



ST. STEPHEN'S
SCHOOL *Rome, Italy*

Position Statement for Head of School
St. Stephen's School
Rome, Italy July 1, 2022

St. Stephen's School

Head of School Position Statement

Start Date: July 1, 2022



THE PLACE

"Rome is the city of echoes, the city of illusions, and the city of yearning." Giotto di Bondon, Renaissance Painter

"In 'Roma,' I wanted to get across the idea that underneath Rome today is ancient Rome. So close. I am always conscious of that, and it thrills me. Imagine being in a traffic jam at the Coliseum!"

Federico Fellini, Italian Film Director

"Rome (is) a poem pressed into service as a city." Anatole Broyard, American writer

The next head of school for St. Stephen's School will embrace the magnificence of Rome--the showcase of Western civilization, with ancient sights and modern vibrancy. You will find the marble ruins of ancient times, tangled streets of the medieval world, grand Renaissance buildings and statues, and Baroque fountains and facades. You will also find 21st-



century traffic and nearly three million people. It's a city where it is easy to feel at home, where the wonders of Rome are a constant backdrop to everyday life. It is incontrovertible that Rome offers a blend of history, art, culture, life, and opportunity that may be overwhelming at times but is always irresistible.

St. Stephen's School, by design, is located in the historic city center

of Rome. It offers some of the world's most important cultural sites out its front door. Rome is considered the School's learning laboratory, with a curriculum foundation built around "The Eternal City," where it serves learning as "...the symbol and repository of the enduring ethical, cultural, and religious values of the West and as one of the most international and cosmopolitan intersections of the modern world."



The School offers every student the chance to live and more deeply understand Western civilization, where a walking field trip provides the view of looking out from inside a Roman ruin toward a medieval house and beyond that to a Renaissance palazzo, with perhaps a contemporary sculpture in the piazza. In a single gaze, 2,700 years of history and culture. St. Stephen's School, Rome is unmistakably one of the unique learning centers for an international school in the world.



THE SCHOOL

"The best part is that we are able to openly share ideas, our leadership is encouraged, and we know that the responsibility we take is important to the school."

—current St. Stephen's student

Chartered in 1962, St. Stephen's opened its doors to students as a boarding program in the fall of 1964. The Reverend John O. Patterson, one of the four School founders, aimed to offer the best elements of a non-denominational, classical liberal arts education. He envisioned a "school whose reason for being would be a quest for excellence, for developing the maturity and wholeness of each member of the community and maintaining the highest standards in all areas and all levels."

Today, St. Stephen's is a four-year (Grades 9-12 and post-graduate year), independent, non-profit, boarding and day school that draws on the strengths of American and European education traditions. The School offers the international IB Diploma Program and a rich panoply of coursework and experiential learning for all students.

With a commitment to both boarding and day school students and their families, the School brings a university preparatory and inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning, yet is equally dedicated to a highly personalized, warm, and collaborative environment. St. Stephen's offers "an extended family in Rome" to each student. Here, students investigate the rich historical layers of Rome as a source for academic inspiration yet also engage in its dynamic, contemporary urban environment.

Talk to ten alumni, and the same ten will tell stories of how St. Stephen's is inseparable from the pulse and opportunities of Rome.



MISSION AND CORE VALUES

MISSION

A non-profit English-language international school in the heart of Rome whose small size and stimulating collaborative environment offer students a transformative college preparatory experience anchored by the highest standards of academic excellence.

CORE VALUES

Care

- We attend to the needs of others, especially those who are vulnerable and in need.
- We actively build a diverse and inclusive community.
- We work to sustain and improve the environment.
- We honor the needs for our own wellbeing.

Scholarship

- We study passionately.
- We pursue thorough knowledge through innovative approaches.
- We use the past to inform our learning.

Creativity

- We value originality, improvisation, and invention.
- We encourage diverse forms of personal expression.
- We promote artistic expression for all community members.

Integrity

- We uphold high standards of academic honesty.
- We help one another find our voice and the courage to act on it.
- We honor the truth, both in word and in deed.

Independence

- We prize learner autonomy.
- We allow room to challenge convention.
- We recognize that where there isn't a path, we must make one



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Boarding and day students respond to the Core Values that guide and even predict authentic camaraderie and mutual support. At St. Stephen's, everyone belongs and has a part to play as contributors. A high value is placed on ideas, inquiry, expressing opinions, and service-learning involvement, all part of how St. Stephen's seeks to create academic distinction, community, and balance.

THE PEOPLE

"There is an important duality, where our teachers teach well, but we also know them as a person and their personality shines through, creating strong relationships and because of this, we receive better feedback." –a St. Stephen's senior

Students

The great strength of St. Stephen's is its sense of tradition, its atmosphere of trust and integrity, and its environment of warmth, collaboration, and respect for all. These principles are the foundation of a supportive and healthy environment – one in which students, their teachers, and everyone associated with the School thrive and develop skills, self-confidence, and maturity. These are not words on the page, but in a palpable sense, how the school community, by tradition and expectation, chooses to live with one another. The consistent voices of many confirm this fact as a description of the School's ethos.

The novel *Core Values* of St. Stephen's speak of valuing originality, improvisation, and invention. The tenets and principles of the School are vividly represented in how each person must help the other find their voice, place in the world, and to honor truth.

The 300 day and boarding students of diverse cultural backgrounds, representing over 50 nations, make up the student body. Approximately one-third of students are from the United States and Canada. Another third are Italian citizens. Others are from Asia and Oceania, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and various nations throughout Europe.



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The School awards Euro 500K in financial aid and scholarships.

Faculty

Numbering approximately 66 faculty at present, full and part-time, St. Stephen's teachers are recruited to live their talent as teachers *and* as practitioners and specialists in their field of study. From authors and playwrights to musicians and published scientists, the diverse faculty includes distinguished scholars, with 90% having an advanced degree and 20% a PhD.

One experienced faculty member offers this laudatory and comprehensive description of the School: "At its best, SSS offers an education, not simply university entry. It is a community where both students and faculty are encouraged to seek out and share their interests, talents and passions. It is unique as an international boarding school, by virtue of its location in the center

of Rome, which offers so many rare opportunities for learning and growth beyond simply the academic..." and

"St. Stephen's is a diverse place, where cliques and conformism are far from the norm. There is a coolness in being different, in being curious, and wanting to discover new things. It is an eccentric place which attracts unusual people, not least faculty, many of whom are recruited through unusual channels. There is little that is 'off the shelf' about SSS, which continues to develop and run in-house programs, like trips, which encourage students and faculty to take risks, challenge themselves, and build new relationships. It is a place where community is strong, and members can air their differences openly, come together and discuss, without fear or stigma, learn from one another in the spirit of understanding and growth."



Trustees

The Board of Trustees is comprised of alumni and current or former parents, teachers, and administrators. The Board consists of up to 32 members of which six must be living in Italy. The Head of School serves in an *ex officio* capacity. Conversations with trustees elicit keen memories, and the profound impact St. Stephen's has had on them, whether as a student, a parent, a faculty member, or an administrator. The affection for the School and its mission is unmistakable. There is a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities that trustees exercise in their stewardship of the School. Equally important is the profile of trustees that includes some who have served for decades and others who are new to governing the School. The School is recognized under Italian law and is a branch of a non-profit, tax-exempt institution incorporated in Connecticut.





THE PROGRAM

“As a faculty member, I am in the company of colleagues who are both professional and practitioners in their field of endeavor—our history teachers are published historians and music faculty are composers. Here we relish creativity and intellectual curiosity because we live the same expectations we have for our students.” – St. Stephen’s faculty member

St. Stephen’s offers a singular program, full stop. The extraordinary combination of dynamic course offerings and the location of the School animates the academic experience for students as well as faculty members. Rare is the school that can offer this bespoke experience, and St. Stephen’s has done so since its inception.

The overarching programmatic goals center on the rigorous International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (95% student participation) in addition to an American diploma program. If examination results were the measure of success, St. Stephen’s can make its claim with an average result of 36. But far beyond test results, St. Stephen’s offers an immersive intellectual experience that decades of students describe as “transformational” and “education for life.” Much of this remarkable experience arises from a first-rate faculty that focuses on the life of the mind and mature student-teacher relationships so that students feel both inspired and supported. In many ways, the School appears to be more like a small liberal arts college than a secondary school.

The influence of Rome on the curriculum is deservedly important. Students in Grade 9 and 10 study Rome itself and have the opportunity

to study Latin, Greek, or Arabic in addition to a modern language. The arts program figures heavily in the course offerings, from the study of art history to studio coursework in 2D and 3D disciplines. And most of the art teachers are practicing artists themselves—which gives another degree of authenticity and depth to the coursework.

Students carry courses in English, history, math, and sciences in addition to transdisciplinary requirements in physical education, technology, health, Critical Thinking, and study skills.

Several signature programs enhance the curriculum. Among them are:

- An archeological “dig” in the grounds behind the campus in partnership with the American University of Rome and a local public, Italian school;

- The Lyceum, an enhanced course of study of the classics;
- Writing and Learning Centers that both support and invigorate academic skills for all students;
- An Innovation Lab for design thinking and engineering;
- A genetics project with a local Roman genetics laboratory;
- A Food, Gardens, and Sustainability project on campus.

History and language course offerings reveal the School's commitment to the classics, and where Rome is the catalyst for dissolving the four walls of the classroom. Courses like *Art History in Rome*, *Roman Topography*, and four levels of Latin taught through readings on Roman civilization illustrate specialized examples for student learning.

The faculty waxes eloquent about the creativity and intellectual range that is encouraged of students and for themselves to reach for a high level of intellectual engagement. They applaud their students whom they describe as “deeply interested in learning” and “have a vision for the changing world around them.” The student themselves are eager to take on the challenge of true academic rigor. One student deftly described her extended essay topic on Victoria notions of masculinity and childbirth as reflected in Dickens and Tolstoy. Another student sought out the use of UK databases for the scientific information he needed. It is clear that no one is bored at St. Stephen's.



Students would like to ensure that the curriculum is both relevant and timely. They underscore their eagerness for the international point of view in their coursework and the importance of grappling with the critical topics of today. They are entirely unanimous about their appreciation for the location of the School in central, historic Rome.

University placements are competitive and center primarily on the US, the UK, Italy, France, Spain, other countries in Europe and some in Asia and South America.

Learn more about the course selections at St. Stephen's: <https://assets.sssrome.it/4592cdf44332de5115ea3d72758c5b09>

The School profile: <https://assets.sssrome.it/0f5c8f581f4d21ea179347566c07854f>

Students cite (and appreciate) the panoply of support services provided: student ambassadors, peer mentors, the advisory system, counselors, and grade-level coordinators. In light of managing both boarding and day school populations, the School provides robust systems of social-emotional support for students.

If curriculum means all organized student opportunities, then St. Stephen's uses “Mens sana in corpore sano” (“A sound mind in a healthy body”) to guide athletics, the visual and performing arts, service-learning, and the Trips Program. In a most intentional way, students engage beyond day-to-day academics to develop personal responsibility, leadership skills, a commitment to diversity and humanitarian concerns, and to embrace civic awareness.



programming. Because the student body is made up of both day and boarding students, it is most common for day students to welcome boarding students into their homes on weekends. And imagine the choices for weekend culture and service-learning experiences with Italy as the backdrop.

Student welfare and guidance are organized around the boarding head who oversees community life, with faculty advisors (boarding residents) serving “in loco parentis,” advocates and mentors. The School nurse is always on-call as are certified counselors.

THE BOARDING PROGRAM

“The boarding program is both the history and heart of the School as it is the model for bringing culture into the day-to-day lives of our students because they are in Rome and we recognize the importance of personalizing learning for every student.” – a St. Stephen’s faculty member.

Alumni speak of boarding experiences at St. Stephen’s as if they occurred yesterday. The voices of past and present boarders speak of being part of a strong tradition where everyone involved is responsible for ensuring trust, integrity, collaboration, and respect. The quality of relationships is paramount, and equally so is building the self-confidence and

decision-making skills to embrace Rome as home.

The secure boarding facility of a boys’ and girls’ dormitories are located on the top two floors of the School building and additional facilities close to campus. The School is indeed home, with dining facilities, featuring Italian fare, a separate snack bar, group recreation area, and full use of sports, music and studio spaces.

The boarding faculty provide direct leadership and stewardship of the boarding schedule and weekly

Strategically, conversations are taking place about how best to grow the boarding program, increase international outreach, and ensure top-notch facilities—and to do so without compromising the climate and culture of a highly personalized program.



FINANCIAL STABILITY AND FUNDRAISING

St. Stephen's School has a consistent history of prudent fiscal management and is in a very strong financial position. As of the end of the current school year, June 2021, the School owned assets valued at Euro 16.2 million. Total revenue for the school year ending June 2021 was Euro 8.8MM. The tuition and related fees at St. Stephen's account for 93% of total revenue and employment costs approximate 67% of total cash expenses. The School offers an attractive salary and benefit package across the teaching and leadership ranks and has enjoyed high faculty and staff stability.

The School ensures a strong working capital position, given the policy to collect school fees on a three-month forward basis. Given its strong financial position and positive cash flow, St. Stephen's School is able to consistently invest in facility improvements. Capex typically represents about 5% of the operating budget and facilities upgrades remain an important going-forward priority.

Fundraising programs at St. Stephen's have been focused on cash donations and philanthropic grants to the School. Annual fundraising efforts have yield yearly results of more than \$400K. The current endowment is slightly over \$12M and is comprised of a variety of restricted and unrestricted funds that have been donated for specific purposes. Examples include the Alumni Legacy Scholarship, several funds to support faculty, and funds for trips and programs.

Alumni, parents, and friends of the School devote time and energy generously to volunteer for School and support fundraising efforts as well as events and targeted events and initiatives. And last year's "St. Stephen's Got Talent" was a fun addition to the School's community-building efforts!





OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

“The essential element is the quality of education and our push for an elevated level of intellectual curiosity with Rome as the learning laboratory. Our next head of school must bring a commitment to this idea.” –St. Stephen’s Trustee

The future Head of School at St. Stephen's, Rome will have the opportunity and leadership responsibility to usher in the next era in the School's history. A forward-thinking leader will look to the future while honoring the history and culture of the School, appreciating that Rome is truly a learning laboratory of remarkable significance for the students, faculty and staff, families, and alumni of St. Stephen's.

The successful leader at St. Stephen’s will demonstrate skilled and impactful leadership skills: the ability to establish vision and all-school goals, to listen empathically, to engage others impactfully, to lead initiatives effectively, to bring creativity and enthusiasm to problem-solving, to manage conflict and change carefully and well. The next head of school will build on the current strengths of the School and will work collaboratively and decisively across all constituencies to take on the opportunities and challenges ahead:

Academic rigor: Ensure and extend the School's reputation for academic excellence as a top priority. Continue to build the discipline, encouragement, tools, and capacity for faculty to deliver a stellar academic program, culminating in the International Baccalaureate Diploma. Inspire and promote best-in-class teaching and learning practices and focused professional development on ensuring an impactful and future-leaning and responsive educational program. The first priority is to be recognized as a leader of learning.

Personalized learning: Understand the importance of providing a tailored learning and caring environment for all St. Stephen’s students in addition to inspiring intellectual curiosity and

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academic prowess. Ensure that each student's individual interests, strengths and talents are supported and developed. Identify partnerships, apprenticeships, and connections with Rome that support the balance of a classical education with innovative and personalized teaching practices and projects.

Strategic leadership: Create a shared vision for the identity and future of St. Stephen's, drawing on a successful track record for strategic planning and change leadership. Work closely with the Board, faculty, staff and community to articulate a future-ready direction for St. Stephen's. Build on the School's current strengths and recognize and act upon exciting opportunities and progressive programs that exist for its next chapter. Define and implement the future decisions about the size of the boarding and day populations as well as facilities needs. Align enrollment strategy with the long-term objectives of the School.

Organizational excellence: Align St. Stephen's mission and strategic thinking with the systems and infrastructure needed to accomplish the School's goals. Assess and reorganize roles and responsibilities to maximize School effectiveness, support, and impact. Ensure clear communication and follow through, internally and externally, and efficient organization of the daily operations of the School.

Establish an ethos of continuous improvement with clear lines of accountability for all aspects of the School, from high expectations for teaching and learning and enrichment programming to event scheduling and facilities development.

Cultural competence: Bring deep knowledge of the facets of cultural competence to the School in order to enhance the learning environment and community as a whole. Embed this work genuinely and purposefully across the School. Appreciate the international nature of St. Stephen's and relish the location and purpose of a global community. Love Rome!

Enrollment strategist: Continue to strengthen the School's international admissions outreach programs through strategic enrollment and marketing plans that tell the story of the School's transformative influence on the lives of young people. Align enrollment strategy with the long-term objectives of the School. Attend to the competitive landscape among independent, public, and international schools in Rome.

Top talent recruiter: Attract and retain an outstanding faculty and staff to deliver the promise of the St. Stephen's mission and program. Ensure equitable human resources programs and cultivate a culture of respect and cooperation for both faculty and staff.

Facilities management: Recognize and assure implementation of the facilities needs at the School with particular attention to improved

teaching and community spaces and aligned with the ethos needed for a top-notch boarding program located in central Rome. Attend to additional facilities needs for the whole program with additional emphasis on athletics.

Boarding school

experience: Demonstrate understanding and experience with high-performing boarding programs. Understand the needs of high School and post-graduate students who are living away from their parents and the holistic responsibility of the School to students and families. Develop the programming needed to ensure that the boarding and day students feel part of a "one school" ethos.

Develop a philanthropic

culture: Bring high energy and experience to build excitement and new avenues of support for the development and fundraising programs of the School. Ensure the financial strength to support programmatic initiatives as well as greater socioeconomic diversity at the School.

Social and emotional well-

being: Support and thoughtfully nurture the health and welfare of the school community. Attend to social-emotional well-being for the everyday life of the School and promote wellness programs for students as well as the adults on campus. Lead with warmth, kindness, and respect for this international community. Be a visible and engaging presence in the School's daily life for students, faculty and staff, families, and alumni.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND SCHOOL CULTURE

“The head of school serves as an *ex officio* member of the board, which is a highly diverse and dynamic group of people with first-hand experience at the School. Our board and head of school culture is one of collaboration and productivity where experience, energy and an entrepreneurial spirit are highly valued.” –St. Stephen’s Trustee

The ideal candidate for St. Stephen’s will bring the following mindset, skills, and experience to the position:

- Successful school leadership experience
- Well-tuned cultural sensibilities for an international school in western Europe
- Successful International Baccalaureate or equivalent experience as an international or independent school teacher and administrator
- Track record of driving inspiring and creative academic excellence
- A warm, visible, and outgoing presence across the daily life of the school
- Strong, supportive, and equitable professional relationships with teachers and staff with a listening ear and instinct to tap perspectives for the betterment of the School
- Ability to lead the School with integrity, creativity, and strength
- Familiarity with the needs of a successful boarding program as essential to the School’s identity
- Operational expertise to lead a complex organization in an international capital city
- Ability to form and lead a strong, aligned leadership team
- Demonstrated commitment to cultural competency
- Financial acumen and a successful track record in fundraising
- Attentive to building a strong school-home partnership
- Able to establish fruitful relationships in Rome and the wider European context
- Faithful, involved, and enthusiastic in supporting extracurricular activities and the wholeness of learning
- Be collaborative in style and ensure strong student and teacher voice to build a culture of trust and transparency



APPLICATION PROCESS

St. Stephen’s School, Rome, has retained Coreen Hester, chester@rg175.com, and Mark E. Ulfers, mark.ulfers@rg175.com, from Resource Group 175 to lead the search for the new Head of School.

All interested candidates should apply online at: <https://rg175.com/candidate/signup> and upload application materials: cover letter, a current resume, a writing sample. Additionally, candidates should provide no fewer than 5 references.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Friday, September 30, 2021. All inquiries will be treated confidentially.