



HEAD OF MIDDLE SCHOOL

Start Date: July 2027

Heathwood Hall Episcopal School

Columbia, South Carolina | heathwood.org



Carney
Sandoe
& ASSOCIATES

MISSION STATEMENT

Heathwood Hall Episcopal School cultivates creative and critical thinking, develops leadership and social skills, and promotes service to others over the pursuit of self-interest through a rich academic and extracurricular program in a supportive community of talented educators and engaged students. Guided by our Core Values, these principles shape not only what we teach, but how we live and learn together.

At a Glance



1951
established



285
Middle School enrollment



27%
students of color



25
total faculty in the MS



77% school-wide
faculty with
advanced degrees



8:1
student-faculty ratio



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OVERVIEW

Just minutes from downtown Columbia, Heathwood Hall Episcopal School occupies 122 acres of wooded wetlands bordered on the west by the Congaree River. Founded in 1951 by the Episcopal Diocese of Upper South Carolina, Heathwood is Columbia's oldest independent school — college-preparatory, co-educational, and grounded in its Episcopal identity and Core Values — enrolling 950 students from age two through twelfth grade. It is accredited by the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS) and has been recognized three times as an "Exemplary" school by the U.S. Department of Education through its Blue Ribbon Schools Program. The 2026–27 school year marks Heathwood's 75th anniversary.

Heathwood, buoyed by a healthy (46%) increase in enrollment during the last decade, has invested heavily in itself in recent years. Under Head of School Chris Hinchey, who has led the School since 2015, the Student Experience Campaign committed more than \$25 million between 2021 and 2025 to athletics, the arts, the chapel, play space, and PEAK, the School's outdoor leadership program. Recent construction includes a 12,000-square-foot expansion of the Athletic Center and a dedicated golf practice facility.

The School is currently renovating “the Pods,” four buildings dating from the School's 1973 move to the South Beltline Blvd. campus that contain 27 classrooms, 16 restrooms, and 3 office complexes and support over 500 students daily.





The next Head of Middle School will lead a division of 285 students in grades 5 through 8. The four-year configuration is deliberate: Heathwood begins the Middle School a year early so students have an extra year to transition, with support scaffolded and independence introduced gradually — changing classes, keeping an agenda, learning to advocate for themselves — before the demands of adolescence arrive in full. Daily advisory, grade-level teaching teams, semester-long related arts rotations, and content-area specialists support that arc; every student takes PEAK classes in outdoor education and leadership on the School's own ropes course, tower, and trails, and each grade travels together annually, with eighth graders traveling to Washington, D.C., on a trip that anchors their Middle School experience. Much of the division's student-development work sits under one framework, Mindful in the Hall, which spans instruction in posture, breath, and body awareness, explicit teaching of executive function and growth mindset, daily advisory, digital citizenship through a partnership with The Social Institute, and health and wellness instruction — and it extends to faculty and parents, so the community shares a vocabulary.

Reporting to the Head of School and serving on the senior leadership team, the Head of Middle School oversees the division's operations, faculty, and program, and serves as its spokesperson to families and prospective families, working in close partnership with the two Middle School Deans, who coordinate grade-level teaching teams and student support services.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The next Head of Middle School will inherit a healthy division and the room to be ambitious with it — real scope to shape program, culture, and people across grades 5 through 8, supported by the two Middle School Deans and an experienced senior leadership team.

Championing the Middle School Experience. The community wants a leader who understands adolescence deeply — the energy, unpredictability, emotions, mistakes, and growth that characterize these years — and who will advocate for the Middle School within the larger institution. Faculty, parents, and students alike asked for a Head who is present in classrooms and hallways, who knows every student by name and something else about them, and who is relatable to children while holding clear boundaries. That means supporting faculty and appreciating their daily work, and sustaining an approach to students that pairs high expectations with developmentally appropriate patience, guidance, accountability, and genuine opportunities to recover from mistakes.

Strengthening Structure, Consistency, and Intentionality. Significant progress has already been made around the Honor Code, civility, respect, discipline, advisory, communication, and expectations. Faculty voiced a strong desire for a consistent, transparent discipline framework — clear expectations, tracked and applied evenly. The next Head should build on that foundation, particularly by developing what the team called "organic structure": enough clarity, routines, and shared expectations to help adolescents thrive without making the division overly rigid. Continuing to develop the daily advisory program, which the Deans invested substantial summer work in shaping, will be central to this effort.



Advancing Academic and Programmatic Vision. The division values being an academically strong Middle School, but the community was candid that the next stage of leadership requires moving beyond effective day-to-day management toward a clear, compelling longer-term vision. The incoming Head will help define what academic excellence should look like for adolescents at Heathwood Hall, lead thoughtfully through the cross-divisional curriculum review, and help faculty understand the rationale behind future programmatic changes.

Strengthening One-School Collaboration. There is an opportunity to make the Middle School feel both distinctly itself and connected to the broader School. Schoolwide collaboration will allow for greater coherence in curriculum, transitions, expectations, and communication across divisions. The next Head should communicate effectively "vertically and horizontally," build strong partnerships with other division heads and school leaders, and bring the consistency that could materially strengthen these institutional relationships.

Planning Strategically for Growth, Space, and Technology. Several practical questions will require strategic, vision-connected leadership: Middle School enrollment and optimal size, particularly with grades nearing capacity (seventh grade is full; eighth grade is nearly so); replacement of lockers and related space constraints; a possible transition from iPads to laptops; and opportunities to reclaim protected green space for student use. The next Head will also participate in the emerging strategic plan and the accreditation process now beginning, ensuring these operational decisions connect to a coherent vision for the Middle School experience.

Sustaining Stability and Building Durable Trust. The next Head will need to follow through on commitments, communicate transparently, and develop enough relational trust to navigate the difficult conversations the role inevitably requires. The incoming Head will articulate the "why" behind decisions, invite questions and candid feedback, and ensure that even those who disagree understand how each choice serves students, supports faculty, and advances the division's long-term health.



\$4.4M
financial aid
awarded



\$7M
endowment



122 acres
campus size

QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

The Head of Middle School will bring an impressive record as an educator and community builder who has previously served in roles of considerable responsibility. Competitive candidates will offer most or all of the following qualifications and qualities:



Professional Qualifications:

- Knowledge of current and evolving best practices in Middle School curriculum and pedagogy;
- Fluency across the developmental range of grades 5 through 8, including the particular needs of fifth graders entering a departmentalized program for the first time;
- The foundational skills necessary to lead and develop grade-level teaching teams, including providing feedback, coaching, and support with an eye toward continuous improvement;
- Demonstrated skill in partnering with families, including the judgment to handle sensitive situations involving children and parents;
- Experience hiring, supporting, leading, and retaining faculty;
- Experience working with an admission office to recruit and retain mission-appropriate students;
- Understanding of the curricular and co-curricular dimensions of a complex Middle School and particular alignment with Heathwood Hall's mission;
- Strong evidence of a personal and professional commitment to belonging and a nuanced understanding of how that work is lived out in an inclusive classroom and school community;
- Classroom teaching experience.



Personal Attributes

- The attentiveness and operational discipline to manage the daily needs of a division of 285 students, in close partnership with the two Middle School Deans;
- Tremendous affection for Middle Schoolers and the adults who support them, and the ability to make thoughtful decisions that center the best interests of students;
- Exceptional interpersonal skills and the ability to communicate effectively and persuasively across a wide range of audiences, vertically and horizontally;
- The willingness to serve as the spokesperson and face of the division, articulating its programs, expectations, and strengths to parents, colleagues, and prospective families;
- A visible, accessible, present leadership style — known in classrooms and hallways, and reliable in following through on what they say;
- The ability to articulate vision and strategy, the tactical skills to manage the systems and processes necessary to implement it, and the organizational fluency to manage multiple streams of information and respond to situations as they emerge;
- The curiosity, confidence, and humility to advocate for new ideas, invite disagreement, and welcome feedback, engaging in challenging conversations with grace and leading with a spirit of "yes, and";
- A bias for action alongside a joyful spirit and sense of humor; and
- High emotional intelligence, including awareness of one's strengths and the willingness to welcome and incorporate feedback in a spirit of continuous reflection and improvement.

LEARN MORE

- [School Website](#)
- [School History](#)
- [Episcopal Tradition](#)
- [Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging](#)
- [Explore the Middle School](#)
- [School Profile](#)





TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;
- A list of five professional references with name, relationship, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate's permission) to:

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