



CLASS OF 2027 HANDBOOK

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OUR MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

The goals of the college counseling office at Suffield Academy are threefold:

1. To provide highly professional, proactive, hands-on counseling and guidance throughout the college search
2. To represent each student fairly and responsibly, identifying his or her uniqueness and potential
3. To enable each student to find a match—fitting his or her ambitions and talents with a college’s programs, resources, and style

Students’ involvement in the college admission process offers them the opportunity to gain a better sense of who they are as they evaluate their achievements and expectations, research schools, and begin to assume responsibility for the next phase of their education. It is our goal to empower students to take ownership of the process and their futures.

COLLEGE COUNSELING: A FOUR-YEAR PROGRAM

Housed in the 3,000-square-foot Hoffman College Counseling Center, Suffield Academy’s innovative college counseling program is a model for independent schools across the United States. The four-year program is afforded generous staffing, modern space, significant financial resources, and dedicated time in the school day. Suffield provides comprehensive and effective college counseling marked by individual attention and extensive services. Suffield’s mission includes readying students for success at the next level and beyond. As part of this effort, the school’s unique college counseling program includes material designed to appropriately challenge students of each grade.

Grade 9

The 9th-grade curriculum concentrates on providing students with college basics. Through the Leadership curriculum and sessions led by college counselors, freshmen learn relevant information such as what a transcript looks like and how a GPA is calculated, how to maximize the Suffield experience and think to the future, and four-year course planning. We also spend time exploring the question “Why College?” and think about ways to maximize summer opportunities.

Grade 10

The 10th-grade curriculum builds on work done the year before, while adding a significant amount of new information. A crucial component of the program is the introduction of standardized tests for college admission including taking practice tests. Despite the growth of test-optional admissions at many colleges and universities, we feel exposure to standardized testing is helpful to our students and administer the PSAT and Pre-ACT for this purpose. Through Leadership classes led by college counselors, sophomores review the differences between the SAT and ACT and also explore college and university types and developing a student resume. The year culminates with a field trip to a college campus. All 10th-grade students take the PSAT and Pre-ACT in preparation for eleventh grade testing.

Grade 11

The 11th-grade curriculum [College 101] is taught in regular weekly Leadership classes primarily during the winter term. College 101 covers topics such as self-reflection and focusing on finding the right college match, the importance of self-advocacy throughout the college search, instruction on researching colleges and building a balanced college list, tips on how to get the most out of a college fair [all attend a fair hosted by area independent schools in April], and planning campus visits.

Juniors are encouraged to pursue the college admission test format that best suits them, typically taking their first official SAT and/or ACT in the winter, with additional testing in the spring of the junior year and fall of their senior year. Suffield offers prep classes for juniors during the early winter and spring. Students may also opt to use private tutoring, online courses, or self-study. Applying as a test-optional candidate is also very commonplace.

Students begin individual work with their assigned college counselor in January of their junior year and all will have developed an initial college list by March break. Students are encouraged to visit colleges during spring break and summer vacations. By the end of junior year, college counselors help families get a sense for expected admission outcomes using the cumulative GPA and test scores. Juniors will also request letters of recommendation from teachers in May.

Grade 12

Before the academic year formally begins, seniors participate in a special “Senior Day” which focuses on college counseling and leadership of the student body. By the time they return to campus, seniors are encouraged to have two essays written and the Common Application completed. Throughout the fall, college counselors work closely with seniors to edit and revise their essays. As the 12th-grade program continues, students:

- Work with their counselors to narrow their college list keeping an eye on balance
- Review applications with counselors before submission
- Meet with college admission representatives visiting Suffield in the fall
- Use fall testing dates for the SAT and/or ACT [if needed]
- Sort through their offers of admission and financial aid and make a final college choice
- Graduate!

PARENT/GUARDIAN PROGRAMS

Our college counseling office offers numerous programs for parents/guardians in all grades to learn more about the college admission landscape and process. Program topics include academic planning, standardized testing, athletic recruiting, and financing a college education. Additionally, programs designed specifically for junior families are held in two segments during the junior year [December and February]. Parents/guardians will learn the specifics of the college application process and how to best support their child throughout this exciting, and yet stressful, time in their life. We also host an “Introduction to the College Process” for sophomore families in April. Guest speakers are a regular part of our parent programs and we offer in-person and virtual options.

RESPONSIBILITIES: MANAGING THE COLLEGE SEARCH

We recognize how overwhelming the college admission process can seem. We are purposely staffed to carefully guide you through the application maze. That said, it is important to understand who takes responsibility for which aspects of the college search. Our operating philosophy is that the most successful college match derives from a student-driven process. We will work with students to ensure they have every tool they need to be successful in their college search.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES...IT IS EXPECTED THAT SUFFIELD’S STUDENTS WILL:

- Begin the process of decision-making early. Make sure you make an appointment with your college counselor in the winter of your junior year. You will be required to complete a Junior Survey before the meeting.
- Meet weekly with your college counselor to build your college list and ultimately review applications and submit.
- Attend all group and individual meetings [please be on time!].
- Engage fully in all College 101/Leadership 11 lessons. These are specifically designed to save you time and stress.
- Communicate your wishes and desires honestly with your parents and college counselor. Be actively engaged in the college admission process.
- If applicable, be prepared for standardized testing [SAT and/or ACT]. Register for tests on time, and if applicable, participate in the test preparation best suited for you [e.g. tutoring, self-paced lessons, classroom instruction].
- Attend the HAISCCA College Fair [Hartford Area Independent Secondary School College Counselors Association] held each April. Suffield expects all juniors to attend the fair with their college counselors. This fair is an excellent opportunity for juniors to

collect information and meet with college representatives from over 150 colleges.

- Research the basic admission criteria at the colleges you are considering. Make sure that you understand the standardized test requirements, interviewing procedures [if any], financial aid and scholarship process, and any special application requirements [graded papers, portfolio for art majors, auditions for music or theater majors, etc.].
- Familiarize yourself with SCOIR, our college counseling software. It is a tremendous resource of information and makes managing the college process much easier.
- Plan to visit colleges during spring break, summer vacation, and other school vacation days. Take advantage of virtual visits and event options as well.
- Meet with college representatives visiting Suffield in the fall of your senior year.
- Research application requirements by the early fall of your senior year. Complete applications honestly and accurately. Meet deadlines by submitting your applications early.
- Request letters of recommendation from teachers at the end of your junior year using SCOIR.
- Continue to work on essays during the summer before your senior year. Communicate regularly with your college counselor for edits and feedback. All personal statements/essays should be finalized by October 1. Supplemental essays are deadline specific but please give your college counselor at least two weeks before the deadline to review drafts.
- Move the colleges to which you have applied from the “Applying” column to the “Applied” column in SCOIR.
- If applicable, send official SAT and/or ACT score reports as required from the testing agencies to the colleges where you file applications.
- Keep your college counselor and parent(s)/guardian(s) up to date on all of your plans, progress, and results.
- Monitor and respond to communications from colleges including email and admission portals (once application is submitted).
- Ask for help! Your college counselor is happy to review applications and essays before you submit them and offer suggestions and edits. It is important to plan ahead and ask for help well before the deadline.
- Submit enrollment deposit fee at final choice college by May 1.

PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES...IT IS EXPECTED THAT SUFFIELD’S PARENTS/GUARDIANS WILL:

- Discuss college plans—including the financial picture and any restrictions—openly and honestly with your child early in the process. Share these thoughts with the college counselor either by phone, in writing, or at a meeting.
- Complete the Parent Questionnaire. This form is made available to parents in the winter of the child’s junior year. Parents who supply us with information and thoughts on this questionnaire add greatly to our understanding of their child, which in turn enables us to write a better, more comprehensive counselor’s summary and recommendation.
- Assist your child with standardized test registrations and deadlines. Remind your child to submit test scores to colleges as required directly from the testing agencies when applying.
- Assist your child in visiting colleges of interest whether it be on campus or virtual visits.
- Complete your portion of the application by providing your personal information [educational background, employment, etc.] and provide a credit card number for application fees.
- If applying for financial aid, fill out financial aid forms and submit before the deadline. See page 14 for further instructions on applying for financial aid.
- Communicate with your child’s college counselor. If you have any questions or concerns, we are here to help. Please remember that we all want what is best for the student.
- Submit enrollment deposit fee at one final choice college by May 1.
- Offer support to your son or daughter throughout the college admission process, but please remember that your child should direct the college admission process. Help your child to recognize and celebrate his or her strengths and to highlight them in interviews and on applications. Encourage your child to take the lead in the process and to take pride in his/her accomplishments.

COUNSELOR RESPONSIBILITIES...IT IS EXPECTED THAT SUFFIELD’S COLLEGE COUNSELORS WILL:

- Work closely with students and families to support them throughout the college process.

- Discuss college planning with the student and the parents and help develop a balanced list that represents good matches for the student.
- Provide comprehensive resources and opportunities for students and their families to learn about the college admissions process and specifics on various colleges.
- Advise students on course selection and planning.
- Provide information for access to the Common Application, SAT and ACT registration, financial aid forms [CSS Profile and FAFSA], testing fee waivers if applicable, and special scholarship information and applications.
- Provide information on summer opportunities, gap year programs, and athletic recruiting.
- Prepare a well-written summary and recommendation that portrays the student in a positive and honest light with an emphasis on academic and personal strengths, achievements, and growth. All counselor recommendations are reviewed by the Director of College Counseling and the Head of School before submission. They are co-signed by Suffield Academy's Head of School.
- Review student's college applications and essays before submission. Offer edits and feedback in a timely manner.
- Prepare and submit transcripts to colleges along with a secondary school report form, counselor's summary and recommendation, school profile, and teacher recommendations.
- Submit fall term, mid-year, and final grade reports to colleges.
- Serve as an advocate for Suffield students to the colleges.
- Support and counsel students and parents throughout the college research, application, and selection process.
- Teach classes and workshops at all grade levels on pertinent college admission topics.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS & PROCEDURES

WHAT COLLEGES LOOK FOR

If only there was a secret formula to highly selective college admission. Unfortunately, no such formula exists! However, there are several components of a college application that carry the most weight. Here is a description of what admission committees look for when reviewing your application:

- First, and foremost, is your transcript. The admission committee will review not only how well you did in your courses, but also what courses you took. It is important that you challenge yourself when choosing courses, but stay realistic. Trying to take too many honors or AP classes when they are not appropriate classes for you is not the answer. Our academic deans work closely with the college counselors to assure proper placement. Also, the college office works to educate colleges about the rigor of a Suffield education and our curriculum. That said, the student's most important job is to work hard and earn the best grades possible by being prepared, engaged, and productive.
- A strong academic record alone will not guarantee you admission to selective colleges. Admission committees look to bring in students with a variety of talents—athletic, musical, and artistic. Or perhaps you have an uncommon interest or experience, which brings diversity to their community. Being involved at Suffield, and in your community, in varied activities and demonstrating a commitment to a couple of extracurricular activities is more important than joining 15 clubs your junior year. Be true to yourself and don't be shy about letting the admission committee know about all your talents and experiences—just be honest about your participation and the amount of time you spend on the activity.
- Colleges are also interested in what others have to say about you through recommendations. Your application should include two teacher recommendations, as well as a college counselor's summary and recommendation. Ideally, one teacher recommendation should be from someone who can speak to your ability to express yourself in writing [usually an English or history teacher]. The second should be one that can speak more to how you think in abstract logical terms [such as a science or math teacher]. However, if there is a subject where you excel or which you plan to pursue at the college level, it may be important to have a recommendation from a teacher in that subject [e.g. Chinese, music]. It is also important to note that colleges want recommendations from junior year teachers—if

you ask someone who taught you as a sophomore, an admission officer might assume you didn't have a more recent teacher who could advocate for you positively. Your college counselor will assist you in deciding which teachers to ask. Each college counselor also prepares a detailed summary of your Suffield experience. Your counselor reviews all teacher and advisor comments that have been written during your time at Suffield. We also draw from your surveys and College 101 work. Often counselors will consult other adults on campus who know you well. A great deal of care goes into providing a thoughtful, comprehensive, and supportive statement. The Director of College Counseling and the Head of School review all counselor recommendations before they are sent to colleges.

- Admission officers will also carefully review your completed application and essays. The application will provide personal information, extracurricular activities, work experience, and other pertinent information. You want to put great care into presenting your information clearly and in an organized fashion. You will work on your activities list in Junior Leadership and individually with your college counselor. It will also be important to spend considerable time on your essay. This is the one piece of your application that really provides a “window into your world” and allows the reader to hear your voice and learn more about you. Do not be afraid that you do not have a once in a lifetime event to write about. Instead, focus on what you want the reader to learn about you and find a creative way to express your message. Use your college counselor as a resource for brainstorming ideas and editorial suggestions.
- Some colleges require supplementary materials such as an institution-specific essay [“Why do you want to attend College X?”]. It is important that you pay attention to what each college requires and give special attention to those items. Similarly, if you are applying to a specific major [nursing, art, etc.], make sure you note any additional requirements such as testing or submission of a portfolio.
- Although seldom the most important credential in your application, SAT and/or ACT scores are still required by some colleges and universities and may be required depending upon the intended major, merit aid money, and/or athletic programs. This makes it important to check each school's testing requirements carefully. Please see page 9 for more detailed information on this topic.
- Finally, colleges will be reviewing the rigor of the curriculum at Suffield Academy, looking closely at our school profile [which is included with your supporting materials that your counselor sends], and how you perform in comparison to other students in your senior class. The school profile includes general information about Suffield Academy, our grading scale, graduation requirements, and course offerings. In addition, because Suffield Academy does not rank its students, we publish a GPA distribution chart to give admissions representatives a way to assess your achievement in relation to your classmates.

SENIOR TO-DO LIST: HOW TO GET APPLICATIONS OUT THE DOOR

There are a lot of details involved with applying to college. But if you stay organized and ask for help, you will manage the process with considerably less stress. The information below should help ease the pressure, make the process more efficient, and leave time for you to enjoy your senior year.

- Complete the application (or alternative applications) during the summer.
- Begin work on your main college essay (aka personal statement) during Junior Leadership in the spring. Summer should include time for editing/writing that essay and school specific supplemental essays.
- Attend regular meetings and review applications in detail with your college counselor before you submit. Most often students will submit applications with the college counselor.
- Follow up with thank you notes to your teachers for writing recommendations on your behalf.
- Keep your SCOIR Applying/Applied list up to date. Materials cannot be sent to colleges not on those lists. This will alert your college counselor to submit your supporting materials [official transcript, teacher recommendations, counselor's summary and recommendation, and a school profile] to the college.
- Pay the application fees online when submitting your application. If you think you may qualify for a fee waiver based on your family's financial situation, please talk to your college counselor.

- Research those colleges that require scores and submit your official SAT, ACT, or English language proficiency [International Students] score reports directly to those colleges from the testing agency. Remember that it will take about three weeks for the scores to arrive at the colleges, so make these requests well in advance of the application deadline. The college office cannot send scores for you, but counselors are happy to help.

WHAT THE COLLEGE COUNSELING OFFICE WILL DO

Once you have applied to a college, we will submit your official transcript, a school profile, teacher recommendations, and your counselor's summary and recommendation.

- College counselors will follow up with colleges to advocate on your behalf when appropriate and possible.
- The college counseling office will automatically send out fall term grades [beginning of December] and mid-year grade reports [end of January] to the colleges to which you have applied [based on your SCOIR account].
- The college counseling office is only allowed to send **ONE final official transcript to the college you eventually choose to attend**, typically sent in mid-June.

SPECIAL NOTES ON APPLICATIONS

The Common Application Over 1,100 colleges and universities accept the Common Application. We encourage all students to complete the Common Application online at commonapp.org and use it whenever possible.

College Specific Questions/ Supplemental Essays Be aware that many colleges and universities require supplemental information and writing to accompany the Common Application. Once you have added a college to your Common Application, you will be prompted to answer college-specific questions. Some writing supplements will vary based on the major/program you select.

Reporting Disciplinary Action to Colleges At times, college applications are asking both students and counselors about disciplinary infractions. Suffield expects that you will answer all questions regarding discipline honestly. For the most part, colleges ask if you have been suspended or expelled from a secondary school. You do not need to report smaller infractions or demerits unless asked. If you are suspended or expelled after an application has been submitted, it is your responsibility to contact each individual college. Your college counselor is available to assist you with your written response. It is our school policy not to report disciplinary action to colleges on transcripts or in counselor recommendations.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS: TYPES OF APPLICATIONS

Do your research carefully to understand the different types of admission programs. It is very important to discuss any early applications with your college counselor well in advance of the deadline.

Early Decision [ED] Under this plan, you submit your application with an earlier deadline than normal, and, if accepted, you are obligated to attend. After acceptance, applications to any other schools are withdrawn. The ED application deadline is usually in November, although some colleges do offer a second EDII program with a December or January deadline. This plan should be reserved for students who have one clear first choice college. You may not apply ED to more than one school. **Remember, early decision applications are binding and applicants are required to enroll if accepted.**

Early Action [EA] Under this plan, you submit an application with an earlier deadline than normal, usually in November or December, with the expectation you will receive your decision from the college before most regular decision applications are due. Unlike the ED plan, you have no obligation to attend the college if accepted. In general, you may apply EA to more than one school, except in the case of a few select schools that offer Restrictive Early Action [see below].

Restrictive Early Action This is also a non-binding plan in that applicants admitted early need not respond to an offer of admission until May 1, and may apply Regular Decision to other schools. This plan is unlike standard Early Action programs in that you **may not** apply ED/

EA to any other private college or university. Your college counselor can help you navigate this action plan.

Rolling Admissions A process whereby colleges make and release admissions decisions on applications as they become complete. Decisions can sometimes be made as early as two weeks after your file is complete with the college. The earlier you submit the application, the greater the likelihood of admission.

Regular Decision The most common admission plan where you apply by a stated deadline and receive notification by early April, and must respond to the offer by May 1.

Demonstrating “Interest” In this time of increased selectivity at all colleges and universities, some colleges track your interest in their school. This could mean that they simply pay attention to whether or not you have visited their campus, or it could be as complicated as tracking all the contacts you have had with their office—campus visit, interview, opening emails, meeting a college rep at Suffield or at a college fair, communication with a coach, and much more. We have also seen an increase in required essays on why you want to attend a specific college. If your answer is not thoughtful and specific to that school, the admission committee may get the impression you are not seriously interested in attending that college, and may deny or waitlist an otherwise qualified candidate.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

Standardized testing can be anxiety producing, confusing, and controversial. Students and families are faced with questions related to the preparation for testing as well as the interpretation and use of such tests as criteria for college admission. While it is important to remember that standardized test scores are not the only, or the most important, credential in your college application, they do provide colleges with a means of comparing your abilities to other students throughout the country. Some colleges have downplayed the importance of testing and others have completely eliminated the use of standardized tests. **For an updated list of test-optional schools, please visit fairtest.org.**

We feel that it is important for you and your parents/guardians to have a clear understanding of testing requirements and to be as prepared as possible to take these exams. Based on this belief, we recommend that you take both the SAT and the ACT to see which test you score better on. Both tests are accepted and valued equally at all colleges and universities. Sophomores will take two practice tests, the PSAT and PreACT, during the winter and spring. Once scored, the tests are reviewed and sent to families in the late spring/early summer along with suggestions on test preparation, extended time accommodations, and when to test during the junior year. **Below is a brief description of each test and when Suffield Academy students take them. We begin introducing college admission tests to our students during the sophomore year.**

PSAT [SOPHOMORE YEAR: WINTER & JUNIOR YEAR: FALL]

You will take this practice SAT twice during your time at Suffield—in the winter of your sophomore year and the fall of your junior year.

This test mimics the newer digital format of the SAT. The test is “adaptive”—meaning future questions will get harder/easier depending on how previous questions are answered. Scoring on the PSAT: total score range is 320-1520 with individual sections scored between 160-760.

The junior year PSAT won't count in college admissions, but it is the qualifying test for National Merit Scholarship, and high scoring students may win scholarship money [nationalmerit.org]. For further detailed information, please refer to collegeboard.org/psat.

PRACTICE ACT [SOPHOMORE YEAR–WINTER/SPRING]

Although there is a PreACT, Suffield offers a practice ACT to sophomores. This experience provides an authentic practice test experience to compare and contrast the two tests. A concordance table is available to compare PSAT/ACT results provided to families after taking both tests.

SAT [JUNIOR YEAR–WINTER/SPRING & SENIOR YEAR–FALL]

The SAT is one of two college admission tests. In general, most Suffield students will take the SAT for the first time during the winter or spring of junior year.

The SAT includes two sections: Reading and Writing, and Math. Each section is divided into two modules, and performance on the first module in a section will determine the level of difficulty of the questions appearing in the second module of that section (“adaptive” testing). Scoring on the SAT: total score range is 400-1600 with individual sections scored between 200-800.

For further detailed information, please refer to collegeboard.org/sat.

ACT [JUNIOR YEAR–WINTER/SPRING & SENIOR YEAR–FALL]

The other college admission test is the ACT. All colleges accept either the SAT or ACT scores to support a student’s application.

The ACT is similar in content and style to the SAT and is made up of tests in English, reading, and math. There is also an optional essay which is not used by colleges (we recommend skipping this section). There is also an optional science section which you should take. The score from that section is not included in the composite score but is required by some highly selective colleges. Each section is scored on a 1-36 scale and a composite score is the average of the three main sections on the same scale. Most Suffield students will take the ACT for the first time during the winter of junior year. For further detailed information, please refer to act.org.

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TEST REQUIREMENTS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

An English proficiency test is required by most colleges for those students whose native language is not English. Even when students have near perfect scores in English on the ACT and/or SAT, an English proficiency test may be required. Thus, students who first learned another language, or who grew up in a different country, may need to demonstrate competence in the English language at the college-certifying level. Refer to page 13 for more detailed information on this topic.

SCORE SUBMISSION

Students who have finished taking standardized tests should talk to their college counselor to determine which scores should be submitted to colleges. There are various requirements and policies specific to colleges. It is critical students submit the testing directly to each college from the testing agencies as required by colleges. College Counseling does not report test scores on our transcripts.

TEST PREP

There are a number of ways to prepare for college admission standardized tests [SAT and/or ACT], including:

1. Private tutoring
2. Enrollment in a test prep course offered and conducted at Suffield
3. Enrollment in a formal test prep program through a third-party vendor.
4. Enrollment in an online test prep course through a third-party vendor.
5. Self-study using test prep study guides/books

Although test preparation may be done at any time, students are encouraged to use the summer months. Students can consult with their college counselor about which preparation approach is best for them.

EXTENDED TIME TESTING [SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES]

Extended time tends to be a confusing topic for many. The reality is that most people might benefit from extended time on standardized tests, but only certain students qualify to receive it. Students who have neuropsychological or psychological/educational reports that contain specific tests to support a diagnosis that significantly impacts their functioning may meet the requirements of the College Board

or ACT for extended time or other accommodations. A doctor's note may not be sufficient documentation for a learning disability or difference. For example, ADHD can be medically diagnosed; however, a medical doctor's note is not documentation of how it affects a person's ability to learn, nor does it support the need for accommodations. To apply for extended time and/or special testing on the SAT and/or the ACT for your child, please contact Neil Stone in the Academic Support Office at 860-386-4484 or academic_support@suffieldacademy.org.

COLLEGE VISITS, CAMPUS TOURS, INTERVIEWS, & FAIRS

COLLEGE VISITS

There is no substitute for visiting a college campus to get a feel for it as a potential match. Every college carefully chooses the programs and scenes to highlight in its promotional material. In a visit, one is able to better gain a balanced perspective.

When To Visit At Suffield, we expect students to respect our school calendar and we encourage students to make the best use possible of vacation time when planning visits to colleges. However, should a visit to a college when Suffield is in session be unavoidable, all students [both boarding and day] must complete a College Visit Permission Form at least one week prior to the planned visit. Forms are available in the college counseling office and, once completed, turned into the Dean of Students' office. Please note that juniors are not granted college visit permissions during school unless it is an unusual situation approved by his/her college counselor and the Dean of Students.

There are advantages to both visiting during the summer and when a college is in session. Summer usually offers students the flexibility of visiting without interfering with their academic preparation and high school schedule. Some feel that summer offers the best opportunity for distant visits and can provide an initial sifting in the search process. A return visit to a selected few while college is in session will provide the social dimension, and the time frame for such visits can extend into the spring once an application is filed. The in-session campus visit and interview give one a feeling for the style and culture of the school, student diversity, facilities, and programs in a single visit. The efficiency of an in-session interview can be appealing to those with limited visitation time.

WHAT TO DO DURING A VISIT

Campus Tours and Group Information Sessions Almost every college will offer guided campus tours and some version of a group information session. It is best to participate in such offerings versus a simple drive around a campus if possible. It is important to check a college's website before you visit to see what they offer and if pre-registration is necessary. If not registered in advance or if a tour is full/unavailable, consider a self-guided tour to explore the campus independently and at your own pace. Ask the admissions office if they have a campus map and mark points of interest or view the colleges tours online while walking the campus. Even if you are just dropping in, make sure you fill out a registration card while visiting the admission office so they have a record of your visit.

Interviews Some colleges require interviews, others make them optional, and others do not even offer them. It is your responsibility to determine what is available at the individual colleges that you are interested in. If it is feasible to do an interview and you feel comfortable talking one-on-one, an interview can be a wonderful way for you to personalize your application. Some colleges are offering virtual interviews as well. If you need help finding interview options and/or preparing for an interview, please talk with your college counselor.

COLLEGE FAIRS

Each spring, juniors from Suffield Academy will attend the local HAISSCCA College Fair. Preparation for any fair begins with obtaining a list of attending colleges. Use the list to mark off the colleges you are sure to want to see, especially those you do not know well—and make it a point to stop by their booth to gather more information. Pay specific attention to those colleges that interest you, and make sure to touch base with any school you might not be able to visit. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the school without traveling there.

COLLEGES COMING TO SUFFIELD

Approximately 100 college admissions representatives visit Suffield Academy either in person or virtually every fall. Interested seniors may attend these informational group sessions during free periods, or, should the visit occur during class time, with permission granted in advance by their teacher [seniors only]. Visits are posted and announced to the students in SCOIR and in our Weekly Bulletin, and students sign up in SCOIR. This is a great opportunity to “meet and greet” the admissions counselor who very well could be the one reviewing your application in the upcoming months.

APPLICATIONS WITH SPECIAL FOCUS

ATHLETES

Communication with Coaches Student athletes should communicate with their coaches about the prospect of playing competitive sports and competing at the collegiate level. Our coaches will do their best to advocate on your behalf and to guide you to appropriate programs for your skill level. Your job as an athlete is to be proactive by filling out the high school recruiting forms on a college’s athletic website and making direct contact with the college coaches. When you make plans to visit a college, try to arrange a meeting with the coach as well.

Registering with the NCAA Students who are interested in participating in collegiate athletics should consult and become familiar with the National Collegiate Athletic Association [NCAA]. College athletics are grouped by Divisions [I, II, and III] and each Division is governed by a specific set of eligibility rules. If you plan on playing Division I or II athletics as a college freshman, it is important to be registered with and cleared by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. To be cleared by the Clearinghouse, students must graduate from high school and meet specific core course and grade point average requirements. Athletes may register online after completion of their junior year. **Be sure to visit the NCAA website often at ncaa.org/student-athletes/future.**

Tips for Recruited Athletes

1. Start early! Even if you are not completely sure you want to play sports in college, keep your options open and start conversations with coaches and your parents early in your sophomore or junior year.
2. Attend summer camps and showcases for your particular sport. This is a great way for college coaches to see you in action and for you to improve in your sport. Your Suffield coach can guide you towards appropriate programs.
3. Complete recruit questionnaires on individual colleges’ athletic websites. This is the best way for a college coach to know that you are interested in playing for him/her.
4. Provide college coaches with an unofficial transcript [available in College Counseling] and test scores early on in the process so they give you realistic feedback about admissibility.
5. If you play a sport where film will be a part of the evaluation process, become familiar with Suffield’s filming resources by asking your coach for details. Our coaches upload game footage and you will be able to create a highlight video and provide game footage for college coaches to view online.

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTISTS

For students with special interests and talents in the visual and performing arts, the college application process is likely to involve additional time, planning, and requirements. While an honest self-assessment is the first step for anyone beginning the college search, it is vitally important for young artists to consider the role you want the arts to play in your college education, and to focus on finding the right academic and artistic match.

Self-Assessment Assessing your talent in the arts can be difficult. Start by speaking with your teachers and/or instructors and ask them to give you an honest assessment of your strengths and weaknesses. Share your goals with them to examine your priorities and level of commitment. Consider asking them to write a letter of recommendation on your behalf.

Résumé As a visual or performing artist, you will want to document your talent with a résumé. This is a great opportunity for you to use the information obtained in your personal assessment to showcase your strengths. Your résumé should honestly present your overall background and qualifications in the discipline—including training and experience, classes and special lessons you’ve taken, awards and honors received, performances, displays, etc. Get used to keeping it up-to-date. Ask your teacher or instructor for help.

Supplementary Materials Students with a special talent or interest in the visual or performing arts generally submit supplementary material with their application or have an additional audition prerequisite. These vary, so be sure to carefully research each college’s individual requirements and deadlines.

Art Portfolios Your art teachers know best when it comes to putting together an art portfolio. Use their guidance to help you disseminate the various pieces of your artwork to prepare pictures or slides of your best pieces, noting the medium in which they were done and when.

National Art Portfolio Days If you are considering applying to art schools, you might want to attend a National Portfolio Day to have your work reviewed by a number of colleges and universities. For further information visit nationalportfolioday.org.

Auditions Dance, drama, and music majors will most likely be expected to attend an audition either on the college’s campus or virtually. Read carefully and thoroughly any audition information that is sent to you. Some auditions are in-person while others may be virtual or recorded. In either case, practice your audition ahead of time. Rehearse everything! Be sure you dress appropriately and know what to bring with you to the audition, including a photograph—appealing head shot for drama or voice applicants, full-length photo in a flattering pose for dance, etc.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TESTS

International students need to carefully research college requirements about English language proficiency and may need to take one of the following tests to further demonstrate mastery of the English language:

- TOEFL [Test of the English as a Foreign Language] www.toefl.org
- IELTS [International English Language Testing System] www.ielts.org
- DET [Duolingo English Test] englishtest.duolingo.com

FINANCIAL AID

There is very little financial aid for foreign students to study in the U.S. Most grants, scholarships, and loans from public and private sources are restricted to U.S. citizens. As a result, international students will find very little information about financial aid for international students. Although limited, the number of schools offering funds to international students should be discussed with your college counselor.

FINANCIAL DOCUMENTATION

All U.S. colleges will require documentation attesting to your family’s ability to pay for a U.S. education. One, or all, of the following forms may be requested of you. These forms must be completed and submitted to each college with original signatures and bank seals. Forms can be obtained from the individual colleges.

Certification [or Declaration] of Finances

Colleges require completion of their Certification of Finances forms for the purpose of obtaining complete and accurate information about the funds available to international applicants who want to study in the U.S. This form notes the student’s source of funds and the amount of funds available over four years, and must be certified by an official at the bank where the funds remain. **Please check requirements carefully, as some colleges require this form to be submitted with your application.**

Bank Letter or Bank Statement

Some colleges will require a statement or letter from the bank verifying the availability of funds as noted in the Certification of Finances. Letters must be on the bank's stationery and have the bank's seal, and the date must be within six months of the date received by the college's admissions office.

Affidavit of Financial Support [or Sponsor Letter]

Occasionally a college will request this document that serves to verify the individual who will be financially responsible for the applicant's educational and living expenses while studying in the U.S. This form generally states a minimum allowance per academic year and must be notarized.

LEARNING DISABILITIES/DIFFERENCES [LD]

If you have used academic support at Suffield, you may be looking for similar support in college. With appropriate knowledge about college programs for students with LD and the right preparation and guidance, students can find the right college match.

Colleges provide many kinds of assistance to help students with a learning disability succeed. The kinds of assistance will vary by college, so careful research must be conducted. With the help of our academic support office, determine the level of assistance you need to be successful; then, with the help of your college counselor, begin to research appropriate colleges.

As you do your college research, keep in mind that you may be required to release your diagnostic assessment and evaluation that was conducted by a certified professional to receive accommodations in college. Your college counselor is prohibited from releasing information or discussing such circumstances with colleges without your family's consent. Permission for your college counselor to advocate in this area on your behalf through the college process must be clearly communicated.

There is a strong network of support for you at Suffield, including the academic support office. All nonstandard testing accommodations should be initiated through that office. **For more information, see page 9.**

Your college counselor, your academic dean, and our academic support staff are all here to help, but our goal is to have students become their own advocates.

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

With ever-increasing tuition costs, many families are left wondering how to finance this huge expenditure. It is important that students and parents talk openly about the issue early on in the college search. What follows is general information on the types of aid available, the process of applying and completing forms, and understanding financial aid awards.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid is "need-based" as opposed to "merit-based." In other words, financial aid is awarded based solely on demonstrated financial eligibility (FAFSA and CSS Profile forms). For the most part, other criteria such as academic performance are not taken into consideration for need-based awards. Financial aid funds come from the federal government, the college itself, and in some cases, state programs. Financial aid is typically awarded as a "package" comprised of grant money [which you do not pay back], student loans, and work-study [on campus job].

It is never too early to talk as a family about the cost of attending college. As the cost continues to rise, it is important for both parents and students to understand how those costs will be covered in advance of their college search. Every college has a Net Price Calculator that can help families determine how much they could expect to pay. These may not be concrete figures but can certainly provide an idea of

what the cost may be for your family.

MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS

These grants are given to students based on “merit.” Merit scholarships are awarded based on predetermined criteria such as academic talent, and other extracurricular accomplishments. Demonstrated financial need may or may not be a factor. Sometimes merit scholarships are simply offered to an applicant, and other times a student may be invited to apply for the scholarship.

Please keep in mind that not all colleges offer merit scholarships. In these cases, only students with financial need, demonstrated through the completion of the FAFSA and CSS PROFILE, will receive any additional funding.

ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS

Athletes who follow and meet NCAA guidelines and requirements may be able to use their athletic ability to help pay for college at the Division I or Division II levels. Full athletic scholarships are extremely competitive and only offered to top athletes in their sport. Because this money is athletic-merit based and not need-based, coaches have the ability to take it away at their choosing, and although a coach may promise or recommend the aid renewal for the next year, it is not automatic or guaranteed. Because there is no aid guarantee, athletes should research the financial aid policies at each individual college and make comparisons. In recent years, some Division I student-athletes have also been allowed to earn compensation for their name, image, and likeness (NIL), but meaningful NIL opportunities are rare outside of high-profile, revenue-generating sports and should not be counted on as a significant source of college funding.

OUTSIDE SCHOLARSHIPS

Students are often motivated to investigate outside scholarships from local organizations and corporations. There are many scholarships out there for the taking, but it does require some time and effort to complete their applications as well. Some of the websites in the resources section can steer you in the right direction. Please be mindful, though, that colleges are not likely to award you more money than you qualify for according to the FAFSA and CSS Profile. Therefore, if you are awarded outside scholarships, this money may be deducted from your original financial aid package from the college.

HOW TO APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID

Every college will use the Free Application for Federal Student Aid [FAFSA] form to determine the awarding of federal funding; however, there are many other colleges that require families to complete the College Scholarship Service Profile [CSS PROFILE] as well for non-federal, institutional funds. Both forms require students and families to submit financial documents and answer financial questions to help the college determine how much the family can contribute to the student’s costs. These forms must be completed and submitted as soon as possible every year to obtain financial aid for college.

STEP 1:

Collect Documents necessary for completing financial aid forms:

- Social Security Numbers [Student’s and Parent’s/Guardian’s]
- The 2025 income tax returns, W-2 forms, 1099 forms, and any other records of income earned for the student.
- The 2025 income tax returns, W-2 forms, 1099 forms, and 1040 forms for the parents/guardians.
- Current bank statements and mortgage information.
- Records relating to stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and other investments.
- Documentation of non-taxable income, such as Social Security income, Veterans Benefits, welfare and child support, etc..
- Business and farm records of net worth.

- Records relating to any unusual family financial circumstances, such as medical and dental expenses not covered by health insurance, tuition expenses at elementary or secondary schools, unusually high child care costs, death, divorce, and loss of employment. [Source: finaid.org]

STEP 2:

Determine which colleges you are applying to require the CSS PROFILE form, which can be completed and submitted as early as October 1 of your senior year. This form is available at cssprofile.collegeboard.org.

STEP 3:

Apply for federal aid by completing the FAFSA [Free Application for Federal Student Aid]. Students entering college in the fall of 2027 should complete the 2027–2028 FAFSA which is available after October 1 at studentaid.gov. This form will require you to use your 2025 tax returns.

STEP 4:

Complete any additional institutional forms required by the colleges to which you are applying. Carefully check each college's requirements and filing deadlines to maximize your chances of getting the best financial aid package available.

STEP 5:

Once admitted to a college, notification of your financial aid award may be included with your letter of acceptance or it could come after your letter or online. Carefully compare the awards and feel free to contact the financial aid officers at the colleges that interest you most with questions and for explanations of the award specifics.

SPECIAL NOTE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Financial aid resources are extremely limited for foreign students who plan to attend college in the United States, and few colleges offer aid to international students. Make sure you research each individual college's policy carefully to find out how much it will cost you and what forms are required. Refer to page 13 for more detailed information on this topic.

FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION PROGRAMS

College affordability is crucial to making college dreams a reality. To assist our families, Suffield Academy has partnered with SMARTTRACK® College Funding to offer two free presentations (spring and fall) with discussion that will help families structure their finances and plan for what's ahead. Visit smarttrackcollegefunding.com for more information.

September

- How to Pay for a College Education [a webinar by SMARTTRACK®]

October

- PSAT exam [Suffield Academy automatically registers all juniors for this test]
- Standardized testing workshop for students in Junior Leadership
- Parents' Weekend College Program: Starting the College Search Process

November

- College 101 unit begins in Junior Leadership
- Parent College Program: Standardized Testing [presentation by Summit Educational Group]

December

- Juniors are assigned to a College Counselor
- Junior Parent College Program: College Kickoff

January & February

- Juniors begin individual meetings with assigned college counselor; initial college lists and testing plans developed
- Family meetings scheduled with student and college counselor

February

- Junior Parent College Program: Digging into the Details

March

- Initial college lists are available in SCOIR, and juniors begin college visits during spring break

April

- HAISCCA College Fair at Kingswood-Oxford School in 2026 [required for all juniors]
- ACT [recommended for all juniors pursuing ACT]
- How to Pay for a College Education [a webinar by SMARTTRACK®]

May

- Juniors formally request letters of recommendation from teachers
- SAT [recommended for all juniors pursuing SAT]
- AP & final exams

Mid-June

- Revised college lists available in SCOIR after final grades and test scores are received and reviewed by college counselors

Summer

- Juniors work on college essays, visit and research colleges, prep for standardized tests, and narrow down college lists
- Retake SAT or ACT if needed

August

- SAT [optional for seniors in need of further testing]
- Common Application [available online August 1st]

September

- Senior Day [includes college and leadership workshops]
- ACT [optional for seniors in need of further testing]
- College representatives begin visiting Suffield [through October 31]
- Individual meetings with college counselor [through December]
- Early Decision/Early Action applicants confirm with counselors and update SCOIR accounts

October

- Review with college counselor applications with October/November deadlines
- Students update SCOIR accounts
- SAT or ACT [optional for seniors in need of further testing]
- Parents' Weekend – individual counselor appointments for senior parents
- FAFSA available after October 1: complete and file as soon as possible if applying for financial aid [required at all colleges]
- CSS Profile available after October 1: complete and file if applying for financial aid [required only by certain colleges]

November

- Application filing period for the University of California system
- SAT [optional for seniors in need of further testing]
- Review with college counselor applications with December deadlines
- Students update SCOIR accounts
- Fall term exams

December

- SAT and/or ACT [optional for seniors in need of further testing]
- Review with college counselor applications with January deadlines
- Students update SCOIR accounts
- Final college list confirmed with college counselor

January

- Review with college counselor applications with February or later deadlines

March/April

- Most colleges notify applicants of admission decisions by April 1
- Review admission offers and financial aid packages

May

- National College Decision Day [college deposits are due May 1]
- AP exams [some seniors]
- Baccalaureate/Commencement

June

- ONE final official transcript will be sent to the college or university to which each graduate plans to matriculate

VALUABLE ONLINE RESOURCES FOR YOUR COLLEGE SEARCH

Applications

Common Application commonapp.org

College Athletics/Athletes

NCAA Eligibility Center web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/

National Assoc. of Intercollegiate Athletics naia.org

Sports Recruits sportsrecruits.com

Financial Aid & Scholarships

Complete the FAFSA online [for federal funds] studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa

Preparing for and funding a college education studentaid.gov

Complete the CSS Profile online [for non-federal funds] cssprofile.collegeboard.org

Guide to financial aid finaid.org

SmartTrack College Funding: How to Best Pay for College smarttrackcollegefunding.com

Free scholarship searches fastweb.com

Free scholarship searches bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search

Free scholarship searches unigo.com

Resource for merit and academic scholarships appily.com/scholarships

Federal Trade Commission [search scholarship scams] ftc.gov

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation [in detail] nationalmerit.org

Compare college financial aid data collegescorecard.ed.gov

Hartford Foundation for Public Giving [area scholarship database] hfpgscholarships.org

College Money Matters collegemoneymatters.org

Planning & Preparing for College

College planning made easy appily.com

Virtual campus tours campustours.com

Profiles of “Colleges That Change Lives” ctcl.org

College students review colleges unigo.com/colleges

Plan college campus visits online goseecampus.com

Campus Pride Index [LGBTQ-friendly campuses] campusprideindex.org

Standardized Testing & Test Prep

SAT registration collegeboard.org

ACT registration my.act.org

TOEFL registration for international students ets.org/toefl

Duolingo English Test englishtest.duolingo.com/applicants

Test optional colleges fairtest.org/test-optional-list/

Summit Educational Group [Suffield’s on-campus test prep partner] mytutor.com

College Board’s Official SAT prep khanacademy.org/sat

ACT Online Prep academy.act.org

RECOMMENDED READING FOR PARENTS & STUDENTS

The Truth about College Admission: A Family Guide to Getting In and Staying Together

[Brennan Barnard and Rick Clark, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD, 2023.]

The Truth about College Admission Workbook: A Family Organizer for Your College Search

[Brennan Barnard and Rick Clark, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD, 2021.]

Admission Matters: What Students and Parents Need to Know About Getting Into College, 5th edition

[Sally P. Springer, Jon Reider, Joyce Vining Morgan and Nancy Griesemer, Hoboken, NJ, 2023.]

The College Atlas & Planner

[Wintergreen Orchard House, Westford, MA, 2017.]

The College Finder: Your Comprehensive Guide to Finding Colleges That Fit Your Unique Path

[Steven Antonoff and Jay McCann, Edu.consulting Media, 2025.]

Colleges That Change Lives: 40 Schools That Will Change the Way You Think About College

[Loren Pope, revised by Hilary Masell Oswald, Penguin Books, New York, NY, 2012.]

The Fiske Guide to Colleges 2026

[Edward Fiske, Sourcebooks, Naperville, IL, 2025.]

College Match: A Blueprint for Choosing the Best School for You, 13th Edition

[Steven R. Antonoff, Ph.D., EDUconsultingMedia, Denver, CO, 2022.]

Where You Go Is Not Who You'll Be: An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania

[Frank Bruni, Grand Central Publishing, New York, NY, 2016.]

Who Gets In and Why: A Year Inside College Admissions

[Jeffrey Selingo, Scribner Publishing, New York, NY, 2020.]

Dream School: Finding The College That's Right For You

[Jeffrey Selingo, Scribner Publishing, New York, NY, 2025.]

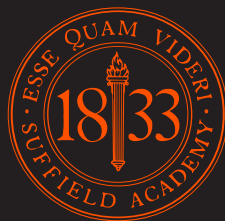
The K&W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Differences

[Marybeth Kravets and Imy F. Wax, The Princeton Review, New York, NY, 2023.]

Our Mission

Suffield Academy is a coeducational independent secondary school serving a diverse community of boarding and day students. Our school has a tradition of academic excellence combined with a strong work ethic. A commitment to scholarship and a respect for individual differences guide our teaching and curriculum. We engender among our students a sense of responsibility, and they are challenged to grow in a structured and nurturing environment. The entire academic, athletic, and extracurricular experience prepares our students for a lifetime of learning, leadership, and active citizenship.

SUFFIELDACADEMY.ORG/COLLEGECOUNSELING



HOFFMAN COLLEGE COUNSELING CENTER

SUFFIELD ACADEMY 185 NORTH MAIN STREET SUFFIELD, CONNECTICUT 06078