



Seven Hills School

The School Built Around Boys

At Seven Hills School We Delight in the Spirit and Energy of Boys

“Grade school...seems rigged against boys, against the higher activity level and lower level of impulse control that is normal for boys. As one disappointed boy remarked unhappily at the end of his first day of school: ‘You can’t do anything!’ The trouble wasn’t really that he couldn’t do anything, of course, but that everything he loved to do – run, throw, wrestle, climb – was outlawed in the classroom. In this setting, a boy’s experience of school is as a thorn among roses: he is a different, lesser, and sometimes frowned-upon presence and he knows it.”

– *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys*, by Dan Kindlon and Michael Thompson



Contents

- I'm Learning Life
- Mission Statement
- Why Seven Hills?
- About the Head
- Community Involvement
- About Boys and Learning
- Curriculum, Bridge
- Curriculum, Grades 6-8
- Application Parts I and II
- Teacher Recommendation
- Release of Records

I'm Learning Life

If you look around the school, you'll notice it's not very fancy. It's not like places where everything is sectioned off and you can't touch stuff. Everything at Seven Hills belongs to all of us.

Even while building Overbrook, I can honestly say our leaders never stopped putting the students first. What I really love about Seven Hills is that people are put ahead of stuff, students before grades, acceptance before perfection. That's why I like to say that, at Seven Hills, I'm learning life!

– Jared Shanks, Former Student Government President



Mission Statement

Seven Hills School offers a dynamic, rigorous program of academic study for middle school boys with emphasis on guided exploration, active learning, and opportunities for intellectual growth.

Seven Hills offers an engaging and challenging curriculum with

- ◆ methods that reflect best practices in educating middle school boys, including an active, hands-on, experience-based approach to learning;
- ◆ high academic standards;
- ◆ an integrated, interdisciplinary program; and
- ◆ responsiveness to students' differing learning styles and strengths.

The administration and faculty of Seven Hills School

- ◆ understand and affirm the developmental needs of middle grade boys;
- ◆ are committed to creating an educational environment most effective for middle school boys; and
- ◆ stimulate intellectual curiosity.

Seven Hills School is a community that

- ◆ values diversity;
- ◆ fosters leadership;
- ◆ encourages integrity, responsibility, empathy, respect, and personal courage; and
- ◆ supports boys in their journeys from childhood to young adulthood as they discover their emerging intellectual interests, abilities, and talents.

Graduates of Seven Hills School are prepared for the challenges of high school, taking with them mastery of the curriculum and an enriched understanding of themselves and the world.

Our Place Built Around Boys



Why Seven Hills?

I love all children, except for boys.

– Lewis Carroll

Grade school is largely a feminine environment, populated predominantly by women teachers and authority figures, that seems rigged against boys, against the higher activity level and lower level of impulse control that is normal for boys. As one disappointed boy remarked unhappily at the end of his first day of school: “You can’t do anything!” The trouble wasn’t really that he couldn’t do anything, of course, but that everything he loved to do—run, throw, wrestle, climb—was outlawed in the classroom. In this setting a boy’s experience of school is as a thorn among roses; he is a different, lesser, and sometimes frowned-upon presence and he knows it.

– *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys*, Dan Kindlon and Michael Thompson

At Seven Hills we enlist faculty and staff who have a special love for boys and who are delighted by the middle years of a boy’s life. Imagine the educational possibilities in a setting where educators welcome the spirit that boys bring into the classroom—boys who keep their bodies in perpetual motion, boys who are bored in half the time, boys who consume twice the space.

In American education, the assessment of student performance inordinately influences curriculum and methods of instruction. From kindergarten to graduate school, educators teach to the test. The transformed middle grade school will require new assessment approaches that promote disciplined inquiry among young adolescents.

– *TURNING POINTS: The Report of the Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents*, Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development

At Seven Hills, we have the opportunity to create from the ground up an environment that values one-on-one learning. Teachers are encouraged to reduce teaching time in the front of the classroom and work side by side with each student during class periods. Learning assessments employed at Seven Hills are selected for their ability to individualize learning strategies for each student. Tests that are incorporated in the Seven Hills community will function as learning exercises that deepen the learning experience rather than generate performance-based comparisons.

Here are ten areas that brain-based research reflects critical differences in learning-styles between boys and girls: Deductive and Inductive Reasoning, Abstract and Concrete Reasoning, Use of Language, Logic and Evidence, Likelihood of Boredom, Use of Space, Physical Movement, Sensitivity and Group Dynamics, Use of Symbolism, and Use of Learning Teams.

– *Boys and Girls Learn Differently! A Guide for Parents and Teachers*, Michael Gurian

Why Seven Hills?

Seven Hills is founded on the very real belief that the differences between girls and boys are significant enough to support a model school committed to instruction and learning methods based on current research as it reflects the hearts and minds of boys in the middle years. Research clearly points to the benefits in critical thinking and collaborative learning for boys in schools where class size, classroom space and layout, schedule and structure of the day, opportunity for movement, and full sensory instruction are reexamined. Few schools can make such sweeping changes. Public schools can rarely consider the value of grouping students along gender lines. Seven Hills can be a model school on the front end of a national movement exploring the connections between boys and learning.

The goal in the brief time we have together, to learn everything we can about purposes, genres, techniques, ideas, feelings, themselves, their worlds.... Most importantly, I take off the top of my head and [learn] in front of them... I show them how I plan, change my mind, confront problems, weigh options, make decisions, use conventions and [deviate] to compose my life.

– *In the Middle: New Understandings About Writing, Reading, and Learning, Nancie Atwell*

At Seven Hills, a teacher is called upon to model curiosity based on her or his own spirit of inquiry. Teachers delight in the wonders of every boy's achievement, from his slightest observations to his most stunning feats. Learning is fun at Seven Hills because the joy of learning is modeled throughout the community. High fives are common at Seven Hills and are considered an appropriate gesture when boys make connections across the curriculum and link experiences.

All of these ideas sound great. The research is compelling, but other schools have access to the same studies. Some even make the same claims on paper that Seven Hills is proposing. How is Seven Hills any different?

– *Prospective parent*

Seven Hills has more than vision and innovation. Seven Hills has two transforming gifts that will help it to deliver on its promises. First, Seven Hills is small. Second, Seven Hills still cherishes its newness. The founding spirit of our place is still with us.

Committed to a class size and school wide ratio that is a standout among schools, Seven Hills can be and do what so many schools can only dream of achieving. Seven Hills believes firmly that class size matters and that smaller is better.

About the Head

David Dorsey, Seven Hills School founding head, brings a deep commitment to making a difference in the lives of boys and their families. His broad experience includes almost 15 years of classroom, administrative, and counseling experience at the University of Richmond. A long-time resident of Richmond, he brings to Seven Hills an outstanding background in service and experiential learning, hands-on learning. His professional experience includes teaching history, English, music, and math at the secondary level in this country and the West Indies, as well as university instruction at the University of Richmond, the University of West Indies, and the University of Nairobi, Kenya.

He has served as an instructor and consultant to Richmond area K-12 teachers through the Art of Teaching Conferences at the University of Richmond. Mr. Dorsey served on the founding boards of Virginia Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL) and The Carver Promise.

Mr. Dorsey completed a bachelor's degree in music and philosophy at Carson-Newman College and completed a Masters of Divinity at Southern Seminary where he also received a Masters of Sacred Music. He has completed all course work toward his doctoral degree at Union Theological Seminary. His current studies are in the areas of human development in the adolescent years, gender studies, brain research, innovative curriculum and best practices in pedagogy for middle school programs.

The father of a graduate from Seven Hills, Mr. Dorsey coached soccer for four years through the Richmond Neighborhood Soccer Association, presided for three years over the Lewis Ginter Recreation Association and remains involved in a host of neighborhood/ Richmond City ventures.

Community Involvement

Seven Hills School provides enhanced learning and community involvement through:

- ◆ Student Government Association
- ◆ Honor Council
- ◆ 7HS Houses
Knights, Midnight Blues, SWAMBIE, and Unknown Prophecies
- ◆ First Lego League Robotics
Overall Champion, Regional Competition at Maggie Walker Governor's School, and Fifth Place, State Competition, Virginia Tech University
- ◆ Richmond Peace Essay Contest
*First Place Winner
Two Honorable Mention Winners*
- ◆ Student Playwright & Performance
*Twelve Angry Men
Edgar Allen Poe, Student Writing*
- ◆ Student Founded Clubs
(i.e. Game Club, Warhammer, Manga, GO, and Journalism
- ◆ Future Problem Solving
*7 Teams & 1 Individual Placed at Virginia State Bowl
1 First, 3 Second, and 3 Third Placements in State
1 Team & 1 Individual Qualified for International Bowl*
- ◆ Art Portfolio Class
- ◆ James River Park Association Service
- ◆ CARITAS (shelter program during winter months)
- ◆ Students Host Edgehill Civic Association Meetings
- ◆ Central Virginia Food Bank
- ◆ Physical Education & Inter-Scholastic League Play
*Basketball
Baseball
Tournament Dodgeball
Golf
Soccer*

About Boys and Learning

- ◆ Biddulph, Steve. *Raising Boys: Why Boys are Different and How to Help Them Become Happy and Well-Balanced Men*. Celestial Arts, 1997.
- ◆ Boyd-Franklin, Nancy. *Boys Into Men: Raising Our African-American Teenage Sons*. Penguin Putnam, 2000.
- ◆ Caron, Ann F. *Strong Mothers, Strong Sons: Raising the Next Generation of Men*. Harper, 1995.
- ◆ Elium, Don, and Jeanne. *Raising a Son: Parents and the Making of a Healthy Man*. Ten Speed Press, 1996.
- ◆ Garbarino, James. *Lost Boys: Why Our Sons Turn Violent and How We Can Save Them*. Simon and Schuster, 1999.
- ◆ Gilmore, D. *The Making of Manhood: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity*. Yale University Press, 1990.
- ◆ Ginsberg, Debra. *Raising Blaze: Bringing Up an Extraordinary Son in an Ordinary World*. Harper Collins, 2002.
- ◆ Gurian, Michael. *A Fine Young Man: What Parents, Mentors, and Educators Can Do to Shape Adolescent Boys into Exceptional Men*. Penguin Putnam, 1998.
- ◆ Gurian, Michael. *Boys and Girls Learn Differently! A Guide for Teachers and Parents*. Jossey-Bass, 2001.
- ◆ Gurian, Michael. *The Wonder of Boys*. Penguin Putnam, 1996.
- ◆ Gurian, Michael. *What Stories Does My Son Need?* Penguin Putnam, 2000.
- ◆ Kindlon, Dan, and Michael Thompson. *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys*. Ballantine Publishing, 1999.
- ◆ Larson, R., and M. Richards. *Divergent Realities: The Emotional Lives of Mothers, Fathers, and Adolescents*. Simon and Schuster, 1994.
- ◆ Newberger, Eli H. *The Men They Will Become: The Nature and Nurture of Male Character*. Perseus Publishing, 1999.
- ◆ Pollack, William. *Real Boys: Rescuing our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood*. Random House, 1998.
- ◆ Pollack, William. *Real Boys' Voices*. Penguin Books, 2000.
- ◆ Thompson, Michael. *Speaking of Boys: Answers to the Most-Asked Questions About Raising Sons*. Ballantine Publishing, 2000.

Bridge Year

Research and Methods

Bridge Year for 5th and 6th Graders: A gateway program for gifted and curious learners

The Bridge Class:

- ◆ attracts a diversity of exceptionally curious and strong, independent learners and collaborative thinkers;
- ◆ respects the emotional and educational developmental needs of 5th and 6th grader boys;
- ◆ includes boys who have completed either the fourth or fifth grade;
- ◆ implements the latest research on boys, learning, and curriculum design;
- ◆ places greatest priority on the process of learning, trusting that strong productivity follows,
- ◆ makes connections across all disciplines in the curriculum;
- ◆ integrates hands-on learning, applied instruction, and challenging classroom assessments,
- ◆ learns under the lead of one full-time, experienced educator who reports directly to Head of School; and
- ◆ fosters strong community between students and families in a class limited to 12 students.

Methods:

- ◆ Nancie Atwell's *Middle Classroom Methods* including cross-curricular note-taking methods and organizational systems
- ◆ Cornell University's *Learning Forms* for the Middler
- ◆ Michael Gurian's *Boys and Girls Learn Differently*
- ◆ The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching research on *Concentric Circles and The "Me" Years*
- ◆ Harvard University's *Multiple Intelligence Theory*
- ◆ University of Chicago's *Sphere Learning and Processes for Gifted Students during Adolescence*
- ◆ National Society of Experiential Education's *Service Learning Model*
- ◆ Incorporates this research and more in the Bridge Year *Brain and Learning Seminar* and Socratic-based discussions across the curriculum

Bridge Year Curriculum

FRAMEWORK: *Open Spheres* incorporating multiple intelligences

SHORT-LONG TERM MEMORY

Daily exercises and practice in the rudiments of memory as applied to reading, writing, foreign languages and mathematics

MATH-LOGICAL

Mathematics Level Grade 6 12 Units of Study ---Applied Math & Problem-Solving Including Hands-On Math Discovery and Sequential Reasoning and Logic	MATH/SCIENCE LABS Living Science Exploration ---Smithsonian, 3 Volume Series by Joy Hakim (2003-2008) <u>The Story of Science:</u> <i>Aristotle Leads the Way</i> <i>Newton at the Center</i> <i>Einstein Adds a New Dimension</i>	Introduction to Physics and Chemistry History of Science Future of Science Research Based Discovery History-Based Lab Experiments Future-Imagined Lab Experiments
---	---	--

INTER/INTRA PERSONAL & SPIRITUAL/NATURAL

Service Learning Integration with local non-profit organizations
James River Curriculum, Monthly RIVER DAYS, and Fall and Spring Annual Campout Adventures
8-unit Brain & Learning Seminar : *The Life of the Mind*

LINGUISTICS

<p>Language Arts Genre Study across multiple creative and informational genres Real Writing Submissions Writing Labs Applied Text Forms</p> <p>Independent Reading Classroom Reading</p> <p><u>The Lightning Thief</u> by Rick Riordan The Works of Edgar Allen Poe <u>The Good Earth</u> by Pearl S. Buck <u>Alice's Adventures in Wonderland</u> by Lewis Carroll <u>The Book of the Dun Cow</u> by Walter Wangerin, Jr. <u>The Call of the Wild</u> by Jack London</p>	<p>Global and Leadership Studies Current World Events Cultural Studies Ancient Civilizations <i>Greece, Egypt, Rome and Chine</i></p> <p>Leadership and Community Building <i>Diverse Perspective Taking</i> <i>Shared Values</i></p> <p><i>"What is Real?" Unit</i> <i>Timeline Projects</i> <i>Map Learning & Visual Knowledge Acquisition</i></p> <p>Country Projects <i>Japan, South Africa, Brazil and India</i></p> <p>Twentieth Century Project <i>Student-Taught Modules</i></p>	<p>Future Problem Solving Case Studies & Future Scenarios</p> <p>Six-Step Problem Solving Process <i>to identify underlying problems, brainstorm solutions, set criteria, select best solutions and write action plan</i></p> <p><u>Global Topic Areas 2008-2009</u> <i>Sensory Overload</i> <i>Invasive Species</i> <i>Orphaned Children</i> <i>Food Distribution</i> <i>Green Living</i></p> <p><u>Global Topic Areas 2009-2010</u> <i>Healthy Living</i> <i>Air Transport</i> <i>Genetic Testing</i> <i>Water Quality</i> <i>Emergency Planning</i></p>
--	--	--

KINESTHETIC/SPATIAL & VISUAL/ARTISTIC

<p>Art, Architecture & Design Visual Problem Solving</p> <p><i>Designing our Very Own Library</i></p>	<p>Art Materials and Disciplines</p> <p><i>Clay, Film, Glass, Print, Photo</i> <i>Drawing, Painting, Woodworking and</i> <i>Found Objects</i></p>	<p>Theatre and Musical Arts</p> <p><i>"Twelve Angry Men"</i> <i>Poe Boys</i> <i>A Night of E. A. Poe one-acts</i></p> <p>Incorporating Student-Created <i>Productions & Performances</i></p>
--	---	---

ASSESSMENTS/TESTING

<p><u>In-Class Assessments</u> Written (Individualized and Standard) Oral and Explanatory Experiential Art & Image Focused</p>	<p><u>Year-Long Assessments</u> Learning Style Inventory DART Assessment By Quarter Goal Setting and Self-Assessment Intra-scholastic mind competitions: FPS and FIRST Robotics</p>
--	---

Curriculum Grades 6-8

-more on flip side-

Grade Six	Grade Seven	Grade Eight
	Eighth Grade Credit for Core Courses	High School Credit for Core Courses
Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics
Math 7	Math 8/Pre-Algebra	Algebra I
Math Lab	Math Lab	Math Lab
Language Arts	Language Arts	Language Arts
Reading/Writing Lab (<i>Three Novels plus Summer Reading</i>)	Reading/Writing Lab (<i>Four Novels plus Summer Reading</i>)	Reading/Writing Lab (<i>Four Novels plus Summer Reading</i>)
Literary Comprehension & Analysis	Literary Comprehension & Analysis	Literary Comprehension & Analysis
Vocabulary	Vocabulary	Vocabulary
Genre Study	Genre Study	Genre Study
History/Social Studies	History/Social Studies	History/Social Studies
US History I (up to 1860)	US History II (1860-Present)	Comparative Civics and Economics:
Current Events	Current Events	<i>US, Brazil, India, Japan, & South Africa</i>
Historical Research Methods (<i>The James River Project</i>)	Autobiographical Research (<i>Living History Project</i>)	International Research Methods (<i>Country Project Symposium</i>)
Foreign Languages	Foreign Languages	Foreign Languages
Introduction to Latin	Latin I	Latin I or II
Introduction to Japanese	Japanese I	Japanese I or II
Science	Science	Science
Laboratory	Laboratory	Laboratory
History of Science II Introduction to Physics & Chemistry II	Life Science Human Organisms, Genetics, Biology and Ecology	Earth Science Exosphere, Lithosphere, Atmosphere, Hydrosphere, and Biosphere
Future Problem Solving	Future Problem Solving	Community Problem Solving
Futures Research & Critical Thinking Innovative & Competitive Solution Study	Futures Research & Critical Thinking Innovative & Competitive Solution Study	Community Action Research Innovative & Competitive Solution Study
Seminar	Seminar	Seminar
Introduction to Philosophy I	Introduction to Architecture I (<i>The Monument Project</i>)	Introduction to Philosophy II & 35m Photography

Curriculum Grades 6-8

Fine and Performing Arts

Including the Bridge Year, a four-year curriculum featuring four-six week modules in select fields providing opportunities for students to learn from working artists in a studio setting and for group-based/ensemble opportunities. Weekly study in visual arts, theatre performance, musical arts, film, photography, woodworking, and design.

Physical Education & Interscholastic Competition

Physical Improvement and Health through four-six week units exploring team-building in traditional and non-traditional sports. Interscholastic competition options include soccer, baseball, and basketball.

Centerpiece Curriculum

CITY: Rivers, Monuments, Parks & Bridges

A four-year commitment across the 7HS curriculum to provide inter-disciplinary, on-site research and applied learning in core courses as may be applied to urban landmarks: The James River, Monument Avenue, Byrd, Bryan, Chimborazo and Forest Hill Parks and the city's new and historic bridges.

Letter of Reference

Student: Please enlist a teacher from your most recent academic year to provide a *Letter of Reference* in the space below. This *Letter of Reference*, submitted in a sealed envelope with the teacher's signature over the seal, should be enclosed with the other portions of your application.

Applicant's name _____

Teacher's name _____ Current School _____

Teacher: Please describe your experience with this student during his most recent academic year. Your assessment of his strengths and challenges in both academic and social areas will be most helpful. Include any information regarding additional support, learning strategies, academic support, and advancement implemented that have been provided for this student. Feel free to use the back side and/or attach additional pages as needed.

Dear Seven Hills School Admissions Representative:

Please call or email me with any additional questions that you may have at: _____

Teacher signature _____ Date _____

Please feel free to use the back side or attach additional pages as necessary.

**Seven Hills School
1311 Overbrook Rd.
Richmond, VA 23220
Fax (804)-329-2408**

Request for Release of Academic Records

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

Please complete this form and give it to your student's current school.

Name of school _____

Mailing address _____

Student's full name _____

Date of birth _____

This student is seeking enrollment at Seven Hills School. Please send a transcript of academic records to Seven Hills School, including the following:

- Record of all academic work, including teacher comments;
- Standardized test results;
- Immunization records, and
- Any diagnostic results and recommendations made by qualified professionals that will help meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of the student.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ **Date** _____

Please send these items as soon as possible to:

Seven Hills School

Attn.: Admissions
1311 Overbrook Road
Richmond, VA 23220
ph: (804)329-6300
fax: 804-329-2408