

*The
Deerfield
Difference*

OUR AUTHENTIC BEST





At Deerfield, we honor the individuality, complex particularities, and unique backgrounds of each student, and invite them to see their education as an unfolding story of promise, potential, and transformation. We believe that the years of high school are formative and defining—perhaps the most important years in a young person’s great journey from childhood to adulthood.

We Are a Community That Shapes Character and Builds Intellect:

Deerfield aspires to be a school of excellence and high achievement, but also a school of joy, friendship, and optimism, where students flourish in mind, body, and character. With an ideally-sized student body of 650, Deerfield offers the breadth of program and opportunity of a large school, but remains small enough so that every student is known and seen.

Citizenship in the Deerfield community—expressed through our commitment to shared traditions, a heads-up, phone-light culture, and academic dress—remains our most important common bond.

At Deerfield, every student leads by modeling the values of integrity, respect for others, and humility. Together, our students actively create the goodness of the school: cheering for one another, lifting one another up, and taking pride in the accomplishments of peers. As a fully-residential school, students meet as equals, united by the shared experience of communal living. As a school that values leadership, older students mentor and guide younger students, renewing and strengthening the culture of the school with each successive year.

We build programs with intention to foster authentic relationships of depth, trust, and respect, and strengthen those practices, such as our sit-down, family-style meals, that further our community ideals. Shared meals support happiness and social connection, and the dining hall remains one of our great classrooms—where students learn the art of conversation across differences.

We consider our campus—bounded by River and Rock, nestled in a colonial village rich in history, and situated at some distance from urban life—to be a blessing and a resource to be enjoyed.

Learning, Literacy, and the Liberal Arts

We value deep, long-form literacy as the foundation for meaningful learning, recognizing it as essential to the intellectual habits necessary for civic engagement and life-long curiosity. We cherish the liberal arts because they help young people learn how to think, not just what to think, and our curriculum celebrates diverse canons and traditions while offering advanced opportunities for research and independent work.

We engage in four powerful classroom “modes:”

LABORATORY:

the classroom as a place of experimentation and discovery

WORKSHOP:

the classroom as a space for creativity and critique

SEMINAR:

the classroom as a forum for questions, dialogue, and truth-seeking

PRACTICE:

the classroom as a “gymnasium,” where skills are built through exercise, repetition, and sustained attention.

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the world, not to script
their understanding of it.



We Embrace Pluralism and Intellectual Diversity

Deerfield is a place where students can talk about complex issues without fear that disagreement will stifle dialogue, and where generosity of spirit, humility, and respect for the norms of scholarly inquiry are everyday habits.

Deerfield is committed to academic pluralism. Our first responsibility is to help students study, understand, and debate the world, not to script their understanding of it. We educate for expressive freedom—fostering courageous, tolerant, and conscientious speech—and expect students to engage with ideas with which they both agree and disagree.

We practice disciplined nonpartisanship as both an instructional aspiration and institutional posture, avoiding public statements on issues of public controversy unless they touch directly on our school's mission. In such a way we create space where students are free to express curiosity and form their own positions.

Academic courses are built around big questions, structured disagreement, and contrasting sources; we curate experiences (from classroom debates to travel to meetings with leaders across the political spectrum) that expose students to a broad range of arguments and perspectives.

We actively recognize that we serve students from many backgrounds and beliefs, and we embrace that diversity as a strength. Access and affordability matter, and we invite families into a community shaped by our legendary Headmaster Frank Boyden's pioneering commitment to meeting the full financial needs of families by "paying what you can."





We Approach Technology with Intention

We understand that today’s media environment constitutes a powerful second curriculum, competing for the time and attention of children, and we are especially sensitive to the ways in which the ubiquity of screens and digital technology can impair the social, emotional, and cognitive development of young people.

For that reason, we approach technology with caution and deliberation, drawing a sharp developmental distinction between adults and children. “Phone-light” expectations, screen-sensible classrooms, and our daily schedule return time and energy to face-to-face interactions, sleep, reading, and study.

We approach each new technology, including Artificial Intelligence, in a like spirit, seeking to harness its potential for learning, while recognizing the well-documented threats it poses to cognitive and social health.



We Value the Cocurricular Classroom

At Deerfield, athletics, arts, debate, robotics, and civic and service programs are not extras: they are coequal with our academic program. In these areas, students find joy in the difficult, experience challenge as a source of mastery, and develop the confidence and self-efficacy that comes with triumph won through perseverance and resiliency.

We see athletics as a moral force in which leadership, teamwork, and collaboration—enduring capacities required in professional and civic life—become habitual.

We encourage experimentation and cross-over engagement, recognizing that breadth and variety of experience are critical to well-being and healthy adolescent development.



Our Faculty Is “All In”

None of Deerfield’s programs would be possible without our faculty and staff. Graduate John McPhee ’49 defined Headmaster Frank Boyden’s ideal faculty as a “group of people much in evidence all of the time.” Today, that means a highly-engaged faculty who teach, coach, mentor, and share their time generously with students across every dimension of school.

Our faculty work collaboratively together to achieve the Academy’s mission. This level of adult engagement is the foundation of everything we do at Deerfield, because we know, from decades of experience and research



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across disparate fields, that young people flourish when faculty are fully present in their lives and committed to relationships of trust, challenge, and wise mentorship. It is the professional standard we expect and celebrate.

The adults in our community model optimism, joy, a zest for learning, and a bedrock belief in our students’ potential and goodness. We invest in faculty and staff because everything we hope for our students rests on their strength and renewal.

Drawing on Deerfield’s history and traditions, including our school motto, *Be worthy of your heritage*, we take inspiration from our history while preparing students for the challenges the future inevitably brings.



