



HEAD OF SCHOOL

Start Date: July 2027

The Derryfield School

Manchester, New Hampshire | derryfield.org



Carney
Sandoe
& ASSOCIATES

MISSION STATEMENT

The Derryfield School inspires bright, motivated young people to be their best and provides them with the skills and experiences needed to be valued, dynamic, confident, and purposeful members of any community.

At a Glance



1964
established



384
total enrollment



27%
students of color



107
total faculty and staff



68%
faculty with
advanced degrees



8:1
student-faculty ratio



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OVERVIEW

Encircling a tall stand of trees, granite stairways, and a running stream, the campus of The Derryfield School, located in Manchester, New Hampshire, has a New Hampshire feel. Unpretentious, innovative, and playful, The Derryfield School is an independent day school for grades 6-12 that occupies a distinctive place in the New Hampshire school landscape. Founded in 1964 by local families—who envisioned a school that combined the rigor and ambition of the nation's finest boarding schools with the values of family life, community connection, and personal balance—Derryfield was intentionally created as a day school where students could pursue excellence while remaining rooted in the lives of the people who know them best. Today, that founding vision continues to define the School's character, attracting families who value both academic challenge and the opportunity for students to return home each evening enriched by, rather than separated from, the communities that shape them.

Several defining academic innovations and programs help shape the Derryfield experience. The School's Portrait of a Derryfield Graduate framework, work that began in 2019, serves as the foundation for student experience as well as curriculum and assessment. This year, the School has moved to schoolwide “portrait-based grading,” ensuring clear feedback on academic content areas and competencies such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, self-advocacy, belonging, and civil discourse. Project-based and experiential learning opportunities also connect classroom learning with authentic, real-world applications. Additionally, all students participate in LEAD (Leadership, Ethics, and Development), a faculty-developed leadership and social development curriculum that spans the student experience.





The community is earnest in their appreciation for Derryfield. Students report that the School's commitment to student leadership and their connections with teachers are some of their favorite aspects of the community. Faculty describe the School as a “yes, and...” place where faculty often wear many hats as they dedicate their efforts to the students in their care. Faculty and staff also share that curriculum innovation, programmatic changes, and new ideas are easier to implement here than other institutions. Parents report that the quality and strength of the faculty are among the most important reasons they choose and stay at Derryfield. As one community member summed it up: “We are comfortable being playful and casual; not stuffy, unpretentious. We are sincere but not serious.” A student described the School as “a one-stop shop. All the different kinds of people come together.” Students, faculty, parents, trustees, and alumni alike emphasized that Derryfield's defining strength is its relationships: “You can't hide here, and you can't fall through the cracks.” At Derryfield, students are known, supported, challenged, and encouraged to explore multiple dimensions of themselves.

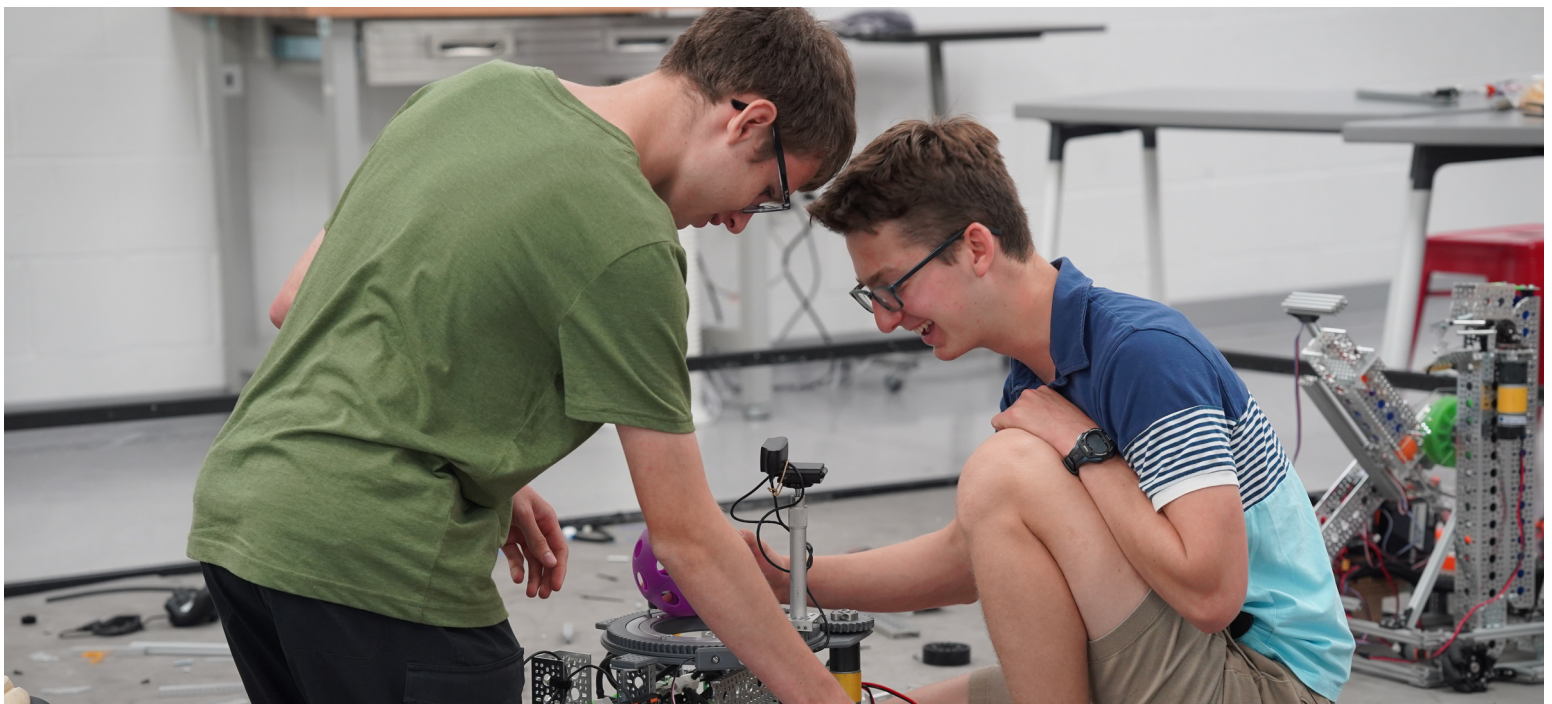
The next Head of School will inherit a School with a clear mission, a highly engaged community, a talented faculty, an ambitious strategic plan, and a deep sense of identity. Derryfield enters this transition seeking a leader who can reflect, honor, and strengthen what makes the School special while ensuring its long-term sustainability and success.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Derryfield's recently adopted strategic plan, *Rooted in Tradition, Reaching Toward Tomorrow*, is grounded in five commitments: intellectual growth and character development, financial sustainability, care and belonging, flourishing educators, and dynamic systems and facilities. The next Head will enter with this momentum, and with opportunities and challenges that require both strong stewardship and leadership in the following areas:

Strengthening Derryfield's Long-Term Sustainability: Derryfield enjoys a strong mission, a loyal community, and a clear sense of purpose. Like many independent schools across New England, the School is navigating demographic shifts, affordability considerations, and changing enrollment patterns, creating a chance for the next Head to help shape a sustainable and resilient future through thoughtful enrollment, advancement, and financial strategies.

Investing in People and Community: The strength of Derryfield rests in its faculty, staff, and the relationships they build with students every day. Ensuring a thriving professional community is one of the elements of its current Strategic Plan. The next Head will be positioned to nurture and strengthen a professional culture that continues to attract, develop, and retain talented educators while ensuring that faculty and staff continue to find joy, purpose, and professional fulfillment in their work.



Leading Through Partnership and Engagement:

Derryfield has long valued collaboration, accessibility, and authentic relationships. The next Head will be well positioned to deepen connections across the community, engage a wide range of stakeholders at the School and in the Manchester community in meaningful dialogue, and strengthen the partnership among faculty, staff, students, families, alumni, and trustees that has long been a hallmark of the School.

Telling the Derryfield Story:

The School's well-established, innovative educational approach, student-centered culture, and distinctive sense of community provide a compelling foundation for future growth and reflect a place where the School is excelling. An exciting opportunity exists for the next Head to serve as Derryfield's chief ambassador, helping prospective families, donors, alumni, and community partners more fully appreciate what makes a Derryfield education unique. A strong and effective advancement, enrollment, and communications team stands ready to support this effort and the new Head.

Building on a Strong Foundation of Innovation:

Over the past decade or more, Derryfield has undertaken meaningful work in areas including experiential learning, leadership development, dynamic and purposeful assessment, and emerging technologies. The next Head will have an opportunity to support the continued evolution of these initiatives while ensuring they remain aligned with the School's enduring commitment to relationships, belonging, academic rigor, and student growth.

Preparing Students for a Changing World:

As technology, higher education, and the world of work continue to evolve rapidly, Derryfield has positioned itself well to help students develop the skills and habits of mind needed to thrive in the future. The next Head will have the opportunity to build upon and guide thoughtful conversations about innovation, artificial intelligence, leadership, and character while preserving the deeply human and relational approach that defines the Derryfield experience.



\$4.5M

financial aid
awarded



44%

students receiving
aid



70+ acres

campus size

QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

The next Head of School will understand that Derryfield's culture is not incidental to its success. The community seeks a leader who can preserve and strengthen the school's joyful, caring, and deeply human character while ensuring that Derryfield remains a vibrant, sustainable, and mission-driven school for generations to come.



Professional Qualifications

The successful candidate will demonstrate many of the following:

- Successful senior leadership experience in an independent school, preferably as a Head of School, Assistant Head of School, or comparable role
- Experience with enrollment strategy, admissions, institutional advancement, and fundraising
- Financial, strategic, and operational acumen to support institutional priorities such as endowment growth, resource stewardship and long-range planning
- Demonstrated success recruiting, developing, retaining, and supporting exceptional faculty and staff
- Experience building and sustaining collaborative organizational cultures characterized by trust, transparency, and shared responsibility
- Ability to serve as a compelling ambassador, communicator, and relationship-builder with families, alumni, donors, and community partners
- Understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing independent schools, including demographic shifts, affordability, enrollment trends, and emerging technologies
- Skilled in leading and navigating conflict, with the ability to lead and manage through crisis, and the ability, as well as the confidence, to make difficult decisions
- Deep appreciation for student-centered education and relationship-driven school culture



Leadership Style and Personal Qualities

The Derryfield community seeks a leader who will reflect, enjoy, and embody the School's values and culture. The ideal candidate will demonstrate:

- Authenticity, warmth, humility, and approachability
- Exceptional listening skills, emotional intelligence, and empathy
- The ability to build trust and strengthen relationships across the community
- Enthusiasm, optimism, a sense of humor, and an appreciation for Derryfield's uniquely playful and unpretentious culture
- Visibility and engagement across the daily life of the School
- Confidence to make difficult decisions while valuing collaboration, transparency, and input
- A commitment to empowering and developing others through delegation and shared leadership
- Curiosity, adaptability, and a desire to become a member of the Derryfield community

LEARN MORE

- [School Website](#)
- [Strategic Plan](#)
- [Equity and Belonging](#)
- [School Profile](#)
- [About Manchester, New Hampshire](#)





TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;

LISA PARSONS

Consultant

lisa.parsons@carneysandoe.com

ALLISON GAINES PELL

Senior Consultant

allison.gainespell@carneysandoe.com

The full-time salary range for this position is \$330,000-\$390,000. The starting salary is based upon, but not limited to, several factors which include years of experience, education background, and expertise.



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