

ASHLEY HALL

FOUNDED 1909

LOWER SCHOOL DIRECTOR

Start Date: July 2027

Ashley Hall

Charleston, South Carolina | ashleyhall.org

Carney Sandoe & Associates

MISSION STATEMENT

Since 1909, the mission of Ashley Hall has been to educate girls and young women to be independent, ethically responsible, and prepared to meet the challenges of their world with confidence.

At a Glance

1909
established

771
total enrollment

235
Lower School enrollment

132
total faculty

47
Lower School faculty

81%
faculty with advanced degrees

16
class sections in the LS



OVERVIEW

Founded in 1909, Ashley Hall is a premier independent school in the Southeast for girls and young women, located in historic downtown Charleston, South Carolina. The day school enrolls 771 students. Its coeducational, Reggio-inspired Early School serves children ages 2–4. Its all-girls program runs from Kindergarten through grade 12 across the Lower School (grades K–4), Middle School (grades 5–8), and Upper School (grades 9–12). Ashley Hall is dedicated to deep learning, healthy development, high achievement, and community impact, and students are known and cared for as individuals. The 2024 SAIS visiting team described "a spirited village of learners who clearly love the school they call home." Faculty and staff speak of a supportive community and close bonds among colleagues and students. They also describe a culture that is rooted in tradition yet open to new ideas.

Ashley Hall's recent trajectory is one of steady growth and renewed momentum. Dr. Anne Weston '73 is the school's sixth Head of School and its first alumna leader. Under her leadership, now in its fifth year, the school has strengthened its financial and operational foundation, built a culture of philanthropy, and addressed deferred maintenance. Enrollment has grown steadily over the past decade, with the Early School and Lower School the largest areas of growth. Ashley Hall is also building an International Baccalaureate continuum. The Lower School achieved full authorization as an IB World School for the Primary Years Programme (PYP) in late 2024. The Middle School is working towards Middle Years Programme authorization, and the Upper School is planning for the Diploma Programme.

The new Lower School Director will succeed Lower School Director Polly Kronsberg, who brings 26 years of institutional knowledge to the role. The search comes at a moment of strength—for the Lower School and Ashley Hall as a whole—and Polly's successor will inherit a talented, trusted team and a division with significant momentum. Reporting to Assistant Head of School for Teaching & Learning Naa-Adei Kotey and working closely with the three other division directors and Head of School Dr. Anne Weston, the Lower School Director will honor the division's traditions while guiding its next chapter. The incoming Director will lead with warmth, joy, and confidence, as a visible daily presence in classrooms and hallways and in close partnership with current and prospective parents.



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The next Director will find the following opportunities and challenges:

Leading Faculty Thoughtfully Through Change
The Lower School has embraced significant change in recent years, including the move to the IB Primary Years Programme in late 2024, the implementation of a new eight-day rotating schedule, and a new literacy curriculum (Arts & Letters). The next Director will continue to seek faculty input in decision-making as they further refine the daily schedule; develop more specific systems, policies, and procedures for students and families; and continue the upward trajectory of an academic program rooted in inquiry. The Director will use data to tell the powerful story of student growth and wellbeing and as a framework to guide academic and programmatic change. While holding the priorities of the full school, the Lower School Director will support and advocate for the specific needs of the Lower School as Ashley Hall continues to grow and evolve.



Coaching, Growth, and Retaining Excellent Teachers
The Lower School teachers and administrators are a close-knit team, and faculty are used to being trusted as professionals. The Director will build on that foundation through a visible, consistent presence in classrooms, developing a culture of observation with constructive feedback, formal goal setting, and meaningful follow-up. Ashley Hall offers a strong three-year onboarding process for new faculty, and the Director will extend mentoring and growth beyond those first years. Professional development has centered on the IB in recent years; the Director will build on that spirit of continuous improvement to include additional priorities, such as innovative pedagogy, the evolving use of technology, differentiation, and cultural competency.

Partnering with Current and Prospective Families
Lower School families are engaged and hold high expectations. The Director will know the Lower School students as individuals and will serve as a strong, transparent, and consistent communicator with parents. The Director plays an integral role in Lower School admission, meeting with each touring family and partnering with the Director of Enrollment Management to finalize Lower School admission decisions. For both current and prospective families, the Director serves as a trusted source of expertise around the development of young children, the Lower School's academic and co-curricular programs, and the school as a whole.

Honoring Tradition and Engaging the Community
The Lower School is rooted in beloved traditions, including the Kindergarten May Day celebration, Lower School Field Day, and the Big Sister + Little Sister mentorship program. The community values both its history and its openness to new ideas. The next Director will navigate those traditions with care while bringing a fresh perspective. The Director will be a visible presence in the school, fully immersed in the life of the school and taking full advantage of the rich culture of Charleston.



$2.3M
financial aid awarded

$15.5M
endowment

$27M
annual operating budget

4 acre
urban campus

QUALIFICATIONS & PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES



Professional Qualifications

The ideal candidate will be an experienced educator and visionary leader with teaching and leadership experience in a Lower School setting and will also hold:

- A deep understanding of child development and appreciation for the opportunities of a multi-division school for girls;
- A demonstrated ability to translate mission and educational vision into the daily life of a school, using shared values and student outcomes to guide program, pedagogy, culture, decision-making, and adult practice;
- A pedagogical philosophy that aligns with the IB Primary Years Programme's transdisciplinary, constructivist approach and deep understanding of Lower School best practices in curriculum and instruction;
- Strong evidence of a professional commitment to building and nurturing an inclusive community in which belonging is advanced and fostered;
- A successful record of recruiting, developing, evaluating, and retaining exceptional faculty and staff, while fostering a culture of growth, collaboration, accountability, and continuous improvement;
- Comfort and experience serving as the division's "chief storyteller" to both internal and external audiences; and
- Financial acumen and facility using data to inform decisions.



Leadership Style and Personal Qualities

The next Lower School Director will be a genuine, grounded leader who brings:

- An approachable, authentic presence and excitement to engage visibly amidst the busy rhythms of school life;
- An ease in connecting with students, teachers and parents alike, modeling the building of strong relationships as crucial to creating a happy and thriving learning community;
- Strategic thinking and creative problem solving, balancing innovation with thoughtful implementation and change management;
- The curiosity, integrity, emotional intelligence, humility, and self-awareness to know what one stands for, understand the impact of one's choices on others, advocate for new ideas, invite disagreement, and engage in challenging conversations with grace; and
- A love of children, joyful spirit, sense of humor, contagious positive energy, and infectious enthusiasm for Lower School.

LOWER SCHOOL ACADEMICS

Digital Versions of Ashley Hall's magazine Perspectives:

- 2026 Issue | page 30, "Reading to Learn"
- 2025 Issue | page 36, "Following the Winds of Purpose: Ashley Hall's Path to IB Excellence
- 2024 Issue | page 36, "Rewriting the Ways We Teach"

We Are Ashley Hall Podcast Series

- Episode #1: Ashley Hall and the International Baccalaureate



LEARN MORE

- School Website
- 2026-27 Lower School Admission Brochure
- All-Girls' Education
- Supporting the Whole Student
- About Charleston, South Carolina





TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence and to apply by submitting the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing interest in this position
- A current résumé

As the process moves forward, selected candidates may be asked to submit:

- Writing samples specific to this search
- 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)

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