

2025
2026

Academic Vision



Maximizing God-given Potential



PORTSMOUTH
CHRISTIAN
ACADEMY
at DOVER



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What is an Academic Vision?

An academic vision is a clear, forward-looking statement that outlines a school's priorities, goals, and values for student learning and development over the course of a year (or longer). It serves as a roadmap that guides everything from classroom instruction to student support, ensuring that all efforts—by teachers, students, and families—are aligned toward shared growth.

At its core, an academic vision answers key questions:

- What kind of growth do we want to see in our students?
- What skills, habits, and values matter most?
- How will we get there—together?

Why It Matters

A well-defined academic vision helps unite teachers, students, and families around common goals. It brings clarity to what's most important, and ensures that every child is growing in ways that are intentional, measurable, and meaningful.

Why Now? Why This Year?

PCA is releasing an Academic Vision this year to bring greater clarity, focus, and unity to our mission. As our school continues to grow—in size, scope, and opportunity—it's more important than ever that students, families, and faculty are aligned around a shared purpose: helping every child grow in the areas that matter most.

This vision gives shape to that purpose. It ensures we're not just reacting to the demands of each day, but intentionally preparing students to grow in knowledge, faith, character, leadership, and life skills. By putting this vision into writing, we're inviting families to join us in that effort—so that together, we can help students thrive both now and in the future.



A Word from the Head of School

Dear Parents,

This year at Portsmouth Christian Academy, our vision is centered on growth—measurable, meaningful growth in every area of your child’s development.

At PCA, our commitment is to guide your child to grow in every way that matters—in wisdom and knowledge, in character and confidence, in faith, creativity, and purpose. This academic vision outlines the six areas we will focus on together this year.

In each area, you’ll see what we commit to as a school, what we ask of you as parents, and what we will challenge your child to do. If you’re a mom or dad reading this, know that we understand each child’s story is different. Some of your children are just beginning their school journey; others are nearing young adulthood.

“We’re preparing your child not just for school, but for life. That means equipping them with the skills, habits, values, and character they will need to lead, serve, and thrive in a rapidly changing world.”

We’re preparing your child not just for school, but for life. That means equipping them with the skills, habits, values, and character they will need to lead, serve, and thrive in a rapidly changing world. Our approach is shaped by a Christian view of life and learning, but we welcome and value every family—whether you are here for faith, for strong academics, for character formation, or for a caring and committed community. We are grateful you are here.

We’ve written this to be clear across all ages, with each division leader providing more detailed context for your child’s stage of growth. This vision will be revisited throughout the year as we celebrate growth, adjust supports, and deepen the partnership that helps your child thrive. At every stage, your child will be learning from teachers and coaches who know them, care about their progress, and call them to grow in confidence, competence, and character.



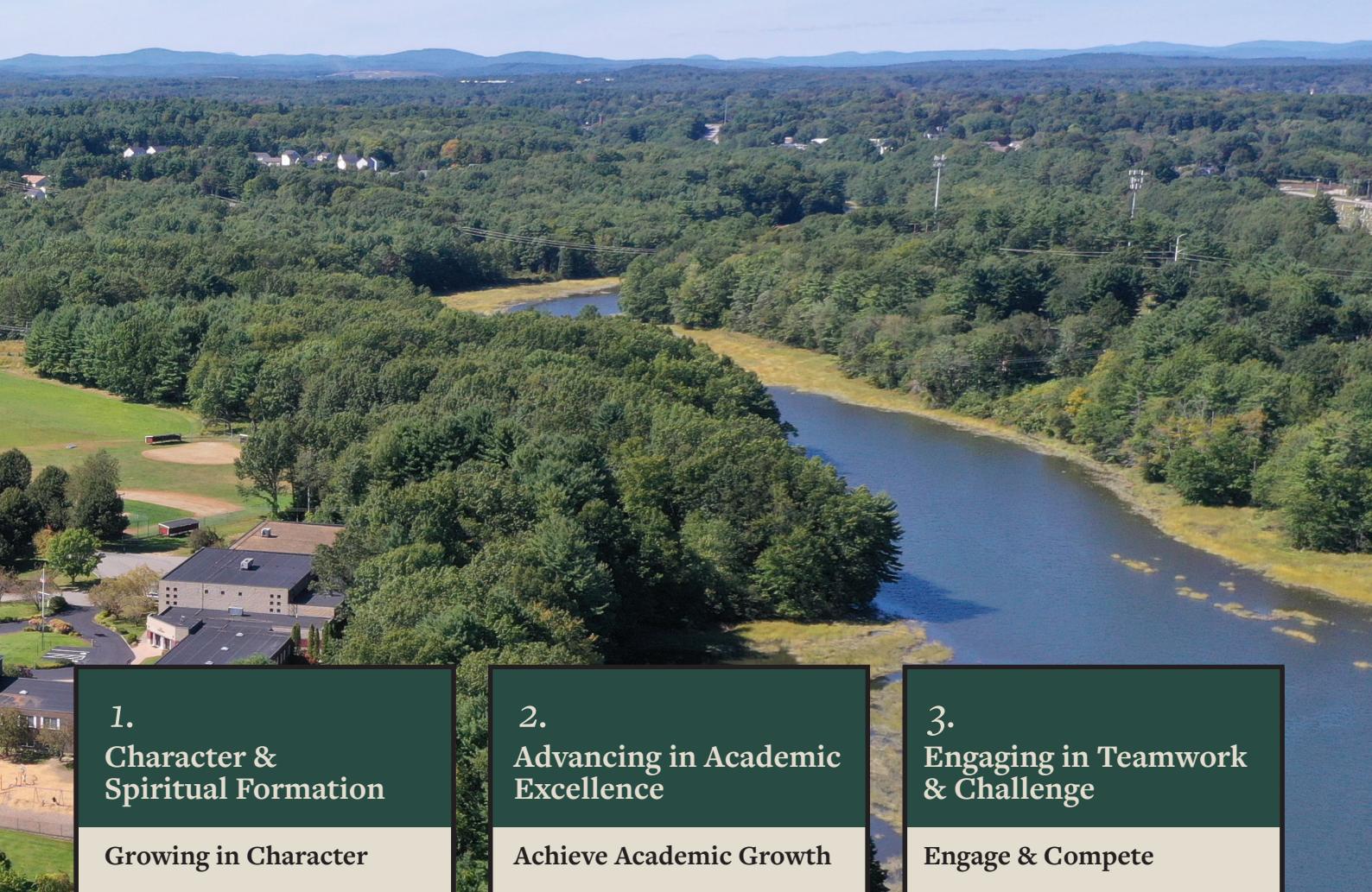
Mike Runey



Academic Vision Summary

Preparing the next generation of Christ-centered graduates.

At Portsmouth Christian Academy, our commitment to your child's growth is grounded in both excellence and purpose. This year, we're focusing on six key areas that reflect our heart as a school: helping students grow in character, advance academically, engage in teamwork and competition, create with purpose, lead with integrity, and use technology wisely while building meaningful relationships. Each area is designed to shape not only what students know, but who they're becoming. With your partnership, we're preparing them not just for school, but for life.



1. Character & Spiritual Formation

Growing in Character

Students will grow in responsibility, maturity, and values like humility, integrity, and compassion. Through chapel, relationships, and daily choices, they'll develop strong character and a deeper understanding of faith.

2. Advancing in Academic Excellence

Achieve Academic Growth

Every student will make meaningful academic growth through intentional instruction, feedback, and support. Whether catching up or accelerating, each child is challenged to engage deeply and reach their potential.

3. Engaging in Teamwork & Challenge

Engage & Compete

Through sports, arts, STEM, and collaborative projects, students will build resilience, confidence, and teamwork. These experiences push them to grow through practice, performance, and shared success.

4. Creating with Purpose

Contribute through Creativity

Each student will complete meaningful projects that reflect curiosity, craftsmanship, and purpose—whether through writing, design, service, or the arts. Creativity becomes a way to learn, express, and give.

5. Leading with Integrity

Lead & Serve

Students will be encouraged to lead—whether in the spotlight or behind the scenes. They'll learn to take initiative, serve others, and influence their community with integrity and purpose.

6. Technology & Real Connection

Use Tech Wisely

Students will use technology responsibly and build habits that support focus, reflection, and real connection. Our goal is to prioritize relationships and growth over distraction.

1. Spiritual and Character Formation

Primary Goal:

Spiritual and character formation are foundational to who we are as people and who your child is becoming. How your child grows in this area sets the tone for every other kind of development. This year, we are focusing especially on Compassionate Community—a core value rooted in God's love for us and Jesus' command that we love our neighbors as ourselves.

Whether helping a peer, responding to correction, or leading by quiet example, your child will have daily opportunities to grow in grace and truth. We aim to help your child grow in personal responsibility, relational maturity, and compassionate engagement with others. This includes learning how to handle disappointment and correction, care for peers, speak honestly and kindly, and reflect a Christlike example in everyday moments.

Our Commitment

We will teach, model, and uphold our core values—this year emphasizing Compassionate Community. Our culture of high expectations and high care will be grounded in biblical truth and God's grace.

We Challenge Your Child

To grow in humility, kindness, courage, honesty, and follow-through—and to learn from setbacks without shame. Whether your child is struggling to share in preschool, finding their voice in the middle years, or navigating complex decisions in high school, we will support them. Moms and dads, we want you to feel seen in these moments too—we are with you. If your child struggles to fit in or stumbles in these areas, know that this is a place of steady encouragement and patient growth. We will walk with them. (Micah 6:8, Galatians 5:22–23). Whether your child is struggling to share in preschool, finding their voice in the middle years, or navigating complex decisions in high school, we will support them. Moms and dads, we want you to feel seen in these moments too—we are with you.. If your child struggles to fit in or stumbles in these areas, know that this is a place of steady encouragement and patient growth. We will walk with them.

We Ask You

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What Could This Look Like?

O1

Example #1

Led a morning devotional in home-room and modeled grace during a peer conflict.

O2

Example #2

Took responsibility for a poor choice and made amends without being prompted.

O3

Example #3

Practiced kindness consistently by including others during lunch and recess.



2. Academic Growth in Literacy, Math, Science and Humanities

Primary Goal:

Maximizing your child's potential is our mission, and we pursue that through academic growth. Our goal is for your child to grow at least one full academic year in core subjects—reading, writing, language, and math—measured by reliable tools like NWEA MAP, PSAT/SAT, rubrics, and classroom performance. This year, we're also renewing our focus on excellent literature. Great books develop vocabulary, comprehension, empathy, and discernment. Across all grades, your child will engage with works that help shape wise, compassionate thinkers.

Whether your child excels or needs more time, we support growth through learning services such as the Mosaic program, tutoring, and enrichment opportunities. These supports promote confidence, independence, and deep understanding for every learner.

Our Commitment

Teachers will use reliable tools and clear rubrics to assess and communicate your child's academic growth. We will support and appropriately challenge every learner.

We Challenge Your Child

To struggle well, think deeply, and grow consistently through hard work and curiosity. For those who are early readers, or for students facing tougher academic challenges in later years, we will work alongside you. Dads and moms, we know how deeply you care about your child's confidence—we do too. If your child has faced challenges or setbacks, we will support their progress and celebrate the growth that is uniquely theirs. (Proverbs 4:7, Philippians 4:8).

We Ask You

Support homework habits, reading routines, and timely communication with teachers. Ask your child about what they're learning and reading.

What Could This Look Like?

O1

Example #1

Starting behind, jumped to grade-level reading fluency by spring.

O2

Example #2

Completed a year-end capstone project in American History on the early settlement period.

O3

Example #3

Revised a persuasive essay three times based on feedback and earned top marks.



3. Play, Challenge, and Teamwork Through Competition and Performance

Primary Goal:

From imaginative play in early years to athletics, mock trial, math clubs, and fine arts, we want your child to take part in joyful and team-based experiences that grow into meaningful challenges. Play lays the foundation for healthy risk-taking and discovery. These experiences develop discipline, resilience, and courage—not just skill. (Ecclesiastes 3:13, 1 Corinthians 9:24–25)

Our Commitment

We will provide opportunities for your child to try new things, work toward a goal, and be part of a team.

We Challenge Your Child

To work hard, support teammates, show up under pressure, and represent Christ with humility and strength. If your child is still finding their place on the team or stage, we will help them grow in confidence and belonging over time. (Hebrews 12:1, Colossians 3:23). If your child is still finding their place on the team or stage, we will help them grow in confidence and belonging over time.

We Ask You

Encourage participation, not perfection. Cheer effort and perseverance. Let your child fail forward.

What Could This Look Like?

O1

Example #1

Captained his or her basketball team and modeled leadership on and off the court.

O2

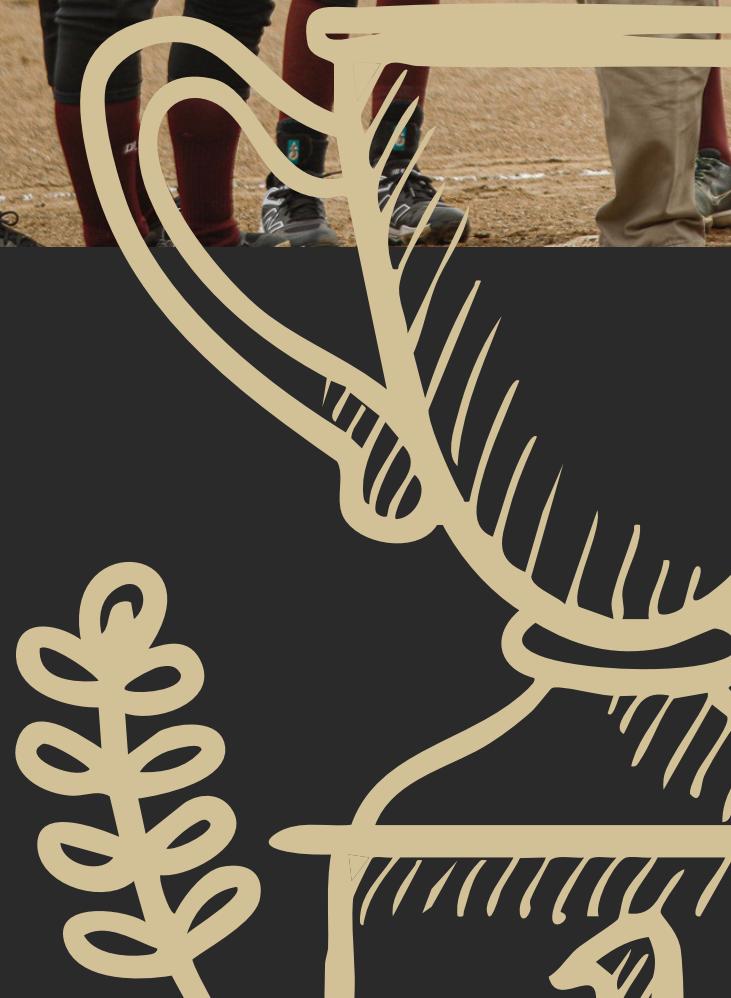
Example #2

Competed in the Upper School math team and placed in the top 10 at regionals.

O3

Example #3

Joins a SeaPerch Team that makes it to Regional Competition.



4. Creation Through Projects, the Arts, and Service

Primary Goal:

Creating is a core to being created in God's image. Your child will create meaningfully throughout the year, largely through projects or collaboration. Collaboration will largely be in the Fine Arts: choir, band, orchestra, and ensembles; many will participate in our drama programs. Others will be inspired by the rich history or literature they're reading—stories that spark imagination, reflection, and thoughtful response.

Through essays, speeches, artwork, or performances, your child will learn to respond to powerful ideas with both creativity and clarity. Many will reflect biblical truth, moral imagination, historical understanding, or gratitude to God.

Our Commitment

We will give students opportunities to write, build, perform, and serve in age-appropriate and thoughtful ways.

We Challenge Your Child

To reflect deeply, create boldly, and see their work as an offering to God and others. For some children, this is where they finally come alive—in song, paint, performance, or service. Moms and dads, if your child blooms here, we celebrate that with you. Every student brings a different kind of creativity—some quiet, some bold—and we want each one to know their voice matters. (Genesis 1:27, Exodus 35:31–35).

We Ask You

Celebrate effort and originality. Ask about what your child is creating and why it matters.

What Could This Look Like?

O1

Example #1

Designed a service-learning poster campaign to raise awareness for a local nonprofit.

O2

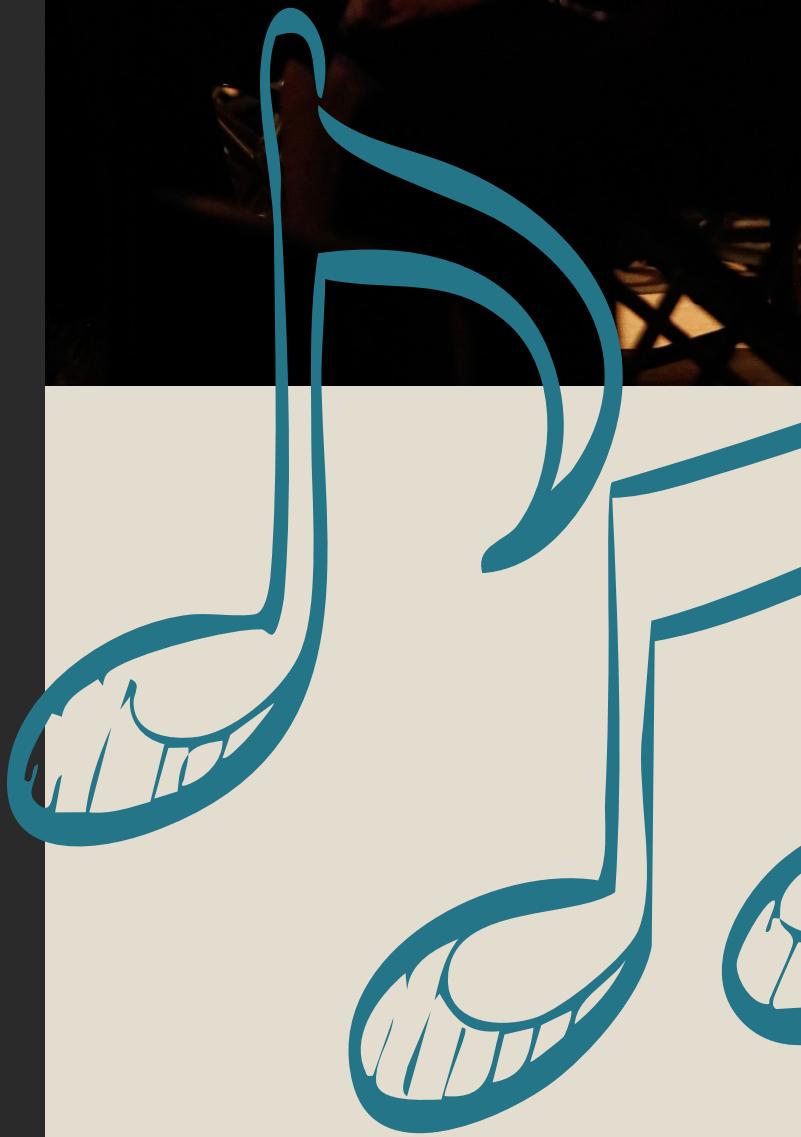
Example #2

Created a painting to be displayed at the spring Visual Arts Showcase.

O3

Example #3

Named to All-State as a musician.



5. Leadership Through Responsibility and Initiative

Primary Goal:

Because leadership develops across your child's life stages, this year your child will be invited to lead in age-appropriate ways. In the early years, that may look like caring for a classmate, completing tasks with integrity, or following through on simple responsibilities. As your child matures, those same seeds grow into initiative, ownership, mentoring, and more visible forms of service—like organizing events, leading prayer, speaking publicly, or supporting team efforts.

Wherever your child is in their journey, we are committed to helping them develop a heart for service, a growing sense of purpose, and the courage to lead with humility. We aim to nurture leadership that lasts—built on self-awareness, thoughtful action, and faithful influence.

Our Commitment

We will offer age-appropriate opportunities for your child to lead and serve, both formally and informally.

We Challenge Your Child

To show up, speak up, and lead by example—not just with confidence, but with integrity. Whether leadership looks like quiet consistency or taking the mic, we want your child to discover the strength of servant-hearted influence. Moms and dads, we'll help them get there. For those still growing into leadership, we commit to walking with them and helping them recognize their influence. (Matthew 20:26–28, 1 Timothy 4:12).

We Ask You

Support your child in taking ownership of their choices and commitments. Let them take the lead sometimes.

What Could This Look Like?

O1

Example #1

Co-led chapel announcements and helped plan a student service project.

O2

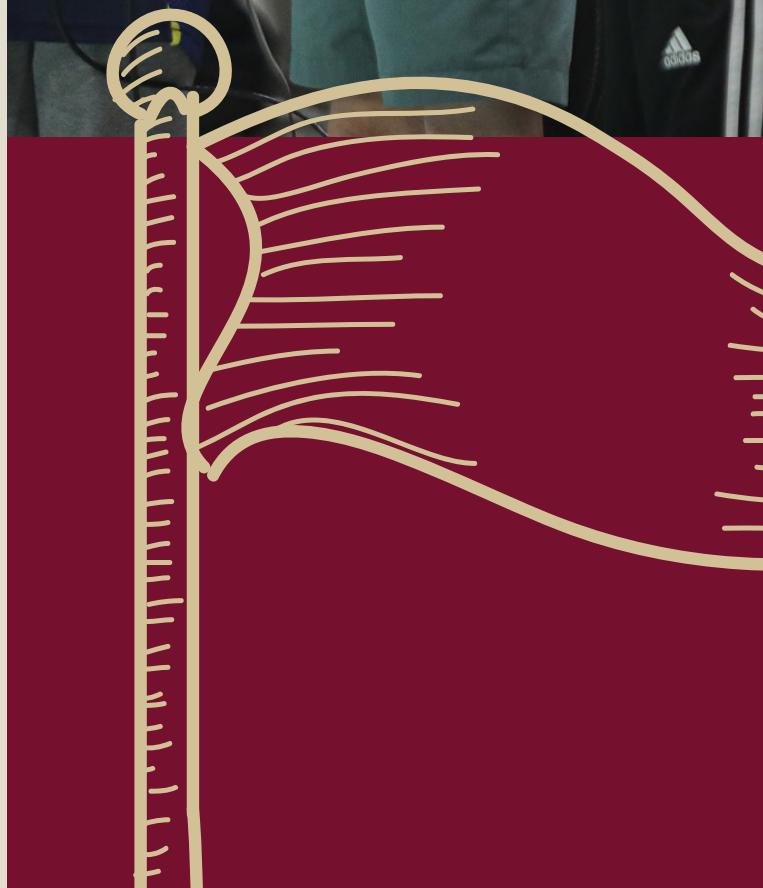
Example #2

Organized a Lower School classroom clean-up effort without being asked.

O3

Example #3

Served as group leader in a science fair project and helped resolve team disagreements.



6. Technology and Attention

Primary Goal:

We aim to develop discernment and habits of presence in a distracted world. This year, we are intentionally teaching students when and how to use technology more wisely—and when to set it aside in favor of in-person learning, paper-based tools, or quiet reflection. We believe that some technology can support learning, but it must never replace thinking. Educational technology can extend access, but should not replace attention.

By cultivating habits that support attention, engagement, comprehension, and long-term memory, we aim to help your children steward their time and focus well. These choices not only enhance learning but also bring greater joy, freedom, and meaningful relationships. For students who feel distracted, anxious, or unsure where they fit, we will patiently help them form healthy habits and feel at home in their learning journey.

And through all of this, we want to guide and form them in a way that trains them up in the way they should go, preparing them for a life of wisdom, service, and purpose.

Our Commitment

We will maintain clear boundaries around device use in class and reinforce habits of focus and presence.

We Challenge Your Child

To value in-person learning, use tech wisely, and grow in self-control. If your child is still building healthy boundaries, or struggles with screen time or focus, we'll guide them with grace and structure. We know you're modeling this at home too—and we thank you for it. (Romans 12:2, Psalm 90:12).

We Ask You

Limit recreational tech use during the week. Model focused attention. Reinforce family rhythms and shared learning.

What Could This Look Like?

O1

Example #1

Managed screen time independently by choosing to read or journal during free periods.

O2

Example #2

Used Canva and Google Slides to design a presentation—without distractions.

O3

Example #3

Set boundaries for phone use during homework and saw better focus and results.



Looking Ahead with Joy and Purpose.

This vision reflects the next faithful step in PCA's mission to honor Christ by educating the whole student. It draws from our long tradition, our current strengths, and the needs we see emerging for your child's future. This includes helping your child read deeply, reflect thoughtfully, and respond meaningfully to great works of literature—a skill that forms both the mind and the heart.

We are a school that takes joy in your child's growth. Thank you for walking with us this year.

This year also brings the opportunity to mark America's 250th anniversary. Across all grade levels, we will celebrate this milestone with age-appropriate projects, reflections, and gratitude for God's care for our nation. We aim to help your child grow in civic understanding and a deeper appreciation for the blessings and responsibilities of freedom.

Looking ahead, our vision is not only for this year, but for the path beyond. A Portsmouth Christian Academy education prepares your child for college, for career, and for calling—so they may enter adulthood not only equipped to succeed, but ready to serve and lead with wisdom, integrity, and faith.

With gratitude and resolve,
Mike Runey
Head of School





**“but those who hope in
the Lord will renew their
strength. They will soar on
wings like eagles; they will
run and not grow weary, they
will walk and not be faint.”**

Isaiah 40:31



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