

## POSITION STATEMENT

# St. Stephen's School

HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

START DATE: JULY 1, 2026 OR 2027





## OVERVIEW

St. Stephen's opened its doors in 1964. Founder Reverend John O. Patterson envisioned a "school whose reason for being would be a quest for excellence, for developing the maturity and wholeness of each member of the community, and maintaining the highest standards in all areas and all levels."

Today, St. Stephen's is a four-year, independent, non-profit boarding and day school that draws on the strengths of American and European education traditions. In many ways, St. Stephen's School is a unique blend of an American day and boarding school of the highest caliber with a thriving international school. The wonders of the "Eternal City"—from ancient marble ruins to grand Renaissance buildings to Baroque façades—are the backdrop of life for the students of St. Stephen's School. Combine all this with 21st-century traffic and nearly three million people in a bustling, lively cacophony of exuberant contemporary life, and you have the setting for the School in full color.

The School is thriving, having recently celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2024, and seeks to identify its next leader for July 2026 or 2027.

## THE PLACE

"Rome (is) a poem pressed into service as a city." —Anatole Broyard, American writer

Rome offers an irresistible blend of history, art, culture, and opportunities for learning, and St. Stephen's School is located in the city's historic center, with some of the world's great cultural sites just steps away. The curriculum is anchored in this unique place, "the symbol and repository of the enduring ethical, cultural, and religious values of the West and as one of the most international and cosmopolitan intersections of the modern world." Alumni say that the St. Stephen's experience is inseparable from the pulse of Rome.

# MISSION AND VALUES

## Mission

St. Stephen's is an American school providing an international education in a caring, culturally rich environment, empowering students to become independent and creative learners prepared for a complex world.

## Statement of Educational Philosophy

"Ours is a four-year, independent, non-denominational, boarding and day school that draws on the strengths of both American and European educational traditions. Through close mentoring, intellectual inquiry and inspired teaching in a small class setting, we motivate students to reach their fullest potential and take responsibility for their academic achievement, thereby readying them for the most competitive universities and the joys and benefits of lifelong learning. We foster a warm, inclusive environment—enriched by a vibrant boarding program—so young people gain the confidence to find their true balance and engage fully as caring citizens in a diverse international community. We examine the rich historical layers of Rome as a source of academic inspiration and encourage students to engage its dynamic urban environment. We strive to provide a holistic formative experience that lays the foundation for continued academic success and a fulfilling life."

## School Motto

**Mens (mind):** the ability to think critically, creatively and scientifically, coupled with a good dose of natural curiosity;

**Voluntas (will):** the motivation to succeed and the potential to excel academically;

**Gratia (influence):** interpreted as personal and social integrity, cooperation and concern for others and commitment to community, both local and global.



## Core Values

The School's core values embody what the School believes and strives to achieve as a community; they are a reflection of the vision the School hopes young graduates and pupils will share, as well as the values the School aspires to model for them.

- **Care:** We attend to the needs of others and actively build a diverse and inclusive community.
- **Scholarship:** We study passionately, use the past to inform our learning, and pursue knowledge through innovative approaches.
- **Creativity:** We encourage diverse forms of expression and value originality and invention.
- **Integrity:** We honor the truth and help one another find our voice and the courage to act on it.
- **Independence:** We prize learner autonomy, challenge convention, and recognize that where there isn't a path, we must make one.



## THE PEOPLE

### Students

St. Stephen's enrolls 300 day and boarding students of diverse cultural backgrounds, representing 70 nations. Around one third of students are from the United States and Canada. Another third are Italian and the rest are from around the world, including students from Europe, Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East.

Currently, sixty students are enrolled in boarding (up 20% in three years), with plans to grow further. Post-graduate study is available, and students from US boarding programs—Choate, Buckingham, Brown & Nichols, and Phillips Exeter, among others—have enrolled in recent years. The School awards €750K in financial aid and scholarships.

Students are attracted to the strengths of the St. Stephen's experience: academic challenge in a warm, collaborative environment with a sense of tradition. The program creates a foundation of respect for the individual which develops self-confidence and maturity for graduates.

### Faculty

Numbering around 60, St. Stephen's teachers shine as committed, talented educators as well as practitioners and specialists in their fields. From published authors and working artists to musicians and scientists, the diverse faculty includes distinguished scholars, with 90% having an advanced degree and 20% a PhD. Faculty retention is around 90%, with 4-5 new teachers hired in each of the last few years.

A long-serving teacher said of the School: "It is a community where both students and faculty are encouraged to seek out and share their interests, talents and passions. It is unique as an international boarding school in the center of Rome, which offers so many rare opportunities for learning and growth beyond simply the academics. St. Stephen's is a diverse place, where cliques and conformism are far from the norm. There is a coolness in being different, in being curious, and wanting to discover new things. It is a place where community is strong."

### Trustees

"The board is a highly diverse and dynamic group of people with first-hand experience at the School. Our board and head of school culture is one of collaboration and productivity where experience, energy, and an entrepreneurial spirit are highly valued."

—St. Stephen's Trustee

The Board of Trustees has 23 members, including three designated as ex officio: the head of school, a member of faculty, and a current parent. Alumni trustees recount the profound impact St. Stephen's has had on them, whether as a student, a parent, a faculty member, or an administrator. The Board's commitment to the School and its mission is deep and caring.

The board leaders are well aligned, supportive, and strategic; they will be helpful partners to the next head of school in moving the school forward. There is a commitment to understanding the roles and responsibilities that trustees bring to their stewardship of the School, further growing the Board's capacity for strategic governance and ensuring the School's long-term financial health. There is a healthy mix of tenures on the Board: some trustees have served for decades, while others are new to governing the School. The School is recognized under Italian law and is registered as a nonprofit in Connecticut.

## THE PROGRAM

“As a faculty member, I am in the company of colleagues who are both professional and practitioners in their field of endeavor—our history teachers are published historians and music faculty are composers. Here we relish creativity and intellectual curiosity because we live the same expectations we have for our students.”

—St. Stephen's faculty member

St. Stephen's offers a unique program. The extraordinary combination of dynamic course offerings and the location of the School animates the academic experience for students as well as faculty members.



The programmatic goals center on the rigorous International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (95% student participation) in addition to the American diploma program. If examination results were the measure of success, St. Stephen's can make its claim with an average result of 36 on the IB. But beyond test results, St. Stephen's offers an immersive intellectual experience that decades of students describe as “transformational” and “education for life.”

Signature programs enhance the curriculum, such as:

- An archeological dig together with the American University of Rome and a local school
- The Lyceum, an enhanced course of study of the classics
- Writing and Learning Centers that support academic skills for all students
- An Innovation Lab for design thinking and engineering
- A genetics project with Roman university professors at a working genetics laboratory
- A Food, Gardens, and Sustainability project on campus.

Rome has a strong influence on the curriculum, for good reason. Students in Grade 9 and 10 study Rome itself with courses like Art History in Rome and Roman Topography. Four levels of Latin draw on readings on Roman civilization. The arts are prominent, from art history to studio coursework in 2D and 3D disciplines. Students carry courses in English, history, math, and sciences in addition to transdisciplinary requirements in physical education, technology, health, critical thinking, and study skills. Some take on further language study in Greek or Arabic. (See the school's [course descriptions](#) for complete details.)

The faculty waxes eloquent about the encouragement—of students and for themselves—to reach for a high level of intellectual engagement. They applaud their students, whom they describe as “deeply interested in learning” and having a “vision for the changing world around them.” The students are eager to take on the challenge of true academic rigor. One student described her extended essay topic on Victorian notions of masculinity and childbirth as reflected in Dickens and Tolstoy. Another sought out the use of UK databases for the scientific information he needed. Clearly, no one is bored at St. Stephen’s.

Students cite (and appreciate) the support services provided: student ambassadors, peer mentors, advisory, counselors, and grade-level coordinators. Outside the classroom, St. Stephen’s offers a panoply of opportunities for students: sports and athletics, visual and performing arts, service learning, and experiential learning trips. Students engage beyond day-to-day academics to develop personal responsibility, leadership skills, a commitment to diversity and humanitarian concerns, and to embrace civic awareness.

[University placements are competitive and center primarily on the US, the UK, Italy, France, Spain, other countries in Europe and some in Asia and South America.](#)

## THE BOARDING EXPERIENCE

“The boarding program is both the history and heart of the School as it is the model for bringing culture into the day-to-day lives of our students because they are in Rome and we recognize the importance of personalizing learning for every student.”

–St. Stephen’s faculty member

Boarding is key to the School’s overall identity. With new facilities recently acquired, the School can continue growing boarding enrollment while elevating the climate and culture of a highly personalized program. The School recently earned the certification of the British Boarding School Association and will continue to prioritize the highest standards for the boarding experience.

The new facilities nearby have also enabled the School to refurbish and open additional learning spaces in the main building. The School is a warm and stimulating home, with delicious Italian fare, group recreation area, and full use of sports, music, and studio spaces. Boarding faculty lead the boarding schedule and weekly programming and day students welcome boarding students into their homes on weekends. Counselors and faculty advisors serve as supportive mentors.

Past and present boarders speak of being part of a strong tradition where everyone involved is responsible for ensuring trust, integrity, collaboration, and respect. St. Stephen’s creates a memorable experience for students in terms of building self-confidence and decision-making skills as well as the appreciation of Rome through the boarding opportunity.





## FINANCIAL STABILITY AND FUNDRAISING

St. Stephen's School has a history of prudent fiscal management and is in a solid financial position. As of the end of the current school year, June 2025, the School owned assets valued at €18.5M. Total revenue for the school year ending June 2025 was €11.8M. The current endowment is USD\$13.6M and consists of a combination of unrestricted funds and a variety of funds that have been donated for specific purposes. Examples include the Alumni Legacy Scholarship, funds to support faculty, and support for trips and programs.

Tuition and related fees at St. Stephen's account for 93% of total revenue and employment costs approximately 55% of total cash expenses. The School offers an attractive salary and benefit package and is committed to maintaining competitive compensation.

The School ensures a strong working capital position, given the policy to collect school fees on a three-month forward basis, and can consistently invest in facility improvements. Capex typically represents about 5% of the operating budget and facilities upgrades remain an important priority going forward.

Jill Muti, the outgoing head, has made progress in building the culture of philanthropy during her tenure, doubling the annual fund to €400,000 and raising \$1.4 million in major gifts for new facilities. Alumni, parents, and friends of the School devote time and energy generously to support the School's fundraising efforts as well as special events and initiatives. [Here is the 2022-2024 Annual Report.](#)

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The next head of school at St. Stephen's will build on the School's strengths and work collaboratively with all constituencies to take on opportunities and challenges as follows:

**Nurture a thriving culture of strong relationships and shared commitment to students and their experience.** A top priority is to build and strengthen relationships and foster a healthy, engaged culture in this highly diverse international school. Students—their growth, learning, welfare, and experience—must be placed at the center of every decision and the strategic direction of the School. Ensure that the School's core values, as well as cultural competency, are embedded deeply in the daily life of the School.

**Guide the school into its next chapter.** Important progress has been made across all current strategic priorities. The incoming head of school will work closely with the Board and community to realize the exciting opportunities that exist for the School's next chapter. The new strategic plan must build on the School's progress and define critical choices intended to keep St. Stephen's thriving with the commitment to academic excellence, student experience, and financial strength.

**Maintain the school at full enrollment, continuing to attract and retain highly talented day and boarding students.** Continue to strengthen the School's admissions outreach, in Rome and globally, through strategic enrollment and marketing efforts that tell the story of the

School's transformative influence on the lives of young people. Align enrollment strategy for day and boarding students with the long-term objectives of the School.

**Build the boarding program in size and quality; nurture a “one school” ethos.** The boarding population has grown and is off the main campus for the first time. Ensure a top-quality experience for boarding students throughout their time at St. Stephen's. Excellent pastoral care must be a defining characteristic of the program. Drive a strategic focus on recruiting and enrolling mission-aligned students, steadily increasing the boarding population over time to one-third of total enrollment. Ensure that boarding and day students feel well integrated and connected, part of a single cohesive school community. Over time, secure appropriate new facilities to enable growth.



**Maintain and extend the school's academic excellence in the IB as well as with a compelling, high-quality alternative diploma pathway.** The School has an established reputation for academic excellence through the IB program and must remain a top choice for outstanding local students seeking an internationally minded education. The new head should continue to develop a compelling, attractive, high quality alternative to the IB graduation pathway, leveraging the School's unique strengths and allowing students greater agency to shape their own learning journey through high school. Inspire and promote best-in-class teaching and learning practices, including professional development, to ensure an impactful educational program.

**Deepen the culture of philanthropy.** Advancement has grown significantly under the current head of school, and a foundation is currently being established in Italy to support the school's ability to fundraise locally and acquire property. The role of head of development is not currently filled, enabling the incoming head of school to make a strategic, high-impact hire. The new head must build on this progress, partnering closely with the board and key donors.

**Pursue organizational excellence.** Ensure clear communication, internally and externally, and efficient organization of the daily operations of the School. Uphold an ethos of continuous improvement with clear lines of accountability for all aspects of the School, from high expectations for teaching and learning and enrichment programming to event scheduling and facilities development. Build a strong and effective senior leadership team to address the multiple challenges of working in Rome and managing the complex layers of Italian legal and civic expectations.

## ABOUT YOU

The ideal candidate for St. Stephen's will bring most or all of the following mindsets, skills, and experience to the position:

- A track record of successful senior leadership in academically rigorous International Baccalaureate and/or American independent or international school(s).
- Excellent strategic, programmatic, and change management leadership skills to guide and strengthen a school with a unique value proposition through implementing important strategic initiatives effectively.
- An excellent community builder who fosters trust and upholds core values among all stakeholders.
- Well-tuned cultural sensibilities for an international school in western Europe.
- Ability to lead an effective leadership team and successfully hire, manage, and develop educators and leaders.
- A strong partner with a Board of Trustees, experienced in working with boards to support advancement, financial planning, facilities work, and best-in-practice protocols.
- A strong understanding of world-class quality in boarding programs, with deep sensibility for high school students' experience living far from home.
- Good judgment, high self-awareness, and resourcefulness.
- Willingness to embrace and learn the complexity of working in Italy.
- Italian language and/or experience working in Italy are desirable, but not required.



## APPLICATION PROCESS

St. Stephen's School has retained Resource Group 175 (RG175) to support the search for its next head of school. Interested candidates should prepare a cover letter, updated resume, and a writing sample as part of the application materials. Five references are also a required component of the application materials.

The application deadline is September 15 for a start date of either July 1, 2026 or July 1, 2027. Candidates are encouraged to submit their materials in a timely manner at <https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>

For any questions about this exciting leadership position and to register your interest, please contact the RG175 consultants directly:

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