



Duchesne Academy  
of the Sacred Heart



**Position Statement**  
**Head of Upper School**  
**Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart**

**Houston, TX**  
**July 1, 2024**

# Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart

## Head of Upper School

Position Statement | Start Date: July 1, 2024



Duchesne Academy  
of the Sacred Heart



### OVERVIEW

Founded in September of 1960, Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart is an independent, all-girls Catholic day school. Situated on a lovely campus in a wooded residential section of town, it is described for the way it builds strong bonds between students and among families. The school provides a rigorous and stimulating college preparatory education carefully designed to empower young girls to think critically, build community, act ethically, and find their voices.

Sixty-four years ago, Duchesne enrolled 55 girls on a wooded, azalea-filled former estate whose central building known as the “White House” housed the first classroom instruction. In the decades that followed, the school developed to meet the needs of its expanding student population while remaining true to the Sacred Heart values that had inspired its opening. In the 1990s, a new Fine Arts Building, new White House, new Lower School building, and the beautiful Burguières Chapel of the Sacred Heart were added.

Duchesne is a dynamic presence of 21st-century learning firmly rooted in 200-year-old Sacred Heart values and is the only all girls Pre-K through Grade 12 Catholic school in Houston. With a student population of over 750, Duchesne welcomes students from 79 different zip codes and 13 foreign countries of which 43% are Catholic. Duchesne Academy seeks



a dynamic, Catholic Head of Upper School to begin July 1, 2024. The successful candidate will be an experienced leader devoted to Duchesne’s mission, the Sacred Heart Goals and Criteria, and college preparatory programs.

### MISSION

As a Sacred Heart school, Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart espouses the vision of St. Madeleine Sophie Barat of education as the primary means to discover and reveal the love of the Heart of Jesus. Our mission is articulated in the *Goals and Criteria of Sacred Heart Schools*, and board members, administrators, staff, and teachers work in concert with the Society of the Sacred Heart to ensure mission integrity. The Sacred Heart Way strengthens habits of heart and mind focused on decision-making. Students are encouraged to pause, to reflect, to discern, to decide, and to act. Our approach to education fosters the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual growth of our students, engaging them in challenging experiences that inspire intellectual curiosity and set them on a path towards transformation and hope. At Duchesne, we model and practice contemplative prayer and silence in the presence of the Divine, and we cultivate open inquiry, critical thinking, and a life-long love of learning. The intellectual dimension of a Sacred Heart education inspires us to seek truth, to foster goodness, to celebrate beauty, and to embrace mystery.



# Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart

## Head of Upper School

Position Statement | Start Date: July 1, 2024



Duchesne Academy  
of the Sacred Heart

### DUCHESNE AT-A-GLANCE

|                          |       |
|--------------------------|-------|
| Founded:                 | 1960  |
| Total students:          | 758   |
| Total faculty:           | 142   |
| Student/teacher ratio:   |       |
| Lower School:            | 10:1  |
| Middle School:           | 20:1  |
| Upper School:            | 15:1  |
| Financial aid budget:    | \$2M  |
| Annual Operating Budget: | \$25M |
| Endowment:               | \$7M  |

### THE UPPER SCHOOL

The Sacred Heart educational program at Duchesne is firmly grounded in the belief that each student should learn in an atmosphere that challenges her intellectually while supporting and developing her emotionally and spiritually. The academic program begins in the pre-Kindergarten years and progresses with increasing complexity and demand to the rigorous college preparatory curriculum of the Upper School.

The Upper School operates on a six-term modular “MOD” schedule with each MOD consisting of 29 or 30 days. Classes last 80 minutes, a pace which allows concept and context to drive learning instead of content. Students take three to four courses per MOD and select classes from a combination of requirements and electives to fill up to 24 spaces each year. In keeping with our philosophy of balance, this curricula emphasizes cognitive depth, critical thinking, and skill-building. Offering students more autonomy in choosing how they gain those skills fosters intrinsic motivation to learn. The college-style MOD schedule in the Duchesne Upper School helps girls discover their own unique voices and prepares them to thrive in their post-secondary studies. With an impressive list of 20 Advanced Placement courses, 11 Honors courses, and over 80 different electives, the Upper





School offers a wide array of educational experiences such as college advising and dual credit.

Duchesne's college advising program offers students one-on-one meetings beginning junior year to help each young woman find and explore colleges that are compatible with her goals and abilities. Duchesne's dual credit program is in association with the University of St. Thomas in Houston. All University of St. Thomas (UST) course offerings are online and either synchronous or asynchronous. Students can receive elective credit from Duchesne, as well as college credit from UST and other institutions around the country.

Duchesne students emerge uniquely as informed and confident young women. The school is able to provide small class sizes while offering a wide variety of courses, programs, and activities that would normally only be seen in larger schools including a fully integrated, advanced technology program, interactive classrooms, CAVE (Computer Audio/Video Education) internships, over 50 clubs and activities, a robust arts program, and dynamic athletics.

### **STUDENT-CENTERED ENVIRONMENT**

At Duchesne, all students have a voice. Each student has a faculty advisor they meet with frequently throughout the year. Advisors serve as advocates so that every girl has a touchpoint and an adult on campus that she can go to with questions and concerns, large or small. Our small class sizes foster meaningful relationships between students and their teachers, and our administrators are also actively involved—it's not uncommon to see girls hanging out and having a snack in the Dean of Students' office.

### **SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT**

As a Sacred Heart school, active faith is one of our primary goals. Through theology classes, prayer services, Mass, and other campus ministry activities, our students are encouraged to explore and develop their relationships with God. Each grade level participates in an off-campus retreat where girls are invited to practice prayerful reflection, worship, and spiritual community building.



# Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart

## Head of Upper School

Position Statement | Start Date: July 1, 2024



### WELLNESS AND BALANCE

The well-being of each student is a top priority at Duchesne. Our academic program is demanding and our teachers constantly challenge students to excel, but we also emphasize the importance of wellness and take active measures to reduce stress and anxiety among students. Our Counseling Department sponsors an extensive health and wellness program that meets weekly and provides students with tools to succeed. We also strive to educate students about digital citizenship as well as staying safe on social media.

### COMMUNITY

Our students are open-minded and supportive, together creating a dynamic, close-knit community that's inviting and bursting with energy. Within each grade level, community-building activities form strong bonds and lifelong friendships. Beginning with freshman orientation (which includes a sleepover at school) to senior retreat (which is held at a retreat center), each class has beloved yearly traditions. We also host school-wide events including Spirit Week, Unity Day, Field Day, and Cong. During Cong. (French for "taking a break"), all classes are canceled, and instead, a full day of fun, games, and socializing ensues! Additionally, the Upper School Student Council organizes events throughout the year such as crawfish boils, movie nights, a powder puff game, semi-formal, prom, and more.

### SERVICE AND SOCIAL AWARENESS

Duchesne's signature experiential program is rooted in the Sacred Heart Goal that calls us to serve our community and act for justice. Our Upper School girls work closely with organizations throughout Greater Houston such as hospitals, schools, and nonprofit organizations that serve the needs of marginalized populations. The program includes a reflection component in which students assess their service-learning experience in order to instill a lifelong sense of giving back.

### TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

Duchesne's Institute for Global and Social Awareness offers opportunities for student travel domestically and internationally. Options for students may include travel to a site in the summer to participate in summer service programming, while other opportunities may take students to explore a new city or country to bolster classroom knowledge with real world experience. Travel offers Duchesne students an opportunity to participate in social awareness or volunteer opportunities while building community; two of the five Sacred Heart Goals and Criteria.





### THE ARTS

The Arts at Duchesne enrich the whole person in emotional, intellectual, and spiritual development. Students explore the world of visual and performing arts through a wealth of mediums—paint, clay, pixels, lighting, sound, film, voice, body, and heart. From age three through her senior year, each student experiences a level of artistic immersion that suits her abilities and ambitions and furthers her capacity for discipline and exuberant self-expression.

The visual arts program at Duchesne develops strong, confident, expressive visual art skills. Students draw, paint, sculpt, photograph, study art history, and create two- and three-dimensional designs with projects that incorporate the elements of art and the principles of design using both traditional methods and modern technology. The performing arts allow each girl to develop self-expression and communication skills and includes

music, theatre, and dance. The music program at Duchesne builds vocal foundational skills at all levels, incorporating music theory, notation, and instrumental experiences as students develop a lifelong love of song. Theater enriches each student's educational experience with an appreciation for the cultural, historical, political, and spiritual values as reflected through the lens of the performing arts. Courses are offered in a variety of levels and genres for acting, writing, and designing theater.

The Duchesne dance program is modeled after programs based in LA and NYC and trains creative and inquisitive dancers who are passionate about storytelling and connecting to their communities through dance. Dancers at Duchesne train in an array of styles from ballet, jazz, contemporary, jazz funk/commercial style dance, and musical theater.



# Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart

Head of Upper School

Position Statement | Start Date: July 1, 2024



Duchesne Academy  
of the Sacred Heart



## ATHLETICS

Duchesne seeks to develop student athletes who learn teamwork skills and a spirit of healthy competition. As part of the Southwest Preparatory Conference (SPC), Duchesne athletes have competed at and won State Championships in several of the 11 varsity sports offered including basketball, cross country, golf, field hockey, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, track and field, and volleyball. Many graduates have also gone on to compete at the collegiate level with 6 in 2023.

## STUDENT LIFE

Student life at Duchesne is a close-knit community, extending beyond the students in the classrooms. Clubs and activities play a significant role in the development of students, allowing them to explore their interests outside of academics and to gain leadership skills. Some

of the Upper School clubs and organizations include AcaBellas, Biomedical Club, Chess Club, Debate Club, French Symposium, Hispanic Culture Club, Junior Achievement Club, Model UN, and Robotics.

## CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

With more than 50 clubs and co-curricular activities, our Upper School students have numerous ways to get involved outside of class. Duchesne's robotics team is among the only all-female teams in Texas, routinely competing in world championship events. Our speech and debate team is nationally recognized and travels to tournaments throughout the country. Other clubs allow students to pursue cultural, spiritual, and intellectual interests.

All University of St. Thomas (UST) course offerings will be online, either synchronous or asynchronous. Students will be able to receive elective credit from Duchesne, as well as college credit from UST and other institutions around the country.

## ACCREDITATIONS AND AFFILIATIONS

In addition to being a member of the Network of Sacred Heart Schools, Duchesne Academy is accredited by the state of Texas through the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department (TCCBED), the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS), and the Sacred Heart Commission on Goals (SHCOG). Affiliations include: NCGS (National Coalition of Girls Schools), ISM (Independent School Management), Archdiocese of Galveston Houston, and NAIS (National Association of Independent Schools).





### **FACULTY AND STAFF**

The faculty members are the heart and soul of Duchesne. The teachers at every grade level are exceptional in their field and share in a fierce dedication to the intellectual and personal development of each student. The school provides faculty with exceptional resources and annual professional growth opportunities. The

faculty strives to create a collaborative, inclusive environment where young women attain essential foundational skills and competencies while igniting new passions and interests. Faculty members communicate genuine respect for each student and her capacity to grow, learn, and excel. All students are highly recognized with great care and appreciation by the entire community.







### THE IDEAL CANDIDATE TO LEAD THE UPPER SCHOOL

- Understands and is committed to the Sacred Heart educational mission, philosophy, and the *Goals and Criteria*.
- Brings a knowledge of the classroom experience and the teaching that supports students in a gender specific setting.
- Exhibits a strong moral code and will serve as a voice for the school's Catholic identity.
- Is an empathic listener whose decision making will be collaborative in nature—with both faculty and administrative colleagues.
- Demonstrates a history of leadership experience including a record of effective evaluating, hiring, and retaining a diverse faculty and staff.
- Is a visible and approachable presence within the school community whose engagement is both energetic and joyful.

- Be grounded in the best practices of Upper School education with a vision to support professional growth, curriculum alignment, technology and scheduling.
- Possess effective communication skills and a desire to have authentic engagements and conversations.
- Possesses academic credentials that demonstrate a continuous pursuit of intellectual growth.

This is an exciting opportunity for a dedicated and accomplished educator who is interested in leading a strong and caring upper school. A dedicated faculty, capable students, an openness to new ideas, supportive administrative colleagues and enrollment growth are all in evidence at Duchesne. The school is well respected in the Houston market. The school is competitive with salary and benefits.



Position Statement | Start Date: July 1, 2024

### TO APPLY

Applications are currently being accepted and reviewed. They should be sent to the RG175 website: <https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>. It should include:

- Cover letter that includes description of skills and experience fitting for the position.
- Resume.
- 2-page philosophy of education statement.
- List of 5 references and contact information. References will not be contacted without prior notification.

Deadline to apply: **March 10, 2024**

For more information, please contact Arlyce Seibert at [arlyceseibert14@icloud.com](mailto:arlyceseibert14@icloud.com)

