



# PORTSMOUTH ABBEY SCHOOL PROFILE 2019 - 2020

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**THE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY** - Founded by the Rev. Dom Hugh Diman in 1926, as an independent Catholic preparatory boarding school under the auspices of the English Benedictine Congregation, Portsmouth Abbey School is located in Rhode Island, on Aquidneck Island, overlooking the Narragansett Bay, eight miles north of Newport. The school immerses students in a rigorous study of the foundations of Western civilization, intellectual tradition, and culture to instill in its students the Benedictine love of knowledge, study, discussion, and the exchange of ideas. The mission: to help young men and women grow in knowledge and grace by fostering reverence for God and the human person, respect for learning and order, and responsibility for the shared experience of community life. While the student body is predominantly Catholic (about two-thirds), students from all faiths find a warm welcome at the Abbey. Thirty-seven percent of the student body receives \$4.8 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 51 lay teachers and 4 monks on the faculty; 38 faculty members, or 69%, hold advanced degrees, 9 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 22 states, Puerto Rico, D.C., and 16 foreign countries. **There are 94 students in the Sixth Form**, all of whom are expected to attend college.

	Boys	Girls	Total
Boarding	123	103	226
Day	52	92	110
Total	175	195	336

## IMPORTANT NOTES:

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

## SPECIAL FEATURES OF OUR PROGRAMMING:

- Students entering the Third Form are required to study Latin for one year.
- Students are required to take a religion course each year. The religion courses include an academic exploration of theology, church history, and ethics, and an examination of the application of Catholic doctrine and ethics in such areas as public policy and biomedical issues.
- The comprehensive writing instruction, which takes place across all Forms and disciplines, culminates in an Independent Sixth Form Thesis: 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 foun-

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## COLLEGE COUNSELING OFFICE

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dational 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 a week students meet to work on writing.

-The science sequence begins with physics followed by chemistry and biology. All are laboratory sciences, including the science electives.

- At the entry level, the math department embraces a problem-solving curriculum for Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2/Analysis classes. The curriculum consists of a book of problems that develops the mathematics through constant spirals of discovery and reinforcement. In other words, homework is never "ten of these" but always a set of problems that may or may not seem related to each other, but gradually develop the student's reasoning powers and knowledge. On the other end, the curriculum is never exhausted as the department offers a rotating set of college-level, Post-AP math courses for those who have completed Calculus BC. The rotation in recent years has included Differential Equations, Multivariable Calculus, Linear Algebra, Real Analysis, 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 four major publications (yearbook, *Gregorian*; literary magazine, *The Raven*; and newspaper, *The Beacon*); captains of athletic teams; and in the performing arts, stage manager, section leaders, directors, arrangers, choreographers.

## CO-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES:

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

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

**Community Service:** All students are invited to perform community service. Students may participate in one or more of the after-school service internships that provide support for local aid organizations and schools. Expanded service projects include the Clothe-a-Child program, the DC March for Life, and the local Walk for Cancer. Students are welcome to, and often do, create new opportunities for service.

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

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

**Athletics:** Most Abbey students compete in at least one sport each year; many compete in two or three. Portsmouth Abbey fields 25 varsity teams in 18 sports, with JV teams available in most sports. In the past year, Abbey teams have won four league or regional championships and one student athlete has been named league "Player of the Year." In addition, 35 athletes have been selected All League, eight have been selected All State, six have been selected All New England, and one was selected US lacrosse All American. Two coaches were selected by their peers as Coach of the Year.

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

## SUMMER PROGRAMS:

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

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

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

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

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

## TESTING DATA:

The following scores are for the class of 2020 as of June 2019. This data includes 10 students whose native language is not English.

### SAT Scores—Middle 50%

Students tested	EBRW	Mathematics	Total
92	580-685	555-690	1140-1355

### ACT Scores—Middle 50%

Students tested	ELA	English	Math	Reading	Science	STEM	Composite
34	25-27	24-33	21-28	24-30	22-29	23-28	24-29

## 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.

**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 2018-19 academic year, 16 AP courses are offered. Due to the inherent rigor of the curriculum and the unique graduation requirements, students are limited in the number of AP courses in which they can enroll. Therefore it is extremely rare for a student to take an AP course before Fifth-Form year; our top students will graduate with 6 to 8 AP courses. Honors courses (H) are offered in math, science, and languages. Well-qualified students who have excelled in and exhausted our curricular offerings, including AP courses, in a subject area may be invited to participate in courses developed to provide college-level instruction in that area. These post-AP courses are marked with an asterisk (\*) on transcripts. The Advanced Topics in Mathematics course may include Multivariable Calculus, Linear Algebra, Real Analysis and/or Number Theory.

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

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

#### Religion

Basic Theology, Advanced Theology, Topics in Theology, Schola

#### Humanities

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

#### English

Introduction to Literature (Form 3)

Humanities (Form 4)

American Literature (Form 5)

English Seminar and Thesis (Form 6)

Creative Writing (elective, Form 4, 5 or 6)

English Literature AP (Form 6)

#### Classical Languages

Latin 1, 1H, 2, 2H, 3, 3H, AP

Greek 1, 2, 3H, 4H

#### Modern Languages

French 1, 2, 2H, 3, 3H, 4H, AP French Language

Spanish 1, 2, 2H, 3, 3H, 4, 4H, AP Spanish Language

Chinese 1, 2, 3, 4H, 5 AP

#### History

Ancient and Medieval History

Humanities

U.S. History, AP U.S. History

AP European History

Political Science/Economics/International Relations

Rhode Island History H

#### Mathematics

Algebra 1

Geometry, Geometry H

Algebra II/Analysis, Algebra II/Analysis H

Pre calculus, Pre calculus H

AP Calculus AB

AP Calculus BC

AP Statistics

Advanced Topics in Math\* (Post-AP)

AP Computer Science

#### Science

Conceptual Physics, Conceptual Physics H, AP Physics C: Mechanics,

Independent Study in Physics\* (Post-AP)

Chemistry 1, Chemistry 1H, AP Chemistry, 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

Music Technology

AP Music Theory

Theater

Drama Workshop

**MATRICULATION LIST** – Members of the class of 2019 were admitted to over 190 different college and universities and choose to attend the following 67 schools:

Babson College (3)	Emory University	Purdue University (3)	University of New Haven (2)
Barnard College	Florida International University	Roanoke College	University of Pennsylvania (2)
Bates College	Fordham University	Saint Michael's College	University of Rhode Island (7)
Baylor University (2)	Furman University	Smith College	University of Rochester
Boston College	Georgetown University	Southern Methodist University	University of San Diego
Boston University	High Point University	Stevens Institute of Technology	University of Virginia
Bryant University	Instituto Tecnologico de Monterrey	Stonehill College (2)	University of Wisconsin, Madison
Bucknell University	Johns Hopkins University (2)	Texas Christian University	Villanova University (2)
Carnegie Mellon University	Loyola University Chicago	The New School - All Divisions	Virginia Military Institute
Colby College	Mercyhurst University	The University of Alabama (2)	Virginia Tech
College of Charleston	Miami University, Oxford	The University of Tampa	Wake Forest University (2)
College of the Holy Cross	Nazareth College	Trinity College (2)	Whittier College
Connecticut College	New York University	Universidad de Navarra	Williams College
Dean College	Northeastern University	University College Dublin (2)	Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Drexel University	Northwestern University (2)	University of Chicago	Yale University
Duke University	Occidental College	University of Georgia	
Elon University	Providence College	University of Massachusetts, Amherst	

# GRADE DISTRIBUTION CLASS OF 2020 – 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	5											
Algebra II/Analysis H				1								
Algebra II/Analysis			2	7	6	1	4					
American Literature	4	12	15	20	20	7	12	3	3	2	1	
Art History AP		1										
Biology		1	8	12	8	3	2				1	
Biology H	3	2	4	2	2							
Biology AP		2		1								
Calculus AB (AP)	1	1	1			2	1					
Calculus BC (AP)	1		1	2								
Ceramics		1	1	1								
Chemistry			2	7	1	7	5	2	1			
Chemistry H			1	1								
Chemistry (AP)		1	3	1	2	1						
Chinese 2				1								
Chinese 3	2	2			1							
Conceptual Physics			2									
Creative Writing		1	1									
Faith & Church	5	24	30	29	9	1	1					
French 2		1	1		1							
French 2H		2										
French 3	1				1	1						
French 3H	1		1									
French 4H		2	2	1								
French (AP)		1	1	3								
Fundamentals of Art				1								
Latin 2								1				
Latin 3H	3	1	3	2			2					
Latin 4 (AP)		1		1								
Marine Science					1							
Medical Physiology						1						
M European History AP			1		1							
Music Technology		1										
Music Theory (AP)		1										
Number Theory	3											
Physics AP		1										
Precalculus	6	10	9	14	5	5	1			1		
Precalculus Honors	2	2	5	3								
Spanish 1	1											
Spanish 2	1			2	3		1	2			1	
Spanish 2H					1							
Spanish 3		1	2	6	4	3		1		2		
Spanish 3H	2	4	3	2			1					
Spanish 4				2	1							
Spanish 4H	1		1	2								
Statistics (AP)	3	2	1		1	1						
U.S. History	1	4	13	14	6	10	8	5		1		
U.S. History (AP)		7		6			2					
2-D Visual Art		1	12		1							