



Ambleside  
School



**Director of Advancement**

**Ambleside School**  
McLean, VA

## Introduction

Ambleside School (Ambleside) is seeking a visionary, relational, and spiritually grounded leader to serve as its Director of Advancement. Founded in 1999, Ambleside is a Christ-centered K-8 school in McLean, Virginia, committed to providing a Charlotte Mason “living education.” In partnership with families, the school guides and empowers each student to think with the mind of Christ and to author a life rich in relationship to God, self, others, ideas, and all of creation. This enduring mission informs every decision the school makes and undergirds its academics, spiritual life, and community life. Through a broad and rich curriculum grounded in living books, daily spiritual rhythms, and a non-competitive atmosphere that cultivates habits of attention and diligence, Ambleside prepares students not only for future academic success but for thoughtful Christian discipleship and lifelong learning.

The Director of Advancement reports directly to the Head of School and works closely with the Board of Trustees and senior leadership. The Director is responsible for leading the school’s fundraising, donor cultivation, advancement communications, and community partnerships. This leader must be an effective relationship builder who can manage strategy, systems, and people with professionalism and warmth. As such, he or she must be skillful in collaborating with leadership, trustees, faculty, parents, alumni, and donors – producing consistently high-quality work while inspiring others to invest in and advance the mission of Ambleside School. As Ambleside continues to grow in influence and impact, the Director of Advancement will play a critical role in strengthening the partnerships and philanthropic support that sustain its mission.

## Mission Statement

*Ambleside School is a Christ-centered school committed to providing a Charlotte Mason “living education.” In partnership with the family, we guide and empower each student to think with the mind of Christ and to author a life rich in relationship to God, self, others, ideas, and all of creation.*



## Three Pillars of Education

Charlotte Mason’s three pillars of education shape and guide every aspect of life at Ambleside, informing both the classroom experience and the broader school community.

**Atmosphere** – A nurturing, joyful learning environment matters deeply. Teachers cultivate a calm, beautiful, and relational space where students feel secure, respected, and inspired to explore ideas. The emotional and relational “thought-environment” supports curiosity and delight in learning rather than stress or distraction.

**Discipline** – Education includes intentional formation of habits of mind and life, such as attentiveness, perseverance, careful effort, and orderly work. These habits serve students well beyond specific subjects or grades, shaping moral character and lifelong learning.

**Life** – True learning engages the whole person – mind, heart, body, and soul. Students are nourished with rich ideas from living books and creation itself, fostering a love of learning that is vibrant, meaningful, and enduring.

## Statement of Beliefs

We believe that a Christ-centered school is a school that acknowledges the sovereignty of God, the authority of the Word of God, the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit in all of life. It does not seek to divide life or education into spiritual and secular compartments, but rather acknowledges that all truth is God's truth and all learning is an effort to relate to God, self, others, and the created world. It values each student as created by God, with gifts to be strengthened, weaknesses to be overcome, and responsibilities to be carried out. It respects the system of authority that God has established and calls parents and teachers to partner in the training and education of students. It calls students to submit to the loving mentors that God has provided for this purpose. As a Christ-centered school, we hold to the following foundational beliefs:

1. The Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is revered as the inspired, infallible, and fully authoritative Word of God in all of its teaching. Faithful adherence to the teaching of Scripture is essential in the life of a Christian. (2 Tim 3:15-17); (2 Pet 1:20-21).

2. God, who is eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is the creator of all truth and governs all things according to the purpose of His will. (Matt 28:18-20); (1 Cor 8:6); (Isaiah 46:10).

3. God has created people uniquely, knows them fully, and desires to have a personal, vibrant relationship with them, but they are separated from Him because of their sinfulness. (Gen 1:27); (Isaiah 59:2); (Rom 5:12); (Rom 3:23); (Rom 6:23); (John 3:16).

4. God the Son came to earth in human form, fully God and fully man, to live a sinless life, to be crucified, and to rise again from the dead as the only ransom for sinners and the only mediator between God and mankind. (John 1:1, 14); (2 Cor 5:21); (Isaiah 53:4-5); (Matt 20:28); (1 John 4:10); (1 Cor 15:3-4); (1 Tim 2:5-6). God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through His Son, Jesus Christ. (Rom 10:9-10).

5. All people will be resurrected, either unto eternal life with God or eternal separation from Him. (Phil 3:18-21) (Matt 25:46).

6. Upon our acknowledgement of our own sinfulness and acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf, the Holy Spirit continues the work of regeneration, including conviction of sin, new birth, and growth in Christian maturity. (Rom 4:5); (John 16:13); (John 3:3); (John 14:26).

7. God surrounds us with other people to encourage, exhort, and correct us. He calls us to spiritual unity as believers in Jesus Christ, across racial, gender, and socio-economic lines. (Heb 10:24-25); (Eph 4:1-5); (Gal 3:28).

*This Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the final source of our shared beliefs as an Ambleside community. For purposes of Ambleside School's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Board of Trustees is Ambleside School's interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application to the Statement of Faith.*





**Ambleside**  
**AT A GLANCE**

FOUNDED  
**1999**

MAX STUDENTS  
PER CLASS  
**16**

**16**  
SUBJECTS  
TAUGHT PER  
WEEK

**60**  
HOURS PER  
YEAR IN GOD'S  
WORD

**30**  
COMMUNITY  
CHAPELS

FIELD  
STUDIES  
**18**

**Philosophy of Education**

Ambleside's educational philosophy springs from the ideas of British educator Charlotte Mason, who affirmed that children are born persons with inherent dignity and vast potential. Her principles shape not only what students learn, but how they learn and how they relate to God, others, and the world around them.

At its heart, Ambleside's philosophy views education as relational and life-forming. Students are invited into meaningful relationships – with God, self, others, ideas, and creation – through a curriculum that is broad, spiritually rich, and intellectually serious. In a non-competitive atmosphere that values growth over comparison, teachers cultivate habits of attention, diligence, and thoughtful work, helping students grow toward their full God-given potential without limiting them by perceived strengths or weaknesses.

True to Mason's belief that real learning is "vital, dynamic, and living," Ambleside classrooms are rich with ideas that provoke wonder, thoughtful dialogue, and engagement with great books and concepts. Students learn not just to absorb information but to think, question, and grow – experiencing both the delight and the necessary struggle that accompany meaningful learning.

## A Living Education

At Ambleside, a “Living Education” reflects the conviction that the mind is a spiritual organism designed to be nourished by rich ideas. Rooted in Charlotte Mason’s philosophy, students engage directly with living books – works by original authors that communicate knowledge with depth and vitality – rather than diluted texts or fragmented information.

Through the practice of narration, students retell and process ideas in their own words, strengthening attention, comprehension, and clarity of thought. Lessons follow a thoughtful rhythm, balancing rigorous academic study with beauty, reflection, and wonder.

Central to this model is the intentional formation of habits—attentiveness, perseverance, careful execution – that equip students not merely for academic success, but for a lifetime of meaningful learning and faithful engagement with the world.

Ambleside also embraces the belief that both struggle and delight are essential parts of learning, and teachers create classrooms that balance challenge with joy, encouraging students to persevere with difficult material while celebrating the satisfaction of understanding.

In sum, a Living Education at Ambleside equips students with intellectual stamina, spiritual insight, and disciplined habits – preparing them not just for academic success, but for lives of thoughtful engagement with God, others, and the world.

## Academics

At Ambleside School, academics are rooted in a Christ-centered, Charlotte Mason-inspired Living Education that nurtures the whole child – mind, heart, and spirit. Classes are intentionally small, fostering strong student-teacher relationships and personalized attention.

The curriculum is intentionally broad and rich, inviting students to engage deeply with great ideas, excellent literature, and firsthand encounters with God’s world. Across all grade levels, from Kindergarten through Middle School, students are immersed in more than sixteen areas of study that balance intellectual discovery with disciplined skill development.

Central to the Ambleside approach is a seamless integration of faith and learning: students interact daily with Scripture, great works of art and music, and foundational texts that foster thoughtful reflection and joy in learning. Teachers create a nurturing atmosphere where habits of attention, careful observation, and thoughtful work flourish, and where gaining knowledge and producing quality work are intrinsically rewarding.

Across grade levels, the curriculum rhythm interweaves inspirational subjects such as poetry, nature study, and composition with disciplinary work like mathematics, grammar, and science, keeping students engaged and mentally refreshed throughout the day. This balanced structure supports not only academic growth but also a lifelong appetite for discovery and wisdom.

Assessment at Ambleside looks beyond traditional grading, emphasizing meaningful demonstrations of understanding through oral responses, written narration, and end-of-term essay examinations. Parents partner with teachers through regular conferences and detailed “Reports of Growth” that highlight both student strengths and areas for continued development.

In all they do, Ambleside students are encouraged to think deeply, live faithfully, and apply their learning with integrity—preparing them for future academic endeavors and a life devoted to thoughtful service and Christian discipleship.



**Area's of Study:**

- Art
- Bible
- Citizenship
- Music Appreciation
- Composition
- Dictation
- Froebel Manipulatives
- Geography
- Grammar
- Handwork
- Handwriting
- History
- Literature
- Mathematics
- Nature Study
- Phonics and Reading
- Picture Study
- Poetry
- Read-Aloud
- Recitation
- Science
- Singing and Music
- Spanish
- Tales and Fables / Myths and Legends
- Shakespeare



## Spiritual and Student Life

At Ambleside School, student life is intentionally shaped by spiritual formation, community engagement, and Christ-centered rhythms that extend beyond the classroom. The school day and year are woven together with opportunities that help students grow not only academically but also in character, faith, and relationships.

A typical day begins with warm greetings and a communal morning assembly, where students sing hymns and share a quiet time of prayer—setting a tone of reverence, gratitude, and unity. Throughout the day, learners of all ages interact graciously with one another and with teachers, practicing courtesy, kindness, and mutual respect as part of school culture.

Beyond daily life, Ambleside hosts a variety of special events and community gatherings designed to strengthen spiritual life and community bonds. Regular weekly chapels bring the school together for worship, and seasonal celebrations like Lessons and Carols invite students to perform Scripture readings and music with family and friends. Parent-focused events such as Coffee with Charlotte Mason and Ambleside Evenings build community while offering spiritual and educational enrichment for families. Other traditions, including the Shakespeare Festival, integrate artistic expression with communal celebration, bringing together students, parents, and faculty in shared experiences.

Life at Ambleside also emphasizes peer support and leadership. Older students routinely serve the community—whether helping younger classmates with routines at the end of the day or participating in safety patrol—as part of forming responsible, compassionate citizens. Friendly conflict resolution, collaborative play, and guided conversations around lunch further nurture social and emotional growth.

Taken together, daily life and annual events reflect Ambleside's commitment to forming students who are spiritually grounded, socially engaged, and prepared to live out their faith with integrity and joy.



## Faculty and Leadership

Teachers at Ambleside are creative, thoughtful, engaged learners with broad interests and expansive educational knowledge. They enjoy ideas, read regularly, and are passionate about faith and learning. They pursue relationship with Christ and are called to shepherd their students spiritually, as well as academically. All Ambleside teachers complete training in the Charlotte Mason approach through Ambleside Schools International, with whom the school is formally affiliated.

Ambleside is led by Kristin Nowak, a veteran educator with deep expertise in Charlotte Mason pedagogy and a steadfast commitment to Christ-centered leadership. Recognized by Ambleside Schools International as one of the top teachers in its 25-school association, she has served at Ambleside for eight years as a beloved middle school teacher and leader of cherished traditions such as the “First Fridays” program. She holds degrees from George Mason University and George Washington University, maintains Virginia teaching certification, and faithfully serves as a deacon in her church.



## Accreditation and Governance

Ambleside is associated with Ambleside Schools International, an organization which monitors and supports other schools similar to Ambleside in the United States and abroad. The quality of instruction and integrity of the Ambleside curriculum are evaluated annually. Ambleside School is accredited by the Association of Christian Teachers and Schools, whose accreditation process has been approved by the Virginia Council of Private Education as authorized by the Virginia State Board of Education. Ambleside School is also accredited by Accreditation International and the National Council for Private School Accreditation.

Ambleside School is a non-profit corporation, managed by a Board of Trustees, which includes the Head of School as a non-voting member. The board has a three-fold responsibility of fiscal management, spiritual oversight, and operational accountability. Trustees are elected by the Board and meet once a month.

The Board is responsible for ensuring that the School is operating in accordance with its mission statement. It is also responsible for ensuring the long-term viability of the School, and for hiring and overseeing the performance of the Head of School. The day-to-day operations of the School are the responsibility of the Head of School.



## The Position - Director of Advancement

The Ambleside School Director of Advancement is a follower of Jesus Christ with a heart for children. The Director leads the school's advancement efforts with professionalism, joy, and a commitment to our Charlotte Mason philosophy. This role focuses on donor cultivation and stewardship, fundraising strategy, advancement communications, and building partnerships that strengthen and sustain the mission of Ambleside School. The Director works closely with the Directors of Operations and Finance and reports to the Head of School.

### Personal Qualities

Spiritually mature, relational, teachable, organized, mission-driven, excellent communicator, strategic thinker, and committed to Ambleside's Christ-centered and Charlotte Mason identity.

### Key Responsibilities

#### Mission & Community Presence

- Represent Ambleside's Christ-centered, Charlotte Mason identity with warmth and professionalism.
- Build relationships with families, churches, local organizations, and community partners.
- Share mission-focused stories that connect supporters to the school.

#### Advancement Strategy & Donor Development

- Develop and execute a multi-year advancement plan with annual fundraising targets.
- Build and maintain a structured donor pipeline for new, recurring, and major donors.
- Cultivate and steward donors through regular rhythms such as handwritten thank-you notes, quarterly impact updates, and an annual donor report.
- Maintain a portfolio of donor relationships with planned touchpoints.
- Support capital or strategic initiatives in collaboration with consultants.
- Strengthen alumni engagement through communication and events.

#### Development Operations

- Research and manage grants.
- Maintain the donor database (Bloomerang) with accurate reporting.
- Track and report key advancement metrics, including donor retention, recurring giving, major donor engagement, and grant progress.
- Produce stewardship materials, including updates and impact stories.
- Coordinate passive fundraising programs.

#### Community & Alumni Engagement

- Oversee alumni communication, chapel, and annual alumni events.
- Build partnerships with churches, ministries, businesses, and community groups.
- Support parent involvement through volunteer teams and ambassadors.

#### Fundraising Events & Campaigns

- Lead key fundraising events: Ambleside Experience (spring) and Golf Tournament (fall).
- Oversee the Annual Fund, monthly giving, and the Christmas Campaign.
- Create and manage an annual communications calendar for appeals, stewardship, and advancement updates.
- Manage advancement communications, marketing, and stewardship follow-up.

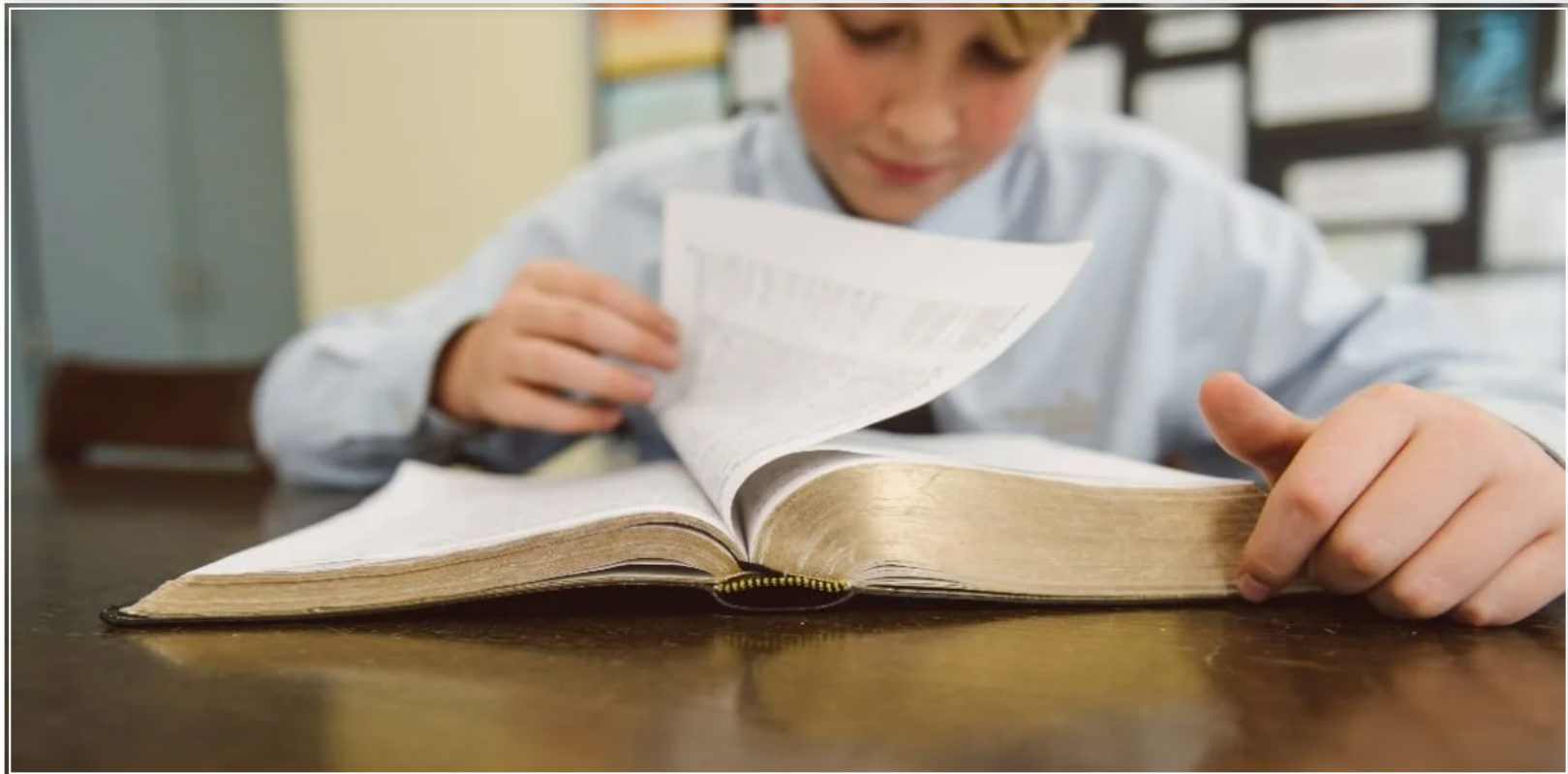
#### Leadership, Collaboration & Administrative Support

- Partner with the Head of School and Board of Trustees on fundraising and strategy.
- Collaborate with Operations and Finance to align advancement and financial planning.
- Assist with school operations as needed (e.g., break coverage, greeting, carpool).

### Qualifications

**Essential:** Bachelor's degree, strong communication and organizational skills, donor management software competency, alignment with Charlotte Mason philosophy, participation in ASI mentoring, and clear background checks

**Preferred:** Master's degree and 3-5 years of advancement or fundraising experience.



## Search Process

The Ambleside School search is underway to appoint a new Director of Advancement who will begin as soon as a suitable candidate is identified. The hiring decision will be made by the Head of School. Ambleside has engaged NextEd to provide support. Compensation will be competitive with comparable private schools in the area.

All candidates will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and discretion. Interested candidates should apply online through [NextEd's website](#). The online application will include specific personal information and the following required uploaded documents:

- Interest cover letter
- Resume
- Statement of personal Christian faith

Candidates who are invited to continue in the process as semifinalists will have a second round of data collection to include other information deemed important to the search. Semifinalists will also participate in a one-way recorded video interview.

### COMMUNICATION

Please direct all inquiries to:

**Talin Unruh**  
Talent Acquisition Manager  
720.822.0505  
[talin@next-ed.com](mailto:talin@next-ed.com)

[CLICK HERE TO APPLY](#)