



# **NORFOLK ACADEMY**

Norfolk, VA

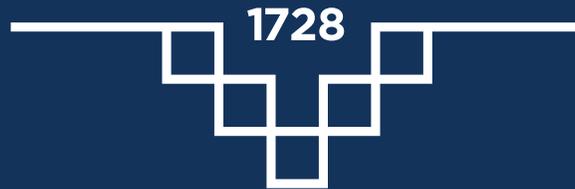
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**HEAD OF SCHOOL**  
Start Date: July 2023  
[norfolkacademy.org](http://norfolkacademy.org)



**Carney  
Sandoe**  
& ASSOCIATES

# NORFOLK ACADEMY



“We aim to prepare students to become ultimately useful and responsible citizens of a democracy. We strive to make them aware of their role in creating a just society. Aware of a tradition of academic excellence that dates from 1728 and sensitive to the need for meeting change, the Academy attempts to maintain high standards, both academic and ethical, for students and faculty. We believe that the honor system is the embodiment of those ideals.

Norfolk Academy strives to live by our conviction that sound moral and spiritual values define the individual in a more significant way than individual achievement.”

–Excerpt from Norfolk Academy’s Philosophy and Objectives

## OVERVIEW

Founded in 1728, Norfolk Academy is the oldest independent school in Virginia and one of the premier independent schools in the nation. Situated on a 70-acre campus, the school serves 1,200 students in grades 1-12 and offers a broad and varied program of academic, artistic, and athletic opportunities to help each student “develop maturity of body, mind, and character and engender awareness and appreciation of intellectual, aesthetic, and moral excellence.” The Norfolk Academy community fosters a climate of belonging, so that each individual feels secure, respected, and valued.

As beautifully stated in the Portrait of a Graduate, “Norfolk Academy’s chartering in 1728 gives the school’s graduates a distinctive perspective; they are part of an historic institution that has been educating Americans who have helped lead the nation in all fields of endeavor and through many times of crisis and renewal. Our graduates are inspired by the school’s resilience and its ability to respond to the nation’s needs, and in the school’s story, they find strength and stamina to fuel their own individual life journeys.”

## At a Glance

Founded: 1728

Total students: 1,205

Students of color: 25%

Total faculty: 118

Faculty of color: 9%

Faculty with advanced degrees: 81%

Academic Structure: Three divisions—Lower  
(Grades 1-6), Middle (Grades 7-9),  
Upper (Grades 10-12)

Student/teacher ratio: 10:1

Financial aid budget: \$3.4 million

Students receiving aid: 20%

Range of Tuition (4 tiers): \$20,800 - \$26,100

Invested Assets/Endowment: \$105.3 million  
(As of 12/31/21)



With the retirement of Dennis Manning, who has led the school with vision, compassion, and humility for more than twenty years, Norfolk Academy seeks a new head of school to continue its long tradition of academic excellence, community engagement, and leadership stability.

## SCHOOL HISTORY

Norfolk Academy was founded in 1728. As early as 1680, however, its presence had been foreseen by Norfolk town planners who reserved a large parcel of land across the street from the parish church as a “school lot.” Some forty-eight years later, the lot was deeded to three prominent citizens with the instructions that a school be constructed there for the benefit of the “inhabitation [sic] of Norfolk Town.” That 1728 “trust deed” served as Norfolk Academy’s charter and created the school’s first trustees.

The modern era for Norfolk Academy began in 1950 with the arrival of James B. Massey, Jr. as head of school. Through his uncompromising leadership and the vision of an outstanding Board of Trustees, the Academy grew and prospered. The final essential steps to prominence were the 1966 merger with the Country Day School for Girls in Virginia Beach and the concurrent move to the school’s present location on the Norfolk/Virginia Beach border. The school has enjoyed remarkable leadership and stability, having just three headmasters in the past 72 years.



Over the last two decades, the school completed campaigns that have transformed the campus and increased the school's endowment substantially. In 2005, the school built a new arts center, which also transformed the school's main entrance with an archway. It includes a state-of-the-art theater (including a sound and lighting booth and backstage areas for set design and construction); rehearsal spaces for orchestra and band, as well as practice rooms; expansive rooms for visual arts; and an art gallery. In 2018, the school completed a \$67 million Defining Leadership campaign, which reshaped the campus with a new stadium, including seating for 1,000, a turf field for football and lacrosse, an all-weather, synthetic track; a leadership center to serve as the hub for innovative learning; a significant expansion to the school's cafeteria (known as the refectory), both to the dining area and kitchen; and a major addition to the Lower School. This year, the school opened a new space for Engineering, Design, and Innovation classes for Middle School students.

## THE SCHOOL

Today, Norfolk Academy enrolls approximately 1,200 students in grades 1-12. A college-preparatory curriculum, combined with strong sports and arts programs, innovative curricular offerings, and time-honored traditions, provides students with an exceptional educational experience. Students who attend Norfolk Academy come from all areas of Hampton Roads (Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, Hampton, and Newport News), the Eastern Shore of Virginia, and northeastern North Carolina. Twenty-five percent of the student body is made up of students of color, and 20% of students receive need-based financial assistance.

Norfolk Academy's 118 faculty members seek to develop engaged learners who possess both the intellectual abilities and the character traits needed to thrive in today's world. The school's teacher-coach model shapes a distinctive school culture; the athletic teams are coached by faculty members, allowing teachers to understand students fully and develop powerful, motivating relationships. Arts programs, as well, are led by teachers. Faculty have an average of 19 years of experience teaching at Norfolk Academy.



With a student-to-teacher ratio of approximately 10:1 throughout the school, teachers know their students well and dedicate themselves to making sure their students achieve their highest potential.

The school's most cherished tradition is its Honor System, which is both an ideal and a reality. It sets clear expectations that every student comes to understand and internalize. Each member of the Norfolk Academy community commits to behaving honorably in all school activities and programs; students write the honor pledge on all graded assignments; and they are expected to speak honestly, and act with integrity, in all interactions with peers and teachers. The student-led Honor Councils in middle and upper divisions lead education in honorable behavior and adjudicate honor infractions with guidance from faculty and the head of school; in the lower school, teachers handle infractions in a developmentally appropriate manner. The Honor System shapes an environment that helps students and all members of the community advance their ethical development and their capacity to make sound, moral, and mature decisions. Open lockers are the most visible manifestation of the robust honor system at the Academy.

Norfolk Academy is the only school in the region that enjoys accreditation by all three school accrediting organizations: the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS/AdvancEd), the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS), and the Virginia Association of Independent Schools (VAIS). Under the auspices of the Virginia Council of Private Education (VCPE), Norfolk Academy is recognized as an accredited school by the Virginia State Board of Education. The school is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), the College Board, the Educational Records Bureau (ERB), the Secondary School Admissions Test Board (SSATB), and the World Leading Schools Association (WLSA).

## **ACADEMICS**

Norfolk Academy strives to prepare students academically for college and adult life by fostering an atmosphere in which learning is seen as its own reward, by encouraging all students to do their best work, and by helping students decide their specific academic interests through exposing them to a variety of disciplines. Students across all grades approach learning as an integrated endeavor—one that encompasses reading, problem-solving, research, and real-world experiences.



## Lower School

Norfolk Academy's Lower School programs launch students on a journey of intellectual and moral growth that continues through graduation. Lower School begins with single gender classrooms in grades one through four. This intentional structure allows girls and boys to explore, learn, and take risks among their peers of the same gender in their initial years of education. In fifth grade, the school brings boys and girls together for dynamic co-ed classes.

Habits and traditions that reflect the school's community of trust begin in first grade. Teachers greet students in the morning with a handshake or similar greeting that carries an implied message: "I see you. I know you. I respect you." Students learn about the Honor System with instruction suited to their developmental age. The school's program to shape students into confident public speakers begins in the Lower School with Boy-of-the-Day and Girl-of-the-Day, a program of presentations to the class that builds comfort with taking on a leadership role and speaking to peers.

Students enjoy daily P.E. classes throughout Lower School, including units of swimming instruction at the school's indoor pool. This practice helps forge health of body, mind, and spirit. Students learn to de-stress through rigorous exercise and build collaborative skills as they play; the program is a contributor to the extraordinary level of voluntary participation in competitive athletics starting in Middle School.

Norfolk Academy also offers an exciting Engineering Design and Innovation program for Lower School students. Two full-time teachers provide instruction and experimentation in dedicated classrooms for students as part of their regularly scheduled classes. Projects grow in complexity as students progress through the course from first to sixth grade; students begin by tackling projects to teach fundamental principles and progress to more complex projects, including programming robots and constructing aerodynamic rockets.



Family-style lunches, a hallmark of Norfolk Academy’s close-knit culture, begin in Lower School. Faculty join students, and fifth and sixth graders serve as “waiters” to serve a variety of entrees to younger students. The fully-staffed kitchen provides several hot options daily, including vegetarian and vegan meals, and a soup selection in colder months. Faculty oversee the tables and keep the conversation flowing among students of various grades, a practice that continues through Middle and Upper Schools. Alumni often recall the lunch experience as one of the most enjoyable and bonding times of their Academy experience.

### **Middle School**

Norfolk Academy seventh, eighth, and ninth graders present themselves with more poise and polish than most adolescents thanks to the natural culmination of coming of age within the school’s respectful, relational culture and community. Because the Middle School extends to ninth grade, Norfolk Academy students don’t feel rushed to “fit in” among juniors and seniors before they’re ready. Instead, they hold a vast array of leadership positions during their ninth-grade year—including the opportunity to begin their journey through the Batten Leadership Program, which reinforces and strengthens the school’s commitment to producing principled, civic-minded leaders.

The Middle School curriculum includes study in English, world languages (French, German, Spanish, and Latin) history and social science, mathematics, science, fine arts, and physical education. (All students take Latin in sixth and seventh grades; they begin studying a modern foreign language in 8th grade and may opt to continue Latin as well.) This program of core subjects is supported by a speech program that shapes students into poised and dynamic public speakers. In ninth grade, each student presents a persuasive speech to the faculty and the entire Middle School through a daily Chapel program. Each student works closely with a faculty advisor and school librarians throughout the process of selecting a topic, researching, drafting, polishing, and practicing. The delivery of the speech is a rite of passage that marks each student’s preparation for Upper School.



Students in seventh and eighth grades end the year with the Mini-mester, a week-long program focusing on experiential learning outside of the typical classroom setting. The courses, designed by faculty members, are designed to fuel students' interest in further exploration. All ninth graders participate in Leadership Lab, a program designed to promote personal growth, collaborative skills, and leadership; it includes challenges in a forest setting and urban environment in Washington, D.C.

### **Upper School**

As students enter the Upper School, they are prepared to dive into more advanced courses and to follow their passions. Students can choose from an array of electives in all areas of study, from the sciences to the humanities. Students may pursue advanced courses in all the lab sciences; in recent years, the science department has added advanced courses in organic chemistry, inorganic chemistry, and anatomy and physiology. All modern language courses extend through Level 5, and Latin extends through Level 6.

Each May, sophomores and juniors embark on experiential learning opportunities locally and abroad. Maymester includes international programs, cross-curricular courses designed by Upper School faculty, and professional internships through Norfolk Academy's Alumni Career Connections program. These offerings have substantive academic content, provide immersive learning experiences, and afford time for reflection and growth. Maymester is designed to prepare students to be engaged global citizens.

The Senior Speech is similar in structure to the ninth grade speech, but seniors have more independence throughout the process, befitting their maturity; the faculty advisor mainly provides guidance, encouragement, and modest editing. These speeches, delivered to all Upper School students and faculty in the daily Chapel program, mark the culmination of a journey in learning to speak with poise and confidence. Every senior experiences a sense of accomplishment in completing this rite of passage, one that offers preparation for college and beyond.



Over 90% of students graduate from the college or university to which they originally matriculate - evidence that their college searches are thoughtful, intentional, and fit-centered. Norfolk Academy's demanding curriculum and high standards ensure that students are well-prepared for the academic demands of the most rigorous colleges and universities in the country.

## THE ARTS

Norfolk Academy provides the resources, facilities, and inspiration to grow in both discipline and discernment in the arts. Lower School students have classes in visual arts and general music. In addition, students may participate in band and string classes that lead to membership in band, orchestra, or chorus. Private individual lessons are available during the school day in piano and all ensemble instruments. Private students may perform in one of eight spring recitals. Norfolk Academy is home to a well-established and popular dance program for grades 1-6, featuring ballet and jazz classes. The Young People's Theater Program offers additional opportunities to perform onstage through the Enrichment Program.

## College Matriculation

Norfolk Academy students from the classes of 2017-2021 have matriculated to the following institutions, among others:

American University  
Boston University  
Brown University  
Carnegie Mellon University  
Columbia University  
Cornell University  
Dartmouth College  
Duke University  
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University  
Emory University  
The George Washington University  
Georgetown University  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
Harvard University  
Howard University  
Johns Hopkins University  
Morehouse College  
Naval Academy Preparatory School  
The New School  
New York University  
Princeton University  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
Savannah College of Art and Design  
Stanford University  
Syracuse University  
Tufts University  
Tulane University  
United States Merchant Marine Academy  
United States Military Academy  
United States Naval Academy  
University of California, Los Angeles, San Diego  
University of Chicago  
University of Michigan  
University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill  
University of Notre Dame  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Virginia  
Vanderbilt University  
Virginia Military Institute  
Washington University in St. Louis  
Yale University

[See the full list.](#)



The Upper School curriculum offers studio art 1, 2, and 3, for students wishing to explore their creativity in a variety of media; students in the art program can also explore woodworking and sculpture. Art History and film courses are offered, as well as sports broadcasting. Actors, actresses, and students interested in all aspects of stagecraft (light, sound, set, and costume design) develop their skills with fall and spring plays, as well as the Winter Musical. The Dance Team practices throughout the year as an after-school offering and dancers in the winter season perform in the Winter Musical.

## ATHLETICS

The Norfolk Academy Athletic Program is an integral part of the school's overall educational experience. It contributes to the physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being of every student-athlete in a manner consistent with Norfolk Academy's overall Philosophy and Objectives. A program of daily P.E. in Lower School builds healthy habits for life and enthusiasm for competitive athletics. More than 85% of Middle and Upper School students participate in the 27 sports and 72 different teams. Varsity teams compete in the Tidewater Conference of Independent Schools, the Virginia Prep League, the League of Independent Schools, and in VISAA state level championship competition.

Norfolk Academy's teacher-coach model builds cohesion and continuity throughout Middle and Upper Schools. With classroom teachers coaching nearly all of the competitive athletic teams, students come to know and appreciate one another on multiple levels. Trust earned in the classroom continues to build on the field, and lessons learned on the court—about teamwork, about patience, about strategy and tactics—find applications back in the classroom.



## SCHOOL LIFE

Norfolk Academy students develop their learning beyond the classroom through an array of programs that offer real-world challenges. Numerous extra-curricular activities are offered; student-led clubs in the Upper School cover an array of interests and all have a community engagement component.

The school's International Programs include long-term and short-term language-based exchanges, in which students stay in the homes of host families. The partnership between Norfolk Academy and Copernicus Gymnasium in Lönigen, Germany will mark its 50th anniversary in 2023, making it one of the nation's oldest, continuously operating exchange programs—quite possibly the oldest one. These programs help develop students into culturally perceptive citizens and build confidence for navigating in unfamiliar environments.

The Batten Leadership Program reinforces and strengthens the school's commitment to producing principled, civic-minded leaders through three signature programs: the Batten Leadership Fellows, a three-year, selective, co-curricular, experiential, academic leadership program with five tracks; The Leadership Lab, a 4-year series of academic and experiential laboratories for all ninth graders and continued optional labs for students in grades 10 through 12; and the Medical Scholars, a series of medical education programs and internships for interested Upper School students.



## HAMPTON ROADS: A THRIVING COASTAL COMMUNITY

Approximately 1.75 million people live in the Hampton Roads region, which is a prime place to live, work, and enjoy recreational activities. The vibrancy of the region arises in part from the constellation of cities, each with its own unique attributes: Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and—across the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel (currently undergoing a major expansion)—Newport News, Hampton, and Williamsburg. Several major universities contribute to the region’s economy and its intellectual and cultural energy: Old Dominion University and Norfolk State (both in Norfolk), Virginia Wesleyan University (Virginia Beach), Regent University (Virginia Beach), Hampton University, and William & Mary (Williamsburg).

Norfolk is considered to be the historic, urban, financial, and cultural center of the region. It is home to the world’s largest naval base and the North American headquarters for NATO. Norfolk International Airport, served by major airlines, is a travel hub for the region.

The city is the principal home for several major performing arts companies and museums. Chrysler Hall, Norfolk’s downtown performing arts center, features the Norfolk Forum Lecture Series, the Virginia Symphony, and touring Broadway shows. The Virginia Opera, the official opera company of Virginia, is based in Norfolk. The Chrysler Museum of Art features masterworks from every major civilization, historical period, and culture of the past 5,000 years.

The Virginia Beach Oceanfront, with an array of luxury hotels and family-friendly activities, is a tourism engine for the region. The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) and the Virginia Aquarium are major attractions, as well as the Virginia Beach Field House, a 175,000 square foot indoor sports complex that specializes in adult and youth sports leagues. The region also serves as home to the two highest level professional franchises in the state of Virginia—the Norfolk Tides play Triple-A baseball in the International League, and the Norfolk Admirals play ice hockey in the ECHL.



With the Chesapeake Bay, Atlantic Ocean, countless rivers, and 144 miles of shoreline to be explored and enjoyed, outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy fishing, boating, swimming, and surfing in the Atlantic Ocean and the Chesapeake Bay. The region has a wide array of shopping, including upscale boutiques and major regional malls; the restaurant scene is robust, with a range of dining options along the Virginia Beach Oceanfront and the new Waterside District in Norfolk. More than 100 festivals are hosted each year throughout the Hampton Roads region, many of them free.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Norfolk Academy has a strong tradition of governance that has featured a positive Board of Trustees/Head of School relationship. The Board of Trustees has afforded great latitude to the Head of School in running the school and in imagining the school's future. Evidence of the success of this culture is that the school has had only three Heads of School in the last seventy plus years. The next leader of Norfolk Academy will work closely with the Board of Trustees to revitalize ongoing projects that have been put on hold because of the health and safety demands of the past two years and to articulate strategic priorities that will keep Norfolk Academy at the forefront of independent school education. Those priorities, which focus on people and programs, include:

- **Caring for a strong and committed community**

From the strength of student/teacher relationships to the dedication of the Board of Trustees to the sense of being known and cared for expressed by students, parents, faculty, and staff, NA promotes a culture of trust and care. The next head of school will inherit a healthy and enduring school culture; as one teacher shared, "The school has a soul." Students at Norfolk Academy develop a moral compass attuned to their purpose in the world.



- **Supporting faculty growth, purpose, and excellence**

The teacher/coach model has been a hallmark of Norfolk Academy experience and the foundation of the strong relationships between teachers and students. Yet the demands on teachers and coaches have increased, as have concerns about work-life balance and wellness. Understanding how the teacher/coach model may be creatively managed across the arc of a teacher’s career while encouraging faculty fulfillment, collegiality, and excellence will be critical to supporting one of NA’s greatest assets.

- **Continuing to develop leadership programs**

As evidenced in the school’s commitment to service and “unselfishness of thought and action,” Norfolk Academy strives to produce graduates who use their talents to shape a more just society. The next head of school will continue to build upon the foundations of the Batten Leadership Fellows and the Massey Leadership Center to seek pathways to leadership that resonate with students’ passions. In addition to supporting a leadership curriculum and community partnerships, the next head will explore leadership learning opportunities throughout the Hampton Roads region.

- **Improving teaching and learning through “judicious experimentation with the new”**

NA has consistently improved its curriculum and programs by maintaining a careful balance between the best of its proven teaching methods and traditions and a consistent exploration of more innovative pedagogical approaches. Programs like the Batten Leadership Fellows and Maymester have been developed judiciously, incorporating experiential and cross-disciplinary learning with opportunities to be of service to the community beyond the walls of the Academy. The next head of school will continue to support exploration of promising new teaching methods and curricula to meet the evolving needs of Norfolk Academy graduates while also supporting professional development opportunities that allow faculty to bring the best new ideas to the school.

- **Elevating diversity, inclusion, and belonging**

NA seeks to reflect the diversity of the surrounding community by welcoming a student body from many walks of life and hiring faculty and leaders who reflect that diversity. By building relationships with a range of institutional partners, supporting pluralism in the curriculum, and fostering a culture of belonging, the next head of school will continue to embrace and support the richness of a diverse community at the school.



- **Communicating the value proposition**

NA enjoys an excellent reputation and the top market position in the region, and the next head of school will be expected to ensure it remains the top choice for exceptional students and their families. Engaging pervasively in the Hampton Roads market, fostering regional partnerships, and exploring innovative financial models to ensure affordability and access will all be essential responsibilities for the next head.

## DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Approachable, accessible, and collaborative, with a predisposition to empower others to learn and grow;
- Honest, trustworthy, and transparent;
- Committed to excellence in every pursuit;
- Attentive to current educational research and able to combine that understanding with an appreciation for Norfolk Academy's values and vision;
- A collaborative leadership style that delegates effectively and genuinely invites and respects the perspectives and views of others, yet is decisive and firm when necessary;
- A palpable enjoyment at being an active and visible presence in the life of the school;
- Personal and professional commitment to diversity, inclusion, and belonging;
- Effective communicator with faculty members, parents, students, community members, and the Board of Trustees, keeping these groups focused on the school's vision and appropriately informed of potential issues and/or needs;
- Expertise in strategic external affairs, including admissions, fundraising, marketing, and broader community involvement.



## TO APPLY

Interested candidates should submit the following materials as separate PDF attachments in one email:

- Cover letter expressing interest in this leadership position;
- Current resume;
- Statement of educational leadership, and/or a writing sample of your choice (e.g., article, speech, convocation) related to the topic(s) of leadership or education.

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