

The Kinkaid School

Houston, United States



Born of a teacher barred from Houston's classrooms for marrying, now the city's oldest coeducational day school on a wooded 65-acre campus.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	68/100
Academic outcomes	75/100
University placement	74/100
Prestige & heritage	76/100
Alumni network	23/100
Facilities	78/100
Transparency	73/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

The Kinkaid School carries an origin story that still matters: it grew from the work of Margaret Kinkaid, a teacher barred from Houston’s public classrooms after marrying, and it has since become the city’s oldest coeducational day school. That history gives the place more backbone than polish. On a ****64.5 acre campus**** with ****1469**** pupils from Pre-K to 12th grade, Kinkaid operates as a full-spectrum American college-preparatory school with AP in the upper years, and it does so at serious scale. This is not an intimate progressive enclave; it is a ***big, established, socially visible*** Houston independent school with the breadth that scale buys: ****24 sports****, 84 visual and performing arts productions, and a school culture that puts academics, sport, arts and conduct on the same table.

What puts Kinkaid on a shortlist is not novelty but range, continuity and institutional weight. Parents looking for a single-school journey from age 3 to 18, in English, on one campus, with strong co-curricular infrastructure and a clear route into four-year colleges will find a coherent proposition here. The school states that 100 per cent of students are accepted to four-year accredited colleges and universities, 62 per cent of faculty hold advanced degrees, and students complete more than 3,000 service hours. NAIS accreditation gives it a recognised independent-school stamp, but the stronger signal is the school’s long-settled place in Houston’s upper tier. The average annual day fee is **\$32,500**, which places Kinkaid in the expensive bracket, though not at the most inflated edge of the US private-school market.

The trade-off is clear. Kinkaid is built for families who want a **structured, high-expectation** environment rather than experimentation, and for children who will use the breadth on offer rather than hide from it. The stated emphasis on honesty, respect, responsibility and kindness reads less like branding than a code for managing a large, ambitious student body. This suits students who are academically capable, busy, resilient and comfortable in a **competitive, high-participation** setting where sport, arts and service carry real weight alongside grades. It is a weaker fit for children who need a small, low-pressure or unconventional school culture. Kinkaid’s appeal rests in its combination of history, scale and finish: a **formidable** Houston day school for families who want substance, options and a strong social as well as academic network.

STRENGTHS

- Founded in 1906, Kinkaid is the oldest independent coeducational school in Greater Houston, giving it a long-established institutional track record.
- Sits on a 40-acre campus in Piney Point Village with separate divisional buildings for Lower, Middle and Upper School, plus dedicated auditorium and gymnasium facilities.
- Admissions are explicitly need-blind, with financial aid decided entirely separately from the admission decision.
- Reports that 100 percent of graduates are admitted to four-year colleges and universities, with recent matriculations including Princeton, Columbia, Harvard and MIT.
- Offers a broad Advanced Placement and Honors track structure across English, history, math and science, alongside a distinctive January Interim Term of electives, foreign study and career shadowing.

TRADE - OFFS

- Tuition is substantial, running from roughly \$30,000 in Lower School to over \$37,000 in Upper School for 2025-26, before fees and one-time new-student charges.
- Entry is effectively limited to a handful of natural intake points (Pre-K, Kindergarten, Sixth Grade, Ninth Grade), which narrows flexibility for families relocating mid-cycle.
- The application process requires the ISEE (or WPPSI for younger entrants), multiple teacher recommendations and an interview, adding logistical hurdles for overseas applicants unfamiliar with the US private-school admissions calendar.
- As a single, large day campus roughly eight miles from central Houston, it lacks a boarding option, requiring day-commute logistics for relocating families without local housing already arranged.

ADMISSIONS

Kinkaid admits at four natural entry points: Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, Sixth Grade and Ninth Grade, with applications submitted one year ahead of expected entry. Requirements include the ISEE (WPPSI for younger applicants), teacher recommendations, transcripts, a student interview and, for some grades, short-answer essays. Deadlines fall in autumn of the preceding year, and admission is described by the school as need-blind, with financial aid assessed independently via SSS by NAIS. Given its academic profile, competition for available places is understood to be significant, particularly at the Ninth Grade entry point.

NOTABLE ALUMNI (2 3)

SPORT: George W. Bush, Raevyn Rogers

MUSIC: Wlabel

DRAMA: Lauren Bush Lauren, Jeff Martin, Carolyn McCormick, Eric Ladin, David Hornsby

VISUAL_ARTS: George W. Bush, Lauren Bush Lauren

LETTERS: Jeb Bush, Lisa Tuttle, John Cassidy, Katherine Howe, Mimi Kilgore

POLITICS: George W. Bush, Jeb Bush, James Baker, Clark Ervin, J. Adam Erel

SCIENCE: Katherine Howe, Robert L. Bradley, Jr.

BUSINESS: George W. Bush, Jeb Bush, Patrick F. Taylor

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_9ea7d147de.