



*School of the Sacred Heart*

## UPPER SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

July 2024



Villa Duchesne, an independent Catholic school in St. Louis, Missouri, serving boys and girls age 3 through grade 6 and young women in grades 7-12, seeks an experienced and dynamic leader to serve as Upper School Principal starting July 1, 2024.

The Principal is responsible for all day-to-day operations of grades 9-12 and will have the opportunity to lead in a dynamic environment where faculty and administrators are committed to the continuous improvement of the academic, social-emotional, and spiritual growth of young women in the Sacred Heart tradition.

# MISSION & PHILOSOPHY

Inspired by the vision of Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat, foundress of the Society of the Sacred Heart, Villa Duchesne strives to educate the heart and mind of each child in a nurturing and challenging environment. We are dedicated to educating the whole child and preparing our students for lives of faith in God, integrity, leadership, and service to others.

*Our mission is to transform the world, one child at a time.*

The foundation of Villa Duchesne's mission and educational philosophy is the Goals and Criteria of Sacred Heart education, which guide all aspects of school life. The Goals and Criteria give meaning and purpose to the school's objectives and unite them with Sacred Heart schools around the world.



# ABOUT VILLA DUCHESNE

Villa Duchesne ("Villa") is organized into four divisions: early childhood (boys and girls ages 3-4), elementary (boys and girls in grades K-6), middle (young women in grades 7-8), and high school (young women in grades 9-12).

Villa's story began in 1927, when the Society of the Sacred Heart purchased 58 acres in rural St. Louis County. The school opened its doors in 1929 as a boarding and day school for girls, enrolling 127 students in its first year. Villa grew steadily over the years in both enrollment and facility, adding a Chapel to the main building in 1957 and constructing a student activities building in 1961. Changes in the educational landscape in St. Louis came in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when Villa merged with The Academy of the Sacred Heart (City House) and closed its boarding school program.





In 1971, Villa re-established itself as a co-ed lower school (then called Oak Hill) and an all-girls upper school. Today, Villa Duchesne is in its 95th year of providing an outstanding Catholic education in the Sacred Heart tradition.

Villa draws students from approximately 70 partner schools and 54 different zip codes in the St. Louis metropolitan area. The facilities are expansive and include a 500-seat Chapel, an Innovation Center & Think Tank, a state-of-the-art Performing Arts Theater, seven science labs, and two gymnasiums. The school launched a name evolution, a new brand, and a new visual identity in 2022 and has integrated this brand into internal and external communications and marketing efforts. Enrollment has grown significantly since the pandemic, and Villa is well poised for continued growth and advancement as St. Louis's premier independent Catholic school.

## THE UPPER SCHOOL

Villa Duchesne's Upper School comprises the Middle School (grades 7 & 8) and the High School (grades 9-12). Both programs focus on the distinct developmental needs of young women, supporting their social-emotional and spiritual growth and empowering them to be their best selves. The academic program balances an outstanding college preparatory curriculum with an attention to the individual needs of each student.

The **Middle School** program guides young women through their formative years with multi-faceted and developmentally responsive programs and activities designed to meet the unique needs of early adolescents. Students engage in a course of study of core subject areas as well as courses in Theology, French or Spanish, Physical Education, the Fine Arts, Technology, and electives in Middle School Yearbook and a variety of Performing Arts classes.

## Villa At-A-Glance

- **Total School Enrollment:** 524
- **Upper School Enrollment:** 285
  - Catholic: 76%
  - Average Class Size: 15
- **Financial Aid:** 41%
- **Faculty:** 35
- **Instructional Support Staff:** 10
- **Tuition:** \$28,820
- **Accreditations & Memberships:** ISACS, NAIS, Network of Sacred Heart Schools, National Coalition of Girls' Schools, and the National Catholic Educational Association



The **High School** program offers a strong college prep curriculum and a focus on strengthening academic skills and habits. As students progress through the years, course experiences become increasingly broad, complex, and challenging. All students have advisors within a “house” system, which supports their social, emotional, and spiritual growth as members of a close-knit community driven by the values of a Sacred Heart education.



Honors, AP, and specialized courses are available to challenge each student as she discovers and develops her talents. An independent study program is available for juniors and seniors who have mastered the curriculum in a specific discipline and want to pursue advanced topics.

All of the young women in grades 7-12 experience personal growth in an atmosphere of “wise freedom”—a time-honored hallmark of the Villa tradition.



## RESPONSIBILITIES & OPPORTUNITIES

With students as a central focus and through the ideals of the Sacred Heart Goals and Criteria, the Upper School Principal leads, guides, and directs all functions of the middle and high school programs.

Collaborating with the faculty and administration, the Principal will have the opportunity to develop an academic and pedagogical vision grounded in the school's mission, the changing nature of today's students, and evolving societal needs. Specifically, the Principal will work across divisions to ensure the vertical alignment of curriculum, expectations, and social-emotional and spiritual growth. As a member of the school's senior leadership team, the Upper School Principal will collaborate with the Head of School and other divisional leaders to promote a “one school” vision and identity and to ensure the highest quality educational experience for families.

# QUALITIES & QUALIFICATIONS

The successful candidate will be a seasoned Catholic educator with experience as a middle and/or high school administrator, preferably in a school for young women. In addition to being a strategic influencer and consensus-builder, Villa's next Upper School Principal will:

- Understand and demonstrate the Sacred Heart Goals and Criteria both professionally and personally
- Inspire teachers, students, and colleagues by holding an innovative educational vision while honoring the traditions central to Villa's identity
- Demonstrate the ability to work in a setting where faculty collaboration and community involvement are the norm
- Have an understanding of the culture and milieu of independent Catholic schools
- Be present and approachable
- Possess outstanding listening, communication, and organizational skills
- Be unequivocally supportive of teachers, giving them constructive feedback, celebrating their achievements, and standing by them in difficult situations
- Consider multiple perspectives when making decisions, but be clear and decisive when called to be
- Build strong relationships based on authenticity and trust
- Have a deep understanding of the developmental needs of young women
- Have a strong executive presence, demonstrating the ability to establish and follow through with expectations, policies, and procedures

Candidates must have:

- Significant experience as a middle and/or high school administrator at an independent or Catholic school
- A master's degree or higher
- A commitment to being an active practitioner of the Catholic faith
- Experience leading a school or division serving only young women is highly desirable



# APPLICATION PROCESS

Villa Duchesne seeks to have its next Upper School Principal in place by July 1, 2024, and has engaged national executive search firm Educational Directions to assist with the search.

Candidates should submit the following materials as one single consolidated document in PDF format:

- Cover letter addressed to Dr. Dawn Nichols, Head of School, expressing the candidate's interest in and qualifications for the Upper School Principal position at Villa Duchesne
- Current résumé
- Brief educational philosophy statement that includes the candidate's thoughts on assuming the academic leadership of Villa Duchesne's Middle and High Schools
- Names, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers of five professional references with a brief explanation of their relationship to the candidate

Please submit application materials as soon as possible to:

Jay Underwood, Partner  
Educational Directions  
[jay.underwood@edudx.com](mailto:jay.underwood@edudx.com)

Please do not contact the school directly.

This position offers a highly competitive salary and excellent benefits.

*Villa Duchesne is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity employer and seeks qualified candidates from a wide variety of backgrounds.*

