



ROCK POINT SCHOOL

Become Your Best Self

Burlington, VT | www.rockpointschool.org



**Rock Point School is a place where
young people come to change their lives.**

— C.J. Spirito, Headmaster

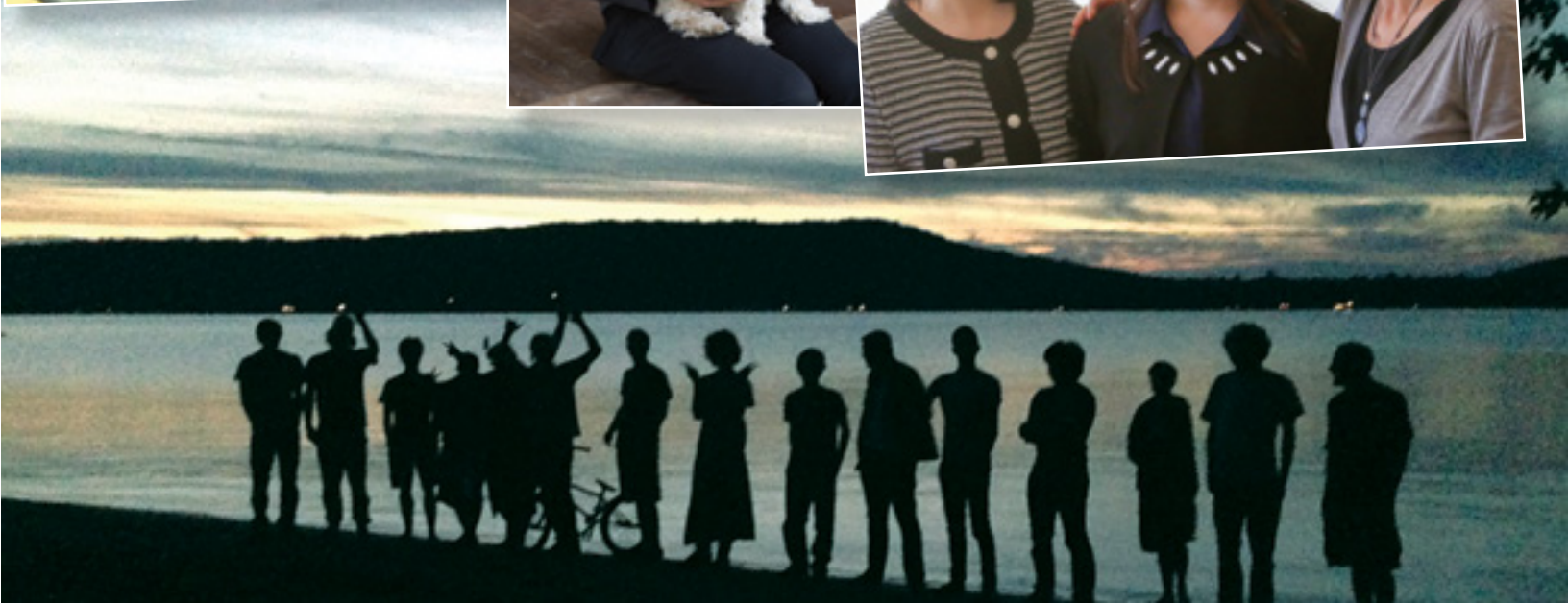
The School Community

At Rock Point School, the emphasis is on the whole student. Whether in the classroom or on the bus to Sugarbush Mountain, in a school-wide meeting, on a rock-climbing adventure, at an art gallery, or participating in a community service project, students are challenged to understand and embody responsibility, honesty, generosity, and respect for themselves and others. Students

are encouraged to solve problems rather than win arguments, and much time and emphasis is given to this in the dormitory program, in one-on-one conversations, in weekly advising meetings, and in the classroom. The school community is like a large family, with all the accompanying love and challenges. We work hard to support one another, to gently challenge each other, and to grow.

I feel deeply thankful for the staff members' compassion, wisdom, grace, dedication, skill, and insight.

— Rick, parent, Pawtucket, RI



Our Mission

The mission of Rock Point School is to provide a small, supportive educational community for teenagers, where they can become successful students and learn skills for living in a community

with peers and adults. The school is committed to providing the educational, cultural, spiritual, and recreational opportunities necessary to accomplish these goals.





Where We Live

Rock Point School is situated on a magnificent tract of land, consisting of over 130 acres along beautiful Lake Champlain in Burlington, Vermont. Founded in 1928 by Bishop Samuel Babcock Booth and Doris Wright Smith on land owned by the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont, Rock Point School has been helping young people grow into their best selves for almost a century. Within a short walk from the school are a public beach and a seven-mile bike path that runs alongside the lake.

The downtown area of Burlington is less than two miles from the school. Burlington is a vibrant

college town with a movie theater, coffee houses, restaurants, shops, art galleries, a skateboard park, and a beautiful waterfront. The Burlington area is also home to the University of Vermont, Champlain College, St. Michael's College, and the Community College of Vermont. The Burlington International Airport is a twenty-minute drive from the school.

Vermont is a state full of diverse outdoor opportunities, including skiing and snowboarding, camping, hiking, rock climbing, canoeing and sailing, and some of the most incredible fall foliage in New England.

Academics: Liberal Arts Curriculum



Rock Point's core curriculum of English, history, science, math, and art is designed to guide students to think, read, write, listen, speak, and create with increasing depth and sophistication, as well as to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills. When students engage their own unique imaginations, whether through reading a novel, writing a history paper or a poem, creating a scientific experiment or a sculpture, or attempting to solve a math problem, they are learning about themselves and the world simultaneously.

Most students use our educational program to prepare themselves for the immediate challenge of going to college, while some choose to go directly to programs like Americorps, technical college, or into the workforce. In the 9th and 10th grade years, our students focus on the foundations of academics and becoming competent students. Our 11th and 12th grade courses emphasize writing, research, critical analysis, and higher level reading and math skills.



Small Classes, Attention to the Individual

People learn best when they are recognized, encouraged, and supported in their inquiries and endeavors. Our small class size and high faculty-to-student ratio allow us to identify the strengths, individual learning styles, struggles, talents, and fears of each student and to work with each in a way that is both challenging and supportive. In addition to classroom time with teachers, students have a daily study hall each afternoon with teachers available to work with them to review their material and help with homework, as well as an evening study hall supervised by dorm staff.

Exceptional Teachers

Our teachers are smart, experienced, creative, engaging, and caring. They return year after year because they love working with the courageous, curious, thoughtful students that Rock Point School attracts. Teachers use differentiated instruction and assessment to accommodate a wide range of skill levels from advanced to developing. Our teachers are very knowledgeable about how to support students in organizational skills, time management, study skills, and developing effective work habits. As Renaissance people, our teachers bring their passions for maple sugaring, bee keeping, French language, music, “Zine” development, and more to our students.

Experiential learning

Our classrooms extend beyond the school building to provide hands-on learning. From Science lessons in our gardens and at the rock thrust fault, to discussing the historical and cultural significance of maple sugaring in Vermont while tapping maple trees, there are learning opportunities happening all over our campus. We also partner with local organizations like the Flynn Theater to attend student matinee performances and provide companion workshops with actors, writers, and other local artists.



Academically, it's a lot different than public school because you get to know your teachers at a closer level and they challenge you individually. They know your weaknesses, they know your strengths, they know where to step it up a level, and give you the opportunity to grow.

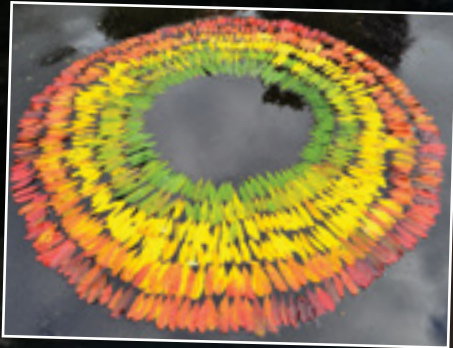
— Alice, student, Salem, MA



The Arts Program

Many students who come to Rock Point School are interested in the arts, but not all have been exposed to creative expression in the past. The studio art program offers two options: first, a foundational course giving students an opportunity to learn basic techniques in painting, drawing, and mixed media; the other option is for more advanced students who want to develop a portfolio with the potential of moving on to art school. Three days a week,

students also have an electives period where they can choose among classes such as stained glass, photography, creative writing, theater, digital animation, and more. Students may participate in the school play as actors, set builders, costume designers, or tech support; work with a visiting Vermont playwright to create their own plays; and show their own artwork at a yearly exhibit at a local Burlington gallery, with the option of selling their work.



Physical Education



Our aim is to encourage students to be healthy and active, to try different activities, and to develop skills for lifelong physical fitness. Though we sometimes play team sports within the school or against other small school groups, our emphasis is on participation, positive attitude, fair play, and fun.

Sports class offerings typically include the following over the course of the year: soccer, basketball, softball, Ultimate Frisbee, biking, skateboarding, running, walking, yoga, skiing, and snowboarding. Students have the opportunity to go to the local YMCA to use their fitness center and pool during P.E. and occasionally on the weekend.

For serious athletes interested in other sports (track, soccer, football, basketball, ice hockey, tennis), once they are doing well in the various aspects of our program, there are options to be involved with competitive team sports in the local community. During the past several years, in the winter months, many of our students have enjoyed participating in a learn-to-snowboard program called Chill (offered by the famous Burton Snowboard Company, which is located in our city).





Rock Point has the ability to take teenagers and lead them from where they are and who they are, gently and carefully, but in a very structured way, in a direction that enables the students to be who they want to be.

— Kathleen, parent, Fairfax, VA



Rock Point Students

Rock Point students are creative and self-aware, and have found themselves off-track personally or academically, and are ready to make positive changes to build healthy, fulfilling lives. They are thoughtful, intelligent, independent thinkers. They are often risk-takers, both intellectually and physically. Some of them have been called “a square peg in a round hole.”

Rock Point students come from all over the country and from a wide range of backgrounds. Many choose Rock Point after becoming disillusioned with large high schools, realizing that a smaller school can allow them to be known and recognized for their contributions and strengths. Students and families are drawn to the support academic program, the community, and the personal growth opportunities.

When students arrive at Rock Point, what they have in common is their desire to grow, despite apprehension about facing the challenge of looking at themselves honestly. Over time, they learn to appreciate their strengths and begin to change what is not working well. When students graduate from Rock Point, they have newfound self-confidence, a positive direction for the next phase of their lives, and a clearer sense of what is real and good inside themselves.



Lilly

Age: 16 | Vermont | Came to Rock Point School as a 9th grader



“

I had to learn how to be by myself instead of trying to fit in. I really got to be myself here. Sometimes we get annoyed with each other, but we learn how to be together.

Being here will be the best four years of your life. The school has so much love and support for students. You never feel alone.

I love knowing that when I leave here, I have become my best self.

”

Ross

Age: 18 | Florida | Came to Rock Point School as an 11th grader



“

What has been most memorable for me at Rock Point is making friends. I now have a second family and they will always be there for me. I now have another home.

I have learned new levels of patience and I have learned to be more empathetic. I wouldn't have gotten that anywhere else.

I now have picked up my life and put it together and I am going to a college that will give me the best degree for my dream job.

”

Kelly

Age: 18 | North Carolina | Came to Rock Point School as a 10th grader



“

Being around people here everyday has made me more comfortable out in the real world. Now I am going to college. I don't think I would have even been able to deal with the thought of college when I first got to Rock Point.

I learned to not give up. Rock Point has encouraged me to keep trying. Rock Point has given me a purpose and it has shown me that I should keep trying every single day!

Getting to know people has been the best thing that could ever happen to me.

”

Dorm Life: Nights and Weekends

The dormitory program is designed to support, challenge, and guide students. It is an educational experience unto itself, complementing the academic program.

Although life in the dorm program is more relaxed and informal, students are constantly working towards goals of improved relationships, increased responsibility, leadership, and personal development.

On weekday evenings, students are busy with study halls, meetings, and chores. Evening study halls provide a structured supplement to daytime study halls, with dorm staff available for assistance. Dorm meetings and a Wellness/Life Skills class provide weekly opportunities for students to discuss issues that arise, learn about healthy living, nutrition, and stress reduction, provide each other with feedback and support, explore topics of interest to the group, have fun together, and enhance cohesion.

Weekend activities at Rock Point are designed to educate and entertain students, to interest them in new, worthwhile activities, and to provide opportunities to connect with peers and adults in small groups

Continued >



Dorm Life: continued

and with the larger community. Choices vary each weekend, and students are encouraged to suggest or help create activities that appeal to them. Offerings may include outdoor adventures such as camping, hiking, skiing, snowboarding, time at the beach, rock climbing, running, and biking; sightseeing or museum trips to cities such as Montreal or Boston; on-campus activities such as cooking, art projects, board games, and movies; and outings in Burlington, such as coffee houses, the skateboard park, lectures and sporting events at local colleges, and festivals and fairs in the area. There is something for everyone!



Dorm Staff

The members of our dorm staff are warm, fun, energetic, and professional adults with strong academic backgrounds, who enjoy spending time with teens. They have diverse interests and gifts to share. They play; give honest and supportive feedback; help students see the impact of their actions; encourage positive communication; promote healthy friendships; model new ways of living one's life with enthusiasm, enjoyment, honesty, courage, and heart; and help to provide a bridge to the academic program. Students form close, mentoring relationships with the dorm staff, and see them as important sources of support and guidance.

The dorm staff is the best part of the school because they do a lot of fun things with you and understand things you are going through. You can talk to them when you need to.

— Emily, student, Hanover, NH



Advising Program

All students have an advisor with whom they meet each week. Every adult at our school is an advisor and is responsible for advising one to three students. This allows the advisor to get to know the students well in the academic and dorm programs. The advisor is part mentor and part cheerleader. Advising is a time for the student to review the triumphs and struggles of the week, to get support, and to be challenged to grow. They work together to create steps for students to move forward socially, personally, and academically. Communication with families is very important to us. Advisors contact parents weekly, sharing the highlights and lowlights, and communicating any plans for additional support.





Community-Based Supports On and Off Campus



The students who attend Rock Point School are on the upswing. They may have struggled before coming to Rock Point, but they are ready to do things differently, with our support. Students have complete access to our staff to talk, get support, and make plans to move forward academically, socially, and personally. There is a weekly, student run all-school meeting which provides an open forum for students and staff to discuss and work toward being a supportive and healthy community, and to plan future activities. When needed, students have access to therapists in town and various support meetings throughout Burlington. Individual tutors can be contracted for students who need additional one-on-one academic support.

Service in the Local and International Community

Caring for oneself and caring for others are strong values at Rock Point School. Students learn that they have a responsibility to their local and larger communities, and that they have gifts to share. We teach stewardship and offer many opportunities to give back to others. Community service offerings change each year, but may include working at a local food shelf, raising money to support housing for the homeless, baking for the Ronald McDonald House, coaching T-ball for Burlington

youth, running a water station for the Burlington Marathon, and assisting with Habitat for Humanity projects. Students also have opportunities to travel. We typically offer a yearly trip to various places including Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and many places within the United States. The hope is that by traveling and offering service to others, students will broaden their perspectives, while they enrich their own lives and the lives of others.



Summer Session: Fun in the Sun

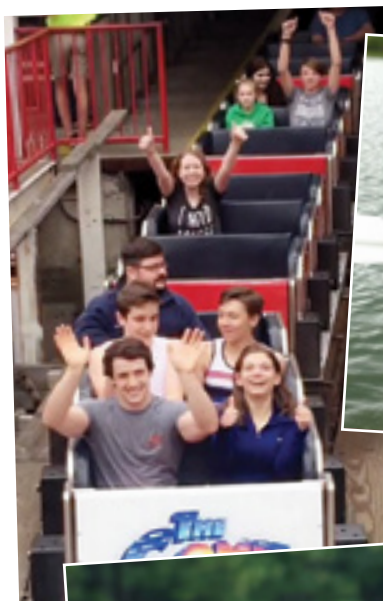
Rock Point School summer session offers a chance for a fun, healthy summer and an interdisciplinary approach to learning, both in and out of the classroom. The summer offers a chance to build core learning skills in a supportive environment, giving students the opportunity to earn some credit. The program also offers a variety of outdoor adventures

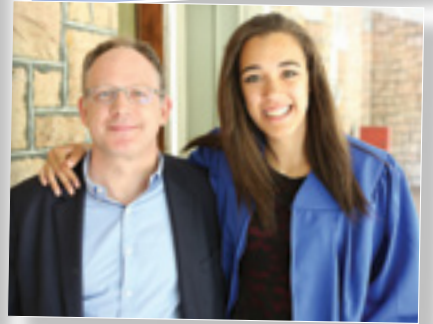
(hiking, camping, sailing and canoeing, swimming, and fishing), as well as art offerings, gardening, cooking and baking, outdoor music events, and time in downtown Burlington. Every weekend is a major trip off campus, often going to the seacoast, a professional sporting event, and a chance to travel throughout New England.

**Just as we do during
the school year, we
emphasize the following:**

- Wellness, healthy habits, and building confidence
- Executive functioning and task follow-through
- Academic credits
- Trying new things and finding a passion
- Being part of a close-knit, healthy community
- Building relationships with caring, supportive adults

**Our summer session is
an excellent way to get a
taste of what Rock Point
School is all about.**





Year-End Celebration & Graduation

As we prepare for the end of the year and graduation, we offer many activities and yearly rituals focused on celebrating our students' specific gifts and accomplishments. Rock Point's graduation is a unique, beautiful, and moving ceremony. The members of the small graduating class are individually honored, through the stories and gratitude offered directly to them by those in the audience. Students leave Rock Point knowing they have been loved and respected, and have grown a great deal, both personally and academically.

There is an old map of the Rock Point property down at the conference center. The map marks several places on the property as sacred places. I was amused and puzzled by that denotation.

At graduation, I realized that RPS is a place where young people can feel safe enough and nurtured in a way that allows them to find within themselves what is good and pure and life-affirming. That is why it truly is a sacred place.

— Lynn, parent, Scarsdale, NY



Preparing for Life After Rock Point School

Throughout their time here, students are encouraged to think about their interests and goals beyond high school. Most of our students attend college, and their preparation for that happens in and out of the classroom in many ways.

The school works in collaboration with parents to arrange for students to take college entrance tests, and we offer a workshop that includes a basic introduction to the SAT, ACT, and test-taking strategies. Seniors all participate in a weekly, semester-long seminar where they are introduced to resumé writing, cover letter writing, and how to complete a college application, including the personal essay. Emphasis is placed on helping students assess their strengths, challenges, and needs, so that they can find schools or programs that are a good match for them.

Our students are admitted to and attend a wide range of colleges, such as Connecticut College, University of San Francisco, Goucher College, University of Vermont, Worcester Polytech Institute, Hampshire College, NYU, Dean College, Knox College, Lesley University, Maine College of Art, Champlain College, and George Washington University.

A few students choose to go directly into the workforce; some students engage in Gap year experiences, such as Americorps, Internship programs, or travel programs. Our goal for them, wherever they go, is that they are able to take what they have acquired at Rock Point School about learning and living in a community and to use the knowledge, skills, and newfound confidence throughout the next phases of their lives.

Come for a Visit

The best way to find out about Rock Point School is to visit us. We'll be happy to arrange a tour of the school, meetings with students, class visits, and an admissions interview.

To schedule your visit or to request more information, contact our admissions office. We look forward to meeting you!



ROCK POINT SCHOOL

www.rockpointschool.org



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Rock Point School is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and is approved by the Vermont State Board of Education. The school is a member of the National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES), the Independent Schools Association of Northern New England (ISANNE), The Association of Boarding Schools (TABS), Small Boarding Schools Association (SBSA), and the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).

Rock Point School does not discriminate against otherwise qualified persons on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, or veteran status in its recruitment, admissions, or employment activities.