

Woodberry Forest School

Woodberry Forest, United States



An all-boys, all-boarding community on 1,200 Piedmont acres, run on a century-old honor code and a football rivalry dating to 1901

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	70/100
Academic outcomes	70/100
University placement	69/100
Prestige & heritage	74/100
Alumni network	74/100
Facilities	74/100
Transparency	64/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Woodberry Forest occupies a narrow niche and does it with unusual conviction: an all-boys, all-boarding American secondary school on 1,200 acres in rural Virginia, with every pupil in residence and ****95%**** of faculty living on campus. That matters. It produces a school where supervision, pastoral care, sport, teaching and social life are not separate departments but one continuous system. The scale is small enough for close adult oversight — a ****5:1**** student-teacher ratio and average class size of ****10**** — yet the campus and endowment give it the reach of a much larger institution. The defining features are plain: a student-run honour code more than a century old, a full residential model, and a culture that prizes structure, loyalty and male peer bonding. **A hard-edged sense of community** is the point here, not an

add-on.

Academically, Woodberry offers the US High School Diploma with AP courses, backed by the sort of staffing and facilities that affluent American boarding schools can fund. It also leans heavily on the educational case for living together: faculty mentorship, study-abroad options, student fellowships, and a timetable that extends beyond lessons into dorm life, athletics, arts and service. Parents should also note what the school emphasises because it tells you how it thinks: boys, boarding, brotherhood, honour, leadership. That clarity is a strength. It is not trying to serve every type of teenager. It is built for families who want **constant adult presence**, **old-school residential discipline** and a school identity strong enough to shape daily behaviour.

The market position is distinct. Woodberry sits in the top tier of US boarding schools for families who want a boys-only environment without compromise. There are very few all-boys, all-boarding schools left in the United States, and Woodberry has the resources, history and alumni depth to make that model credible at scale. The annual boarding fee of ****\$71,000*** places it firmly in the expensive bracket, but the proposition is more coherent than at many rivals: this is not a day school with dorms attached, nor a co-ed boarding school asking boys to carve out their own space. It is a fully residential male community with a famous athletic rivalry, substantial land, and an alumni network that reaches into politics, finance, journalism and the arts. **The atmosphere is intense**, **the traditions are thick**, and the institutional self-belief is strong.

The right student for Woodberry is a boy aged 14 to 18 who wants immersion, not flexibility. He will thrive if he enjoys competition, responds to clear rules, and can live productively inside a tightly knit community where reputation matters. He does not need to be a star athlete, but he must tolerate a campus culture in which sport carries status and shared rituals carry weight. Boys who want anonymity, urban energy, or a more fluid social environment will find the setting restrictive. Boys who want **a disciplined brotherhood**, **high-contact mentoring** and **a contained world with real stakes** will find one of the clearest boarding propositions in the American market.

STRENGTHS	TRADE - OFFS
• Founded in 1889, Woodberry Forest is one of the few remaining all-boys, all-boarding schools in the United States, with a 1,200-acre campus in rural Virginia. • Very small classes and a low student-teacher ratio (average class size around 10-14 students, ratio near 6:1) allow close faculty contact. • The school meets 100 percent of demonstrated financial need for admitted boys, with roughly 41-46 percent of students currently receiving tuition assistance. • A substantial endowment (reported at \$432 million as of mid-2023) underwrites more than half the true cost of each student's education. • The century-old, student-run honor system is central to campus culture and is frequently cited as a distinguishing feature of the school.	• The school is single-sex (all-boys), which removes it from consideration for families seeking a coeducational environment. • Its rural Madison County location, while within reach of Washington, D.C., Charlottesville, and Richmond, means no on-campus access to a major city, which can matter for international families used to urban day-to-day amenities. • Boarding tuition for 2025-2026 is \$69,850, a significant recurring cost before any additional fees for international student services. • Reported acceptance rates in the high-40s to low-50s percent range make it less academically selective at the point of entry than several peer boarding schools, which may affect brand positioning for status-conscious applicants.

ADMISSIONS

Woodberry Forest enrolls boys in grades 9 through 12 only, with entry points typically at ninth and tenth grade. The published application deadline is January 15, alongside a rolling admissions option; a \$60 application fee applies. Standardized testing (SSAT or ISEE) is commonly submitted though not strictly mandated, and an interview is recommended. Reported acceptance rates sit around 49-51 percent, placing it as moderately, not extremely, selective compared with some peer boarding schools. Financial aid applications are processed separately from admissions and do not affect an applicant's chances.

NOTABLE ALUMNI (5 9)

SPORT: Frank Wisner, Q8003125

MUSIC: Johnny Mercer, James McMurtry, Beto O'Rourke

DRAMA: Randolph Scott, Johnny Mercer, Angus Wall, James McMurtry, Roger Wilson

VISUAL_ARTS: Johnny Mercer, Edward D. Dart

LETTERS: Randolph Scott, Johnny Mercer, Angus Wall, Donald Antrim, Bosley Crowther, Heinz Pagels, Lenoir Chambers, Beto O'Rourke

POLITICS: Paul Ilyinsky, Gordon Gray, Richard Thurmond Chatham, Rogers Morton, Frank G. Wisner, Burr Harrison, Robert Daniel, L. Richardson Preyer

SCIENCE: Frank G. Wisner, Robert Hamilton, Heinz Pagels, Noel Perrin, Charles B. Dew, J. Leighton Reid, Justin J.W. Powell

BUSINESS: Johnny Mercer, Frank G. Wisner, Marvin P. Bush, Thruston Ballard Morton, Beto O'Rourke, Charles W. Coker, Clemmie Spangler, Emrah Gültekin

WTS RATING 

This profile summarises editorial research by World's Top Schools. Verify all admissions dates directly with the school before submitting. Sources are cited in the full online profile at WorldsTopSchools.com/schools/sch_ab435ffc1e.