3  | 2  | 1  |    |   |    |    | 1 |   |
| American Literature  | 4  | 12 | 13 | 21 | 11 | 9  | 3  | 3 |    | 5  | 1 |   |
| Art History AP       |    | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Biology              |    | 7  | 14 | 7  | 3  |    | 2  |   |    |    |   |   |
| Biology H            | 1  | 6  | 3  |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Biology AP           | 1  | 1  | 2  | 2  |    |    |    |   |    |    | 1 |   |
| Calculus AB (AP)     | 2  | 6  |    | 1  | 1  |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Calculus BC (AP)     | 5  | 2  | 2  | 1  |    |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Ceramics             |    | 1  | 1  |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Chemistry            | 1  | 2  | 2  | 1  | 1  | 1  |    |   | 1  |    |   |   |
| Chemistry (AP)       | 5  |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Chinese 1            |    |    | 1  |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Chinese 2            |    | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Chinese 3            |    |    | 1  |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Chinese 4H           |    | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Computer Science AP  | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |    | 1 |    |    |   |   |
| Conceptual Physics   |    |    |    | 1  | 1  |    | 2  |   |    |    |   |   |
| Conceptual Physics H |    |    |    | 1  |    |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| French 2H            |    | 2  |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| French 3H            | 2  | 1  | 2  | 2  |    |    | 1  |   |    |    |   |   |
| French AP            |    | 3  | 3  | 1  | 1  | 1  |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Fundamentals of Art  | 1  |    | 1  | 1  |    |    | 1  |   |    |    |   |   |
| Graph Theory         | 1  |    |    |    | 1  |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Infectious Disease   |    |    | 2  |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Latin 2H             |    |    | 1  | 1  |    |    |    |   |    | 1  |   |   |
| Latin 3H             | 4  | 3  | 2  | 5  |    |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Marine Science       |    |    | 1  |    | 1  |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Medical Physiology   |    |    |    | 1  |    |    | 1  |   |    |    |   |   |
| Photography          |    | 1  | 1  |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Physics AP           | 1  | 2  |    | 1  |    | 1  |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Precalculus          | 2  | 8  | 6  | 9  | 4  | 3  | 1  |   | 1  |    |   |   |
| Precalculus Honors   | 2  | 3  | 2  | 2  |    |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Spanish 1            |    | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Spanish 2            |    | 1  |    | 1  |    |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Spanish 3            | 1  | 1  | 3  | 1  | 1  | 1  |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Spanish 3H           | 3  | 4  | 4  | 1  |    |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Spanish 4            | 1  | 1  |    | 1  |    |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Spanish 4H           |    | 2  | 1  | 2  |    |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Spanish AP           |    | 1  |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| Statistics (AP)      | 2  |    |    | 1  | 2  |    |    |   |    |    |   |   |
| U.S. History         | 2  | 10 | 11 | 8  | 8  | 1  | 3  | 1 | 1  | 1  |   |   |
| U.S. History (AP)    |    | 5  | 12 | 7  | 2  | 2  |    |   |    |    |   |   |