



OAK KNOLL

SCHOOL OF THE HOLY CHILD



UPPER SCHOOL DIVISION HEAD SEARCH

Summit, New Jersey

July 1, 2024



EDUCATORS COLLABORATIVE

EXPERTS IN SEARCH, TRANSITION & STRATEGY



AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP LEAD A VIBRANT, MISSION-CENTERED COMMUNITY

Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child's celebrated history and exciting future together create an ideal opportunity for its next Upper School Division Head to help lead this distinct school into its second century. Located in beautiful Summit, New Jersey, just 20 miles from Manhattan, Oak Knoll is where young women of faith and purpose dream big, lead with integrity, seek justice in the world, and prepare for one-of-a-kind futures. Oak Knoll's Upper School Division serves girls in grades 7 through 12, while the Lower School enrolls boys and girls from pre-Kindergarten through grade 6. Currently enrolling 326 students, the Upper School Division begins with a middle school program in which girls benefit from a curriculum and programs that cater to the unique academic and developmental needs of students in grades 7 and 8. In addition to age-specific teaching and classes, middle school students have access to an Upper School environment with all of the cutting-edge facilities and programs provided to older students. Opportunities grow as students enter grade 9 and beyond, where a broad variety of courses, clubs, and activities are available.

The school's curriculum includes several [signature programs](#), including the EmpowHER workshops for girls in grades 7 and 8, an Upper School Leadership curriculum, and a program in social entrepreneurship provided in partnership with the University of Pennsylvania and Schoolyard Ventures. The core curriculum includes courses in English, history, math, world languages, and science, with required courses in computer science, physical education, fine arts, health, and four years of theology. The school offers 18 Advanced Placement courses, and arts academic courses offer the opportunity for students to dive into darkroom and digital photography, computer graphics, theater production and much more.

Campus ministry at Oak Knoll plays a vital role in nurturing students' faith. Through Catholic practices and Holy Child traditions, we encourage student-led worship and service initiatives. Students have the opportunity to plan Masses, prayer services, and reflection days, as well as contribute to the Campus Ministry Council.





A School with a Mission Rooted in Diversity and Belonging

Oak Knoll's mission as a Holy Child school calls on it to sustain a diverse, inclusive school community. Beyond requiring academic excellence, the school's mission charges Oak Knoll to educate students who recognize the dignity of every person, who will work for justice, peace, and compassion, and who can make responsible choices in a complex world. Thus, Oak Knoll embraces cultural, socioeconomic, racial, and religious diversity through a coherent system of administrative and academic programs. This active commitment is fundamental to Oak Knoll's purpose and future.

Oak Knoll is dedicated to the ongoing review of curricular and extracurricular offerings to educate students on the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion and to be allies and changemakers in its ongoing quest for racial and social justice. Oak Knoll believes that it is only through education, understanding, and celebration of our differences that we can begin to make meaningful change in the world.

Engaging in liturgical ministries and creative activities, such as designing program covers and writing prayers, students deepen their faith and artistic involvement while fostering a strong spiritual foundation.

Oak Knoll is part of the Holy Child Network of Schools (one of nine schools across the United States and 13 international schools) that provide independent Catholic education around the world. Complementing Oak Knoll's connections with Holy Child Schools in the United States and abroad, a robust Global Studies initiative is designed to expose students to the world, giving them opportunities to learn about other cultures and explore differences. Oak Knoll currently has exchange programs with Barcelona, Spain, as well as other Holy Child Schools in California, Ireland, and England. Previous trips, exchanges, performances, and service opportunities included travel to Appalachia, Austria, the Czech Republic, the Dominican Republic, France, Hawaii, Ireland, Italy, Canada, and Spain.

Oak Knoll's commitment to service is a testament to the school's identity as a Roman Catholic Holy Child School. With a culture deeply rooted in community service, the school encourages students to recognize and respond to the needs around them, cultivating compassionate citizens who embrace service not as an obligation, but as an integral part of their lives. The program encompasses an array of opportunities, including an all-campus Service Day, monthly service initiatives, and summer service ventures. These activities range from tutoring, serving meals with Bridges





AT A GLANCE

- Established: 1924
- Number of Students: 505, of which 326 are enrolled in the Upper School Division
- Beautiful 11-acre campus in Summit, New Jersey. State-of-the-art athletic fields are located nearby in Chatham, New Jersey
- Upper School Division Teaching Faculty: 53
- Average Upper School Division class size: 14 students
- Upper School Division Student-to-Teacher Ratio: 7:1
- Endowment: \$13 million

Further Explore What Makes Oak Knoll Distinctive

- [A robust collection of clubs and activities](#)
- [The academic program for girls in grades 7 through 12](#)
- [Oak Knoll's outstanding athletic program](#)
- [School profile](#)

Outreach, to planning and executing a summer camp for kids in Jersey City. Service has also extended beyond our borders through domestic and international trips, augmenting the holistic development of our students, and many graduates engage in service on their college campuses and beyond.

Oak Knoll's arts program is where creativity is nurtured and artistic expression is celebrated. The Creative Arts Department fosters an environment for students to explore, learn and excel in dance, music, theater, photography, and art. Designed to unleash the full artistic potential of each student, our program amplifies their talents, facilitates self-discovery, and cultivates a lifelong passion for the arts. The school has beautiful arts facilities including two performance spaces, dance studio, piano lab, darkroom, and art studio. Nine different performance groups, including a chamber orchestra, dance groups, and a select choir that performs internationally, reflect Oak Knoll's deep commitment to the performing arts and complement the academic program. Students participate in art shows, competitions, and multiple performances throughout the year, showcasing their talent and hard work.

The athletics program is well-known for its commitment to the school's mission and impressive history of success. This year, Oak Knoll's nationally ranked field hockey team won its twelfth straight New Jersey sectional title, and the soccer team reached the county finals. Last spring, the track and field team was invited to compete at the prestigious Penn Relays competition, and the lacrosse team won its third straight Union County title. Nine members of the class of 2024 recently signed letters of intent to continue their athletic careers in college, and a large number of Oak Knoll graduates are currently participating in track and field, equestrian, swimming, field hockey, lacrosse, squash, rowing, soccer, and basketball college programs, including those at Harvard, Notre Dame, Princeton, and Yale. Student-athletes have the opportunity to take part in the Leadership Evaluation and Development (L.E.A.D.) Program, which aims to teach and discuss leadership with student-athletes at Oak Knoll with seminars, outside speakers, and leadership training.





SUPPORTING THE VALUES AND CULTURE OF AN INDEPENDENT CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Oak Knoll is a member of the [global Network of Holy Child Schools](#) and the Goals of the Network guide the school's mission, philosophy, and work. As described in its mission, the Oak Knoll community commits to the education and growth of the whole child, as envisioned by Cornelia Connelly, the founder of the [Society of the Holy Child Jesus](#). Engaged in the challenges of the world, the school cultivates a faith commitment that promotes and inspires a joyous personal relationship with God. In a learning climate that is based on trust and reverence for the dignity and uniqueness of each person, Oak Knoll provides an intellectually challenging and creative program of study that fosters excellence in every aspect of school life and prepares graduates to “meet the wants of the age.” Welcoming a diverse student body, the school's learning community develops inquisitive students who think critically, embrace knowledge, respond with moral and ethical integrity, and make responsible choices that enrich their own lives and contribute to the lives of others.

A COMPELLING NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

Oak Knoll has recently completed a dynamic new Strategic Plan that will guide its work in the coming years. The Plan is grounded in the following mission statement and commitments:

At Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child, we believe that each person is created by God for an intended purpose. An Oak Knoll education guides students to discover that purpose and make a significant, positive impact on the world.

- Oak Knoll will be a leader for transformative Catholic education committed to excellence.
- Our graduates will live lives of purpose, prepared to succeed and flourish with integrity in an ever-changing world.

Learn more about [People with Purpose Shape the Future](#).



FUTURE LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child seeks a leader who enthusiastically embraces and champions the school's mission, which is grounded in a belief that every student has a unique purpose and calling. Rooted in Catholic traditions, values, and teachings, Oak Knoll delivers a solid foundation for its students to grow and thrive.

The successful candidate will be a leader distinguished by a warm, welcoming, and inclusive personal manner, exceptional verbal and written communication skills, a dedication to the school's mission, and a commitment to inspiring girls in grades 7-12 to set high educational goals, break gender barriers, and emerge as leaders. They will also bring the skills, initiative, and drive to help further realize a compelling and sustainable vision for the future of the Upper School Division.



Oak Knoll School for the Holy Child is conducting a national search to identify its next Upper School Division Head. Search consultants Nat Conard and George Sanderson of Educators Collaborative solicited input from all stakeholders during an on-campus visit and gathered additional input from stakeholders through an online survey. Based on this input, the following represents a summary of the Upper School Division's strengths, challenges and opportunities, and the skills and attributes desired in the next Upper School Division Head of Oak Knoll.

Strengths of The School

- Oak Knoll has a clear and compelling mission, which is an important guidepost to all members of its community.
- The school's Catholic tradition and culture are core elements of Oak Knoll's identity, and as such they provide members of the community with a clear articulation of the school's values, including ongoing faith development and a deep commitment to service.
- Oak Knoll is committed to supporting its diverse student body, and its dedication to creating a culture of belonging is unequivocal.
- The strong sense of community, small class sizes, low student-teacher ratio, and the close relationships between students and faculty are universally valued.





- With a recently completed Strategic Plan, a new Campus Plan, and aspirational philanthropic initiatives, Oak Knoll is at an important and exciting point in its history as it prepares to celebrate the 100th year of its founding.
- Oak Knoll benefits from a supportive and engaged parent community who, in a recent survey, consistently applauded the school's joy, kindness, and strong sense of community.
- Oak Knoll's Upper School Division has an excellent reputation, with strong enrollment and an impressive record of college placement.
- The school's signature programs, as well as its Global Studies initiatives, distinguish the school from its independent and public school competitors.
- The school's athletic program is considered one of the top such programs in the state, with many students continuing their athletic careers in college.

Opportunities and Challenges

Manage, support, and inspire an experienced faculty

Oak Knoll's teachers are dedicated, talented, and respected. The next Upper School Division Head at Oak Knoll will be responsible for continuing to nurture and develop its faculty, with a particular emphasis on retaining, recruiting, and onboarding talented teachers.

Honor the past while educating for the future

As it prepares to celebrate its centennial, Oak Knoll is justifiably proud of its rich heritage and the core elements of its identity and traditions. The next Upper School Division Head will honor the school's strong values while educating its students for the future, supporting teaching and programs that reflect those priorities.

Continue to support the goals of Holy Child schools

Oak Knoll is committed to educating its students by the Goals of the Holy Child Network of Schools, and it will be important for the next Upper School Division Head to support the faculty in applying these principles to its teaching.

Help bring the Strategic Plan to fruition

Oak Knoll's Strategic Plan emphasizes the importance of delivering an academic curriculum that is innovative, bold, interactive, inclusive, and creative. The next Upper School Division Head will have the opportunity to lead the faculty in developing transformative programs and pedagogy that support this priority.





Support Oak Knoll's Catholic identity

A large number of Oak Knoll's families choose the school because of its Catholic identity. There are ongoing opportunities for the next Upper School Division Head to further tie this aspect of the school to its founder's vision "in addressing the realities of the world," as stated in the Goals and Criteria of Holy Child education.

Continue work to connect the 7th and 8th grade program to the rest of the Upper School Division

Oak Knoll's Upper School Division includes grades 7 through 12, and balancing the goals and schedules of all grades is an important opportunity for the incoming Upper School Division Head.



Support a strong working relationship with Upper School Division parents

The current Upper School Division Head connects often with families and their successor will continue to have the opportunity to develop parents' understanding of the important and positive partnership between the School, teachers, students, and families.

Further explore the intersection of the Upper School Division Head's role with the Lower School program

The Upper School Head tries to work closely with the Lower School, but making connections is sometimes challenging, given that the two schools are housed in different buildings on campus and have two different schedules. Recent initiatives such as the newly developed House System strengthen connections from pre-kindergarten through grade 12, and ongoing work in this area is an important priority for the School.



Further define the school's ability to serve a diversity of learning styles

While Oak Knoll does not modify its curriculum or expectations for its students, it provides a range of services to support its students in and out of the classroom. There is an opportunity for the next Upper School Division Head to continue to refine and articulate the range of services that the school is able to offer in partnership with the strong Student Support team.

Oak Knoll is where young women of faith and purpose dream big, lead with integrity, seek justice in the world, and prepare for one-of-a-kind futures.





Skills and Attributes of the Next Upper School Division Head

Oak Knoll seeks a passionate educator to step into the Upper School Division Head role. The school takes great pride in nurturing an environment that is compassionate, rigorous, joyful, disciplined, and intentionally develops head, heart, and spirit. An individual who brings energy, integrity, and intellect will thrive and experience success in the Oak Knoll community.

The ideal candidates will possess many of the following skills and attributes:

- A deep commitment to the philosophy and mission of Catholic education and the ability to serve as the faith leader of the Upper School
- A commitment to the unique academic and emotional needs of young women in grades 7 through 12
- Demonstrated success as a classroom teacher
- Impactful independent school leadership experience in upper and middle school settings
- Experience with leading and supporting academic innovation, curriculum development, and instruction
- Supportive, compassionate, approachable, accessible, and visible
- An appreciation for the important role of parents in the education of their daughters
- A leadership style that reflects the ability to be flexible, adaptable, proactive, and responsive
- Thoughtful, respectful words and actions that reflect a depth of self-knowledge, grace, humility, and commitment to the mission of the school
- The ability to inspire a highly capable faculty that includes teachers across the spectrum of experience
- Kindness, patience, accessibility, and a sense of humor
- An inspiring communicator who is warm, personable, transparent, and visible and who listens deeply to all community members while taking the time to understand the culture of Oak Knoll
- Charismatic and skilled in building relationships within and beyond the Oak Knoll community, generating excitement about the Upper School Division experience



SUMMARY OF THE SEARCH PROCESS

Candidates interested in this position are asked to submit the following materials by **February 15**:

- EC Summary Sheet and Disclosure Statement (Contact George Sanderson or Nat Conard for these documents)
- Letter of Interest addressed to the Head of School
- Current Resume
- Statement of Educational Leadership Philosophy
- A list of five or more references with contact information (Name, relationship to candidate, phone and email addresses)

Application materials are to be sent electronically via email to:

George Sanderson, Partner, Educators Collaborative

Email: gsanderson@educatorscollaborative.com

Nat Conard, Co-Managing Partner, Educators Collaborative

Email: nconard@educatorscollaborative.com

The Search Schedule

Oak Knoll plans to identify a preliminary group of candidates to interview (virtually) in late February. From this group, the school will select finalists for a full day of interviews on campus in March. The Head of School expects to reach a decision and appoint an Upper School Division Head shortly after finalist visits, with the term of office to commence on July 1, 2024. The benefits package for this position includes a spacious and attractive residence contiguous to Oak Knoll's campus.



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