

Horace Mann School (NY): People-First Admissions

As one of the ten largest independent day schools in the country and regarded as one of the most prestigious in New York City, Horace Mann School serves over 1,800 students from age three through grade 12.

Located in the Riverdale neighborhood of the Bronx, Horace Mann School's vast resource network creates a safe, secure, and caring environment for students, where mutual respect, mature behavior, and the life of the mind can thrive. Students learn to balance individual achievement with a kind and caring community.



Creating a Community of Learners

Jason Caldwell is the Director of Admissions at Horace Mann School. As a Horace Mann alumnus from the Class of 1997, Caldwell believes in his school so much, he sent his two children there, currently in grades five and ten.

"The ultimate goal of admissions is not to just collect application fees and fill seats," said Caldwell. "You are trying to create a community of learners."

To complement these efforts, the team at Horace Mann School has used Ravenna Admit® for nearly a decade. Caldwell praises the human connections it helps build.



"As you build a community of learners, it's essential to communicate clearly with prospective members. Ravenna has really helped us effectively connect with and engage families interested in joining the Horace Mann School community.

Because of the ease with which we're able to communicate with families using Ravenna, it enables us to focus on the human aspects of the job. At the end of the day, keep in mind, 85 percent of the people you meet throughout this process are not getting into your school.

So, it is very important that everyone in the process feels respected, they feel heard, and they feel that they know what's going on. Ravenna helps us be able to treat them as best as we possibly can, no matter the outcome."

With easy, collaborative document review, financial aid integrations, and communication tools, Ravenna has improved relationships with prospective families and helped make decisions more transparent and dignified.

The Ravenna Impact: More Than Just a File

To put these decisions into perspective, Horace Mann School typically receives close to ten applications to each open seat at every grade level. To process this level of interest, the team needs operations to be efficient but accurate.

To simplify workflows and ensure accuracy, Caldwell and his team turned to Ravenna. Since adoption, the Horace Mann School team has streamlined their admissions process in the following ways:

- A self-scheduling function facilitates interviews for the ~1,800 applications each year, greatly reducing back-and-forth between families and staff.
- Event templates which include personalization, school branding, and confetti reduce required set-up time from 1.5 days to 40 minutes—for each of the 11 hosted recruiting events per year.
- Caldwell's favorite feature, communication insights, show admissions staff the moment applicants open their decision letters, helping them to tailor follow-up conversations.

“ We want families and students to be able to say, ‘I’m going to feel seen when I’m here,’” explained Caldwell. “They’re not going to be just a number. ‘I’m not just a file. I’m a person and they see me as a person.’

Changing Lives Together

Over the years, Ravenna has grown from simply a vendor to trusted partner. Caldwell explained how Ravenna took the time to ask for and eventually adopt multiple product suggestions of his.

“Every year, Ravenna comes up with something that makes my life and the life of the team easier,” raved Caldwell. “So, for instance, the ability to take feedback from schools and really incorporate that into the product for years.”

Overall, the Horace Mann School admissions office appreciates the smooth, respectful relationship they’ve built with Ravenna, mirroring their own approach with applicant families.

“**We love the speed at which things take place using Ravenna. Ravenna keeps integrating ways to make both the experience for the applicant and for our administrative team a lot easier.**”

“My great-grandmother was a domestic worker. She worked for a number of years in Riverdale. My grandmother lived in Adams Projects in the South Bronx. My other grandmother lived in Smith Housing. They all dreamed of sending their children to schools like Horace Mann School.

As a result of my own education at Horace Mann School, I've had the opportunity to have my kids grow up in the neighborhood where their ancestors had to work so hard. At the end of the day, this education literally changes lives. And to be a part of that for someone else, knowing the impact, that's a big deal.”

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Strengthen Enrollment.
Support Every Family.**

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