Hampshire Country School
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Introduction

Since 1948, Hampshire Country School has been a unique and special place. It has been a haven for parents whose children needed someone to believe in them and to notice their strengths rather than their difficulties. It has been a school where students have come to believe in themselves, have accomplished more than they thought possible, and have made life-long attachments after thinking that friends were just something other people had.

Hampshire Country School is a place for boys with high intellectual potential that has not been realized and with idiosyncrasies that may have become major problems in traditional settings. The school provides an unusual environment in which those problems are no longer as significant -- not because they have been “fixed,” but because the school's focus is on the bright, active, engaged, and engaging side of each child rather than on his quirks or limitations.

If an intellectual, unusual, or eccentric boy who does not fit in other environments has been longing, perhaps without saying so, for a place where he can belong and grow, Hampshire Country School may be the answer.

Why A Boarding School?

One of the most important factors for personal, scholastic, and professional success is an individual's ability to relate effectively to other people.

For most children, comfortable interaction with others comes naturally: they play actively with other children; they join clubs and teams; and they banter in school hallways and cafeterias.

Some children, however, do not mix naturally with others. Their interests are different; their temperament is more fragile; they may overpower potential friends with their impulsivity or intense sociability. They find themselves unwelcome in social groups and excluded from teams. They may be overcome by the noise and confusion of large groups or crowded areas such as school playgrounds.

Such children often long to be a part of the life they observe around them, and their longing may be displayed as intense sadness or anger. Perhaps of even more importance for their long-term well-being, is the fact that these children are missing life's major opportunities to learn social skills and interpersonal interests through involvement with other people. The very children who most need social experiences are the ones most likely to miss them.

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Why Hampshire Country School?

Hampshire Country School, as a small boarding school, is designed to involve its students in the interpersonal experiences they miss elsewhere. Within the boarding environment, students participate in group activities, share common experiences, work with others toward common goals, and participate in the give-and-take of friendships. This happens throughout every day and week, and the power of such involvement for facilitating personal growth far exceeds what would be possible through formal but time-limited social skills training, direct instruction, or counseling.

Afternoons, evenings, and weekends are filled with scheduled and unscheduled activities that bring students together in recreational sports, outdoor adventures, and ardently contested strategy games. Students share enthusiasm for favorite books. They help each other with homework. They grumble together about cleaning their dorm. They argue about who gets the strawberry yogurt at breakfast. Through it all they are not only building lasting friendships but also learning to understand, predict, and value other people. It is not something that could be learned just in a classroom or a skills training group.

All students at Hampshire Country School are full time boarding students, enrolled for weekends as well as school days. They go home for extended vacations at Christmas time, in the spring, and for the whole summer; but when they are at school the hours out of class are at least as important for their long term success as the hours they spend in class.

Some factors that make H.C.S. an effective school:

- Very small enrollment (maximum 25 students)
- Boarding environment in which students not only study but also play and make friends among a compatible group of peers
- Small classes (usually three to six students) with a high level of teacher-student interaction
- Courses taught at a high scholastic level but with room to accommodate interruptions for difficulties, distractions, or needs
- A peer group and school culture that values intellectual skills and interests
- A school philosophy that assumes the kinds of upsets and reactions some students have indicate a need for support and care rather than behavioral training