

POSITION STATEMENT

Heronfield Academy

HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH

START DATE: JULY 1, 2026



HERONFIELD
ACADEMY



OVERVIEW

Heronfield Academy is an independent middle school on the New Hampshire seacoast serving 91 academically inclined students in Grades 6–8. Informed by the Episcopal tradition and designed since its inception to meet the particular needs of middle school students, Heronfield combines an academically challenging curriculum with engaging extracurricular opportunities and joyful social and recreational activities offered in a small, intentional and caring community. Heronfield graduates attend and succeed at some of the most outstanding secondary schools in the area including Phillips Exeter Academy, Phillips Andover Academy, Governor's Academy, and Berwick Academy, among many others.

Heronfield offers a well-rounded, joyful educational experience that extends far beyond the traditional classroom. Students are encouraged to explore a wide range of interests—in athletics, the arts, and service—through robust extracurricular programming and cherished school traditions. Whether they're engaged in a spirited track meet, performing a skit in Spanish, or lending a hand through community service, students develop not only skills and knowledge, but also empathy, collaboration, and confidence. Student experiences, grounded in Heronfield's core values, cultivate young people who are prepared to lead with character and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

The school's purposeful size allows for a vibrant, close-knit environment in which every student is known and valued. Faculty form deep, enduring connections with students, guiding them with warmth, high expectations, and a belief in their potential. Across campus, one finds a culture rich in curiosity, critical thinking, and creative expression—a place where students are encouraged to stretch, question, and grow.



In only 18 years, Heronfield has made remarkable progress as a unique stand-alone middle school, establishing itself as a model for intentional, student-centered education. As it looks to the future, Heronfield is poised to build on its strong foundation and continue inspiring young learners at a pivotal stage in their development.

MISSION

Heronfield Academy provides an exceptional middle school experience that empowers students to reach their highest level of academic and personal achievement. We are committed to ensuring that every individual in our community is seen, heard, and valued.

Heronfield Academy's mission is prominently displayed in the entrance of the main building, serving as a daily reminder of the school's purpose but it is not just a statement on the wall; it is a lived experience from the moment each day begins. As families arrive on the school's 13-acre campus at 7:45 AM, students are personally greeted by the Head of School and/or faculty and staff, reinforcing a culture of recognition and belonging. Students take pride in being known by name and in knowing others, fostering a deep sense of connection that permeates the community. More importantly, the mission is reflected in the intentional ways administrators, teachers, and staff design programs, build relationships, and support students in their academic and personal growth. At Heronfield, the mission is both a promise and a practice that guides the community with clarity and heart.



CORE VALUES

Members of the Heronfield community strive to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with 5 Core Values: Honesty, Respect, Diligence, Celebration, and Caring.

Honesty: We are committed to openly addressing the challenges of this ongoing work in order to create and maintain a physically and emotionally safe environment for everyone at Heronfield.

Respect: We actively promote a culture of social awareness and understanding where different experiences, thoughts, and opinions are respectfully expressed and thoughtfully heard.

Diligence: Both as individuals and as a community of learners, we continually examine and question our methods and narratives. We seek to recognize and challenge injustice wherever we may see it, and we will revise our programs and policies to reflect our shared growth.

Celebration: We celebrate and affirm the lived experience of our community members, believing that diversity enriches our exchange of ideas and broadens our minds to new perspectives.

Caring: We meet each person with compassion and empathy. As an intentional part of our core curriculum, we aim to foster a sense of social responsibility in our students.

At Heronfield Academy, the five Core Values serve as daily guideposts that shape the culture and character of the school. Far more than aspirational ideals, these values are actively practiced and reinforced through every aspect of school life, from advisory and academics to community gatherings and student interactions. Woven into the curriculum, advisory programs, and community expectations, these values are not just taught—they are lived—helping students develop a strong moral foundation and a deep sense of social responsibility.



HISTORY

Founded in 2007, Heronfield Academy (formerly Seacoast Academy) opened its doors to twenty-four students. By 2015, Heronfield had purchased the 13-acre campus on which the school still sits and opened its doors to ninety students from 22 towns and 3 states, while also unveiling the new Bridget Marley Jenkins Athletic Field. With a generous gift in 2019, Heronfield added a new iStudio to campus which houses the center for technology, engineering, and the arts and in 2020 celebrated the opening of a new Field House, a facility that allowed for the expansion of the physical education and arts programs and also provided for a large community gathering space. In a very short time, Heronfield has established a reputation as one of the finest independent middle schools in New England.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

At Heronfield Academy, education is both an intellectual pursuit and a journey of personal growth. Purposefully invested in the middle school years, Heronfield delivers a developmentally attuned academic program that combines rigorous coursework with meaningful opportunities for creative expression, collaboration, and character formation. The curriculum spans a broad array of subjects—including English, humanities, mathematics, science, Spanish, music, physical education, and TEA (technology, engineering, and art)—ensuring that students explore knowledge from multiple perspectives. In every classroom, talented and passionate faculty meet students where they are, challenging them to reach higher while providing the guidance and encouragement that middle schoolers need to thrive.

Learning at Heronfield extends far beyond traditional academics. The school is intentionally sized to cultivate strong relationships and ensure that each student is seen, heard, and supported. Whether analyzing a short story, debating history at the Harkness table, collaborating in a science lab, or practicing Spanish through songs and skits, students engage deeply with content and with each other. Outside the classroom, a robust enrichment program includes athletics, arts, and service opportunities, as well as community-building events that bring joy, connection, and meaning to daily life. These varied experiences allow students to discover their interests, test their leadership, and develop into capable, confident young people who are prepared for the challenges ahead.

Heronfield is more than a school; it is a vibrant, mission-driven community that inspires young adolescents to stretch their potential and find their voice in the world. Guided by educators who are both subject experts and mentors and keenly attuned to middle-school age students, students grow into thoughtful, curious, and compassionate individuals. In this nurturing environment, Heronfield students develop habits of mind, self-awareness, and interpersonal skills that lay the foundation for lifelong learning.

INTENTIONAL BUILDING OF COMMUNITY

At Heronfield, community building is not an afterthought—it is a daily, deliberate practice that lies at the heart of the school's mission. Through consistent rituals and joyful traditions, Heronfield cultivates a strong sense of belonging where every student feels known, valued, and connected. Weekly gatherings such as Community Meeting and Sanctuary serve as anchor points for reflection, celebration, and connection. These school-wide moments—paired with simple daily practices like greeting each student by name, offering personalized handshakes in advisory, and maintaining eye contact in formal welcomes—foster respect, inclusion, and genuine relationship-building. Each fall, the school hosts a Community Day devoted to deepening students' understanding of empathy, identity, and inclusivity. A recent partnership with Best Buddies, focusing on learning differences and the value of

neurodiversity, demonstrated how students embrace these experiences with open hearts and thoughtful engagement.

Community and character are nurtured through spirited traditions that speak directly to the joyful, sometimes quirky, and always heartfelt nature of middle school life. Grade-level game nights and student-led dances have become signature experiences—not because they are required, but because students want to be there. From the laughter of Musical Chairs to the pride of creating a themed playlist for a dance, these events are marked by student ownership, and authentic connection. Taken together, these traditions and practices reinforce the school's commitment to whole-person education—supporting not only academic growth but also the development of empathy, leadership, and a strong moral compass. In every way, Heronfield is a community where character is not just taught but lived.



STRATEGIC VISION

Heronfield Academy's current strategic vision is built on four foundational pillars—Learning, Leadership, Landscape, and Legacy—that will guide the school's next chapter and serve as essential touchstones for its next Head of School.

- The Learning Pillar reflects Heronfield's commitment to a rigorous, developmentally appropriate academic program and the professional growth of its dedicated faculty. The school will continue to challenge and support students while fostering a culture of curiosity and lifelong learning.
- Through the Leadership Pillar, the school emphasizes belonging, character, and student voice. Heronfield nurtures empathy, responsibility, and collaboration, while actively promoting equity and inclusion. The next Head will help model and strengthen this values-based culture.
- The Landscape Pillar speaks to stewardship of both campus and community. Heronfield values its natural setting and seeks to enhance learning spaces and community connections while maintaining a commitment to environmental sustainability.
- Finally, the Legacy Pillar ensures that Heronfield remains financially sound, mission-driven, and community-supported. The next Head will lead with vision and accountability—strengthening philanthropy, engaging alumni, and securing the school's future for generations to come.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Heronfield Academy seeks a Head of School who will listen, learn, and lead—moving the school forward with clarity, compassion, and focus. The next Head will join a community defined by warmth, purpose, and possibility, and must be ready to collaborate with a dedicated Board of Trustees, faculty, and staff to guide Heronfield into its next chapter. Key opportunities and challenges include but are not limited to the following:

- Articulating a clear vision for Heronfield's future, as an academically focused independent middle school, while partnering with a mission-driven Board to pursue thoughtful institutional growth and ensure the school's long-term financial and programmatic sustainability.
- Serving as an engaged and visible leader, fostering strong relationships across the community by being present in classrooms, at gatherings, and in everyday moments that define school life.
- Continuing and strengthening Heronfield's academic program by aligning curriculum across grades, supporting effective middle school practices, and inspiring teaching excellence through meaningful professional development and faculty retention efforts.



- Telling Heronfield's story with passion and purpose, serving as a persuasive communicator and strategic fundraiser who can advance the school's visibility, enrollment goals, and philanthropic potential.
- Building operational strength by refining roles, systems, and staffing in a lean environment, while addressing key facilities needs and overseeing responsible stewardship of resources.
- Cultivating school culture, upholding Heronfield's core values through thoughtful leadership and student accountability, and laying the groundwork for a growing alumni network that connects past, present, and future.
- Working closely and communicating clearly with a dedicated Board of Trustees engendering a combined effort to plan the future and move the school forward.



KEY QUALITIES FOR LEADERSHIP

Heronfield Academy seeks a Head of School who is deeply present and actively engaged in the daily life of the school—someone who connects authentically with students, faculty, staff, and families, and who serves as a compelling storyteller and ambassador to the broader community. Drawing from community-wide input through interviews and surveys, the following qualities have emerged as most essential to success in this role:

- **Mission-Driven Educator:** Believes deeply in the promise of the middle school years and the power of a rigorous, joyful, and values-based education. Embodies curiosity, kindness, and integrity in word and action.
- **Visible and Engaged Presence:** A full participant in the life of the school, from morning meetings and advisory check-ins to athletics, performances, and school traditions. Leads with care, energy, and authenticity.
- **Relational Leader:** Builds strong, trusting relationships across all constituencies. Accessible, approachable, and attuned to the needs of students, colleagues, and families.
- **Strategic and Operational Thinker:** Articulates a clear vision, works collaboratively to set priorities, and brings the organizational skill and follow-through needed to implement strategic plans effectively.

- **Skilled Communicator and Decision-Maker:** Listens with intention, welcomes diverse perspectives, and fosters open dialogue—while also showing the clarity and resolve to make timely, well-informed decisions when necessary. Communicates regularly and effectively with the Board of Trustees providing clear helpful information and advice.
- **Inspiring Storyteller and Effective Fundraiser:** Champions Heronfield’s mission with confidence and heart, inspiring support, attracting new families, and engaging donors and alumni.
- **Financially Literate and Resourceful:** Understands school finance and budgeting, exercises sound judgment with resources, and helps ensure Heronfield’s long-term sustainability.
- **Faculty and Staff “Whisperer” –** Invests in professional growth, cultivates shared purpose, and nurtures a culture of collaboration, high standards, and mutual respect.
- **Traditional and Innovative –** Honors the school’s traditions and community ethos while guiding thoughtful progress and change that serve students and strengthen the institution.
- **Equity-Minded and Inclusive:** Committed to creating a community where every student, faculty and staff and family feels seen, valued, and a true sense of belonging.
- **Warm, Joyful, and Human:** Leads with presence, empathy, and good humor—bringing a sense of playfulness, perspective, and joy to daily school life.



APPLICATION PROCESS

Heronfield Academy has retained Resource Group 175 to support its search for a new Head of School. Candidates who wish to apply are requested to submit their application materials at: <https://rg175.com/candidates/signup>

An application includes:

- Letter of interest (cover letter)
- Resume or CV
- Educational leadership statement
- Names of five (5) current references and contact information (The references will not be contacted until the semifinalist stage of this process)

The deadline for receipt of a full and completed application is **Friday, September 5, 2025**.

The Heronfield Search Committee intends to interview semi-finalist candidates in September. Finalists will be invited to campus for a visit in October.

For any questions or further information about the position please contact:

John F. Green
Resource Group 175
john.green@rg175.com