

## Why be an Ambleside Member School?

A school should become an Ambleside Member School if the school's leadership recognizes that:

- The application of Charlotte Mason's philosophy and methods are essential to providing students with an optimal education.
- The school would benefit greatly from ASI's expertise and experience necessary for training school principals, training teachers, and developing curriculum and curriculum resources in a manner that optimally supports Charlotte Mason's philosophy.
- Long-term faithfulness to the consistent application of Charlotte Mason's philosophy requires external accountability from an organization that exists to foster that philosophy. (The cultural pressures to regress to the "traditional" form of education are enormous. New board members, new principals, and new teachers will likely have been trained in "traditional" school methods. It is very difficult not to become like every other Christian school.)
- Being a part of a movement rather than a solitary school has great advantages both to its own teachers, students, and parents but to the broader work of using education as a tool for building Christ's kingdom.
- Being a part of a movement, any movement, requires giving up a measure of autonomy. While ASI is available for consultation, each local school operates independently in areas of finances, business strategy, target community, etc. However, ASI member schools are subject to ASI for standards of curriculum, application of Charlotte Mason's pedagogy (including school atmosphere), and teacher training.

## ASI's Relationship with Member Schools

### Services and Expectations

Ambleside Schools International partners with individual local schools, building a global network of schools and educators that serve students and parents by:

- Faithfully following the principles of Jesus Christ.
- Consistently applying the pedagogical insights of British educator, Charlotte Mason.

The most valuable services ASI provides are:

- Training, consulting, and performance assessment of teachers and school administrators.
- Quality controlled curriculum and curriculum resources.
- An extended community of teachers, school administrators, and board members who share a common commitment to Christ and an Ambleside education.

Specific services that ASI provides its member schools include:

- Full use of the Ambleside School Curriculum and on-line curriculum resources with annual updates.
- Schedules, teacher and parent handbooks, student reports and other pedagogical tools.
- Training, mentoring, and support of the principal.
- On-request consulting (30 hours per year).
- On-going training of teachers.
- School administrator resources for hiring and training teachers.
- Annual on-site visits for training, assistance with quality control and consulting.
- Assistance in the selection of new principals and teachers when requested.
- Assistance with the initial promotion of the school (consulting, speaking) when requested.
- Use of the ASI trademark.
- Sharing marketing tools developed by ASI's marketing agency, Cahoots.
- Relationships with other ASI member schools to benefit from a variety of expertise.
- Accreditation. ASI is accredited by Accreditation International (<http://www.aiaccredits.org>) and offers its member schools accreditation through Accreditation International and the National Council for Private School Accreditation. NCPSA has reciprocity with Middle States Association of College and Schools, making accreditation with Middle States a further option.

### Minimum Requirements for ASI Affiliation

1. A mission in accord with those of Ambleside Schools International.  
This does not imply an exact duplication of the mission statement of ASI, but it does require a common commitment to faith in Jesus Christ and the educational philosophy/practice of Charlotte Mason.
2. A commitment to and practice consistent with the Ambleside/Charlotte Mason Philosophy of Education. The school will maintain ASI standards for curriculum, classroom instruction, and school atmosphere.
3. A commitment to and practice consistent with the Ambleside Code of Personal Conduct
4. Use of the ASI Curriculum  
Materials in the Ambleside curriculum have been carefully selected to provide what Charlotte Mason called "the food of the mind." All texts used in the classroom must be exclusively those of the Ambleside curriculum unless approval for an alternate text has been obtained from A.S.I. and all supplemental materials must be in accord with Charlotte Mason pedagogy.
5. The head of school and all full-time teachers are trained

by ASI.

- Minimum Training Requirements for a School Principal:
    - Attends two Ambleside Internships within three years
    - Attends two Ambleside Summer Institutes within three years
    - Attends the Ambleside Principal's Retreat annually
    - Participates in an Ambleside Principals' Conference
    - Attends monthly Principals' Conference Calls
  
  - Minimum Training Requirements for a Full Time Teacher
    - Attends an Ambleside Internship before or during the first year as a full-time teacher
    - Attends an Ambleside Summer Institute before or immediately following the first year as a full-time teacher
6. Twice annual on-site school training and assessment by ASI staff (annually for international schools.)
  7. School size  
In order to preserve the school as a relational community, ASI schools are encouraged to limit class size to 16 and to keep the total number of students under 208. In cases of schools larger than 208, a "college system" is to be adopted.
  8. Payment of annual ASI membership fees.
  9. Member Schools will brand themselves as an Ambleside School.
  10. Member Schools must be in compliance with all federal, state, and local laws; have a clearly stated non-discrimination policy; abide by legal requirements for private school attendance and maintenance of health/safety; and have access to legal counsel.

## Ambleside Schools International Mission

It is the mission of Ambleside Schools International to build and serve a worldwide community of parents, teachers, schools, and training centers that provide to students what Charlotte Mason called a “living education,” guiding and empowering persons to author lives which are full and free, rich in relationship to God, self, others, ideas, and all of creation. Thus, our primary concern is the kind of student each child is becoming, not the mastery of particular data or technique, for we are confident that the student who masters the art of learning will attain his or her full potential for mastering data and technique. Students who master the art of relating well to God, self, others, ideas, and creation will attain the fullness of life for which they were created. Such an education will conform to Ambleside’s Fundamental Pedagogical Convictions, the Ambleside Commitment, Ambleside’s Statement of Faith, the Ambleside Code of Personal Conduct, and our ultimate authority, God’s word in the Holy Bible.

Implied in this mission are:

1. A commitment to fostering a community which embraces all of life in faith, love, joy, and obedience, according to the principles of Jesus Christ, as they are revealed through the Holy Scriptures and defined in the Ambleside Statement of Faith.
1. A commitment to building an educational community that consistently applies the Ambleside/Charlotte Mason philosophy of education.

## **Ambleside Fundamental Pedagogical Convictions**

### **A Non-Competitive, Stimulating Atmosphere**

In an atmosphere of sincerity and truth, students are free to learn for the pleasure of learning. Students do not compete with their peers for rank, grades, or prizes. Learning is the focus, not besting a classmate. Real life is placed before the students to study and discuss. Students are stimulated to observe, explore, and understand.

### **The Discipline of Habit**

At Ambleside, we consider the process of student work to be as important as the end product. Rather than developing persons who are able to study well for the next exam, we are interested in helping students develop a life of study. We ask the questions: Did she attend? Did he put forth effort? And was she thorough? We believe school is not just an institution to get through, but rather a place to develop habits that will serve children the rest of their lives.

### **Education as Vital, Dynamic, Living**

Real learning occurs when the learner wonders, asks why and how. And it needs to happen in an atmosphere that stimulates thought, in an atmosphere rich with ideas. Our objective is to place the very best books before our students, books rich in content and ideas, putting them into relationship with the finest authors. Through the use of “living books” students interact with scientists, mathematicians, philosophers, historians, artists, poets, and explorers.

### **The Infinite Dignity and Potential of Each Child**

Because children are born in God’s image, they are therefore born with great potential for a fruitful and full life of interests and relationships. At Ambleside, children are not identified or limited by their strengths or weaknesses. All children participate in a broad, rigorous curriculum—all children calculate, solve, attend, explore, ponder, recite, paint and sing. The expectation that prevails within the school is that all students will learn and grow to their full potential as persons and attain their vast inheritance.

### **The Priority of the Relational Life**

Children live in relationship with God, self, others, creation, and the world of ideas. These relationships are cultivated in the educational process through a broad, challenging curriculum and a faculty that seeks to relate to students, parents, and one another in accordance with the principles of Jesus Christ.

### **The Importance of Delight and of Struggle**

Children will naturally delight in the feast of great ideas set before them. They will savor them and grow in the ability to enjoy and celebrate their relations with persons, ideas, and creation. But they will also at times struggle. We consider the struggle to be as essential to the learning process as the delight. Children must learn to labor with problems not yet grasped, to remain on task when uncertain of

the outcome, to struggle to completion when mind and hand are tired, to experience the rewards and negative consequences of their actions. There will be no growth in character without the struggle.

Foremost among the enemies of the delight and the struggle necessary for the cultivation of a learner are entertainment and indulgence. In the classroom, entertainment and indulgence both encourage passivity. To grow, a student must be strenuously engaged in the work of learning.

Thus, Ambleside teachers, while often creative in their presentations, make no effort to entertain their students. Ambleside teachers, while being loving, will not be indulgent.

## AMBLESIDE STATEMENT OF FAITH

We are a Christ-centered education ministry. As a Christ-centered ministry, we acknowledge 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. We do not seek to divide education, vocation, or any other aspect of life into spiritual and secular compartments. We acknowledge that all truth is God's truth and that all learning is an effort to relate to God, self, others, and the created world. We value each individual connected to our ministry community (e.g., employees, board members, students, parents, and volunteers) as created by God, with gifts to be strengthened, weaknesses to be overcome, and responsibilities to be carried out. We call parents and all our ministry employees to partner in the training and education of students for the glory of God and the spiritual good of those students. We call students to submit to the loving mentors that God has provided for this purpose. As a Christ-centered ministry, we affirm Biblical and historic Christian orthodoxy, and adopt as part of our Statement of Faith, the Nicene Creed, which provides as follows:

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father [and the Son].\* With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

*\*A later addition by the western church, this phrase is not accepted by Eastern Orthodox churches and affirmation of it is not required.*

As part of our Statement of Faith, and in accord with Scripture and two thousand years of Christian tradition, we also affirm and adopt as our beliefs the following



Biblical truths concerning marriage, biological sex, human sexuality, and the sanctity of life:

The Bible teaches that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female; these two distinct, complementary sexes together reflect the image and nature of God. (Genesis 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. Affirmation of one's biological sex is an affirmation of the image of God within that person.

The term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one biological man and one biological woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Genesis 2:18-25). God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a biological man and a biological woman who are married to each other; God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one biological man and one biological woman. (1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4) Any form of sexual immorality (including without limitation adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bestiality, pedophilia, and use of pornography) is sinful and contrary to God's good purposes. (Matthew 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

Every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity; hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31) God has created mankind in His image and that human life begins at conception. It is God who uniquely forms every human being and gives special dignity, personal freedom, and individual accountability among all the works of His creation. God created each person's inmost being, knitting each person together in the womb of that person's mother. (Psalm 139:13). As God's individualized and personal creation, each person is fearfully and wonderfully made. (Psalm 139:14). God has ordained all the days of each person's life before they came to be. (Psalm 139:16)

Based on Scripture, we therefore believe that from the moment of conception until natural death, every human life is sacred because every human life has been created by God, in His image and likeness. We believe that from the moment of conception every human life must be recognized, respected, and protected as having the rights of a person and the inviolable right to life. Because human life begins at the moment of conception, it is against our religious convictions to formally or materially cooperate in the abortion or other termination of unborn human life, including without limitation by surgical abortion or use of drugs, or services that have the intent, design, effect, or risk of terminating unborn human life or preventing its implantation and growth post-fertilization.



The Statement of Faith set forth in this document does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. For purposes of our ministry's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Board of Directors is our ministry's final interpretive authority on the application of our Statement of Faith.

Under God and the authority of Scripture, our ministry's Board, employees, and volunteers, are required to wholeheartedly affirm and carry out all their work and service for our ministry consistent with our Statement of Faith.

## AMBLESIDE CODE OF PERSONAL CONDUCT

Consistent with Ambleside's Christ-centered mission, commitment to Biblical and historic Christian orthodoxy, and the Ambleside Statement of Faith, the Ambleside Code of Personal Conduct is Ambleside's standard for conduct and practice.

Adult example has a profound effect on the formation of the hearts of children.

Thus, all ministry employees, volunteers, and members of the Board of Directors are expected to maintain a standard of personal conduct consistent with this code of personal conduct and the teachings of the Bible on virtue and the relational life. Such behavioral expectations are necessary in order to maintain the distinctly Christian identity and mission of Ambleside. Likewise, any student that is part of our ministry community is expected to respect the standard of personal conduct set forth in this code of personal conduct and the Bible.

All members of our ministry community are expected to, and all ministry employees, volunteers, and members of the Board of Directors must affirm in writing, their commitment to:

- Pursue an intimate, daily walk of gratitude and obedience with our ever-present, risen, Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ. (Matthew 12:29-30; 28:19-20; John 14:23; 15:5-7)
- Live a life of self-examination, humble repentance for personal sin, and forgiveness of others. (Matthew 6:12; 7:5; 1 John 1:9)
- Demonstrate consistent care for all persons, treating all with kindness, respect, and generosity; never engaging in any behavior (including verbal) which would be damaging, disrespectful, or demeaning of another person, child, or adult. (Matthew 12:31; John 15:12-14; Romans 12:16-18)
- Be diligent in fulfilling all tasks related to one's responsibilities, maintaining a high quality of work, honesty, and integrity. (Colossians 3:23)
- Be careful and gracious in speech, avoiding any profane speech and never making a public statement (in any medium, including e-mail) regarding the school or any member of the Ambleside community which can be considered injurious to the reputation of another person or the school. (Colossians 4:6; Ephesians 4:29)
- Refrain from all illegal activities, including illegal drug use, underage consumption of alcohol, theft, vandalism, and fraudulent activity. (Deuteronomy 5:19-20; Romans 13:1-2; Titus 3:1-2; 1 Peter 2:13-15)
- Refrain from activities destructive to relationships such as outbursts of rage, violence, stealing, lying, or cheating. (Colossians 3:8-9; Galatians 5:19-21)
- Be moderate and appropriate in the consumption of alcohol, avoiding drunkenness, and never giving alcohol or tobacco products to a minor. (Ephesians 5:18; Romans 13:13)

- Protect the divine gift and dignity of human sexuality, in accord with Scripture and two thousand years of Christian tradition:
  - Maintaining the conviction (and conduct in accord with that conviction) that God has wonderfully and immutably created each person as either male or female, as distinct, complementary sexes that reflect the image and nature of God. (Genesis 1:26-27)
  - Honoring the covenant of marriage with the understanding that God has defined the term “marriage” as the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union as delineated in Scripture and that no intimate sexual activity should be engaged in outside of a marriage between one biological man and one biological woman (Genesis 2:18-25; 1 Corinthians 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4)
  - Refraining from all forms of inappropriate sexually explicit talk. (Ephesians 4:29; Matthew 12:34-37)
  - Committing to never view, possess, distribute, or foster the use of pornographic material including, but not limited to, print, video, and audio. (2 Timothy 2:22; Matthew 5:27-30; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8)
  - Committing to never advocate for or participate in immoral sexual activity, including any form of touching or nudity for the purpose of evoking sexual arousal, apart from the context of marriage between one man and one woman. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:3)
  - Committing to never engaging in any physical contact or verbal expression with another person (adult or child) that is an inappropriate display of affection, or emotionally abusive, or scandalous. (Ephesians 5:3; Philippians 1:27)
  - Committing to exhibiting a lifestyle at all times consistent with the Christian calling and commitment to personal holiness in imitation of Jesus Christ for the glory of God the Father in all things. (1 Peter 1:15-16; 1 Corinthians 10:31)

## Description of Training for MEMBER SCHOOLS

### Training of Principals

#### ASI Principals' Retreat

A three-day retreat conducted by senior ASI training staff for the purpose of equipping principals in the necessary skills to lead a school committed to a consistent application of the Ambleside Method. Topics covered include maintaining a consistent atmosphere, leading teachers in a consistent application of Charlotte Mason's pedagogical principles and managing school administration. The retreat is held at a designated location during the summer and attendance is limited to the principals of Ambleside schools.

#### ASI Principals' Mentoring

ASI provides for the mentoring of Ambleside principals during the school year by offering twice monthly (16 times per year) conference calls led by an ASI certified trainer. Mentoring will include recommended readings, discussion of the readings, and an opportunity for principals to present specific questions and problems. Senior Ambleside training staff provides mentoring.

### Teacher Training

#### Ambleside Internships

Internships are a 3-day training consisting of classroom observation, and philosophy reading, and discussion led by Ambleside staff. They are held during the academic year, at Ambleside School of Fredericksburg or another designated Training Center. They offer a comprehensive view of an Ambleside education, providing an opportunity to study the principles of Charlotte Mason, to observe Ambleside teachers modeling the applications of these principles, and to discuss these principles with master teachers in a small group seminar. Internships are limited to ten to twelve participants.

#### Ambleside Internships

The Ambleside Summer Institute is a weeklong immersion in the Charlotte Mason philosophy and practice of Ambleside Schools. During the first half of the week, participants are given the opportunity to experience what it's like to be a student at Ambleside. Ambleside staff teaches lessons drawn from the breadth of the Ambleside Curriculum, including Bible, nature study, composer study, math, literature, and history. Throughout the day, time is taken to explore the significance of what happened in the classroom – how the teacher used the text, how she engaged with taught, how the taught were encouraged to engage the text, how habit formation was encouraged, and how inspirational ideas were made manifest. During the second half of the week, participants are given the opportunity to prepare and teach their own lessons. The Ambleside training staff provides assistance in preparation and feedback. Throughout the week, in the late

afternoon and evenings, Ambleside training staff provides instruction in principles of Charlotte Mason and the application of the Ambleside Method.

### **Ambleside On-Site Training**

Ambleside trainers will visit Ambleside schools for the purpose of assessing consistency of practice and providing on-going teacher training. This will consist of assessments as to school and classroom “atmosphere,” the practice of the “training in habit,” and the facilitation of student engagement with “living ideas.” Ambleside trainers will observe teachers and students while in class, providing evaluation and making recommendations, both to teachers and the school principal. Ambleside trainers will also be available to conduct “in services” for teachers.