



Lower School Principal Job Description

Position Overview

A Principal at The Augustine Academy is first and foremost a lover of Jesus Christ, and as such is therefore also a lover of children and knowledge. The Principal, with the Headmaster, leads TAA’s mission of discipling families through Gospel-centered education. Within this relational context, the Principal is responsible for setting and maintaining a positive (high-joy), inspirational, and peacefully authoritative atmosphere in the school. *Every day* the Principal is to expect, uphold, shepherd and specifically train teachers and students in the habits of the good life and in providing a “living education.” The Principal supports teachers—through ongoing training, regular observation and feedback—in becoming highly skilled in Charlotte Mason’s “method of a lesson” in classroom instruction. The Principal is to master the breadth and depth of the Lower School curriculum, upholding a robust standard of quality and quantity of teacher instruction, and thereby student-produced work. The Lower School Principal supports teachers in the production of home-day lesson plans, and supports parents in the instruction of home-day lessons. In a broad sense, the Principal also represents the school in and out of the classroom and acts on behalf of the school by professionally and warmly interacting with all students, parents, teachers, staff, and visitors. The Principal reports to the Headmaster. Lower school teachers, and some specials teachers, report to the Lower School Principal.

Personal Qualities

Spiritually mature in Christ, service- and other-oriented, teachable, loving towards all persons (especially children), joyful, peaceful in/under authority, wise, growth-oriented, patient, hungry to know and share knowledge, intelligent, thorough, punctual, flexible, collegial, articulate, enthusiastic.

Responsibilities:

Spiritual Life

A Principal at The Augustine Academy is first and foremost a lover of Jesus Christ. As such, the duties listed in this section are provided for the purpose of self-reflection but are not used as criteria in a professional evaluation; such duties would include but are not limited to the following:

- Cultivating a personal love for God by keeping a daily devotional practice.
- Practicing ongoing awareness and dialog with God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—throughout the changing circumstances of each day.
- Being quick to recognize personal responses that are less than the character of Christ (particularly habitual responses); quick to repent and to pursue growth.
- Praying daily for students.
- Initiating prayer (appreciation, repentance, petition) with students spontaneously and at set times (Bible class, lunch, dismissal, etc.)
- Instructing students in how to pray more maturely (i.e., moving beyond “for a good day” or “to win the game,” etc.).

- Freely and naturally speaking of Jesus, though never as a tool to manipulate student behavior.
- Actively participating in a local church community.
- Assisting the Headmaster in leading Assembly and Chapel services.

Relational Life

Cultivate and uphold a life-giving relational dynamic throughout the Lower School by ensuring the following:

- Staff foster a sense of belonging within the school community; are inclusive, approachable, and hospitable.
- Staff view all (especially children) as having immeasurable potential, never defining persons by label or diagnostic category.
- Staff humbly give and receive appropriate correction to/from students, peers, and supervisors.
- Staff have an unassuming view of themselves; neither staff nor students put themselves on display or seek undue attention.
- There are regular community-building activities (e.g., Back to School Picnic, Christmas Service, Caroling, Spring Concert, and Shakespeare, etc.), which maintain the TAA ethos and focus on deep satisfactions, rather than thrills and excitement.
- There are opportunities to foster joyful and supportive relationships among school staff. (e.g., opportunities for fellowship, prayer, shared meals, laughter, counsel, reconciliation when needed, etc.)

Atmosphere

Set and maintain a positive (high-joy), inspirational, and peacefully authoritative atmosphere throughout the Lower School by making certain that the following standards are upheld:

- Classrooms are warm and inviting, well-ordered, free of clutter, and inspirational.
- Classrooms are a place of joy (many smiles) and kindness.
- Teachers have a peaceful and authoritative presence; teachers and students share a sense of must.
- Teachers contribute a supportive, attuned presence.
- Teachers' responses to weakness are gentle; students are shown how to respond gently to weakness.
- Teachers and students show enthusiastic attentiveness to the work at hand.
- Teachers secure diligence in full-class participation, not allowing students to dominate or hide.
- Teachers are present with students at morning arrival, breaks, lunchtime, and departure.
- There is an air of peaceful diligence in communal areas (offices, hallways, library, etc.).
- Public areas are neat, well-ordered, and beautiful, avoiding childish decorations.
- The school has a healthy emotional-relational atmosphere optimal for growth of students.
- The school is largely free from the distractions of popular culture.
- The school is free from cliques and social hierarchy among students.
- During times of free play, any student is welcome to join any game. Sports are enjoyed but not exalted.

Discipline

Ensure the following standards are consistently upheld for effective and intentional cultivation of habit throughout the Lower School:

- Teachers and students uphold good order in routine matters.
- Teachers and students uphold a high regard for persons (active participation, attention, and courtesy).
- Teachers secure focused attention to lessons, tasks, and instructions.
- Teachers instruct in expectations for work (set-up, checkpoints).
- Teachers maintain high quality in oral and written work.
- Teachers respond constructively to student lapses in work and behavior.
- Teachers and students are free of disruptive behavior patterns.
- Teachers do not use behaviorist techniques (shame/praise, reward/punishment) to manipulate student behavior; classrooms are free of competition and artificial incentives.
- Teachers have a clear, explicit growth strategy in place for every student with a significant weakness in behavior or work habits.

On-Method Disciplinary Lessons

Ensure the following method steps are consistently applied in disciplinary subject lessons throughout the Lower School:

- All students are engaged in performing the “act of knowing.”
- The “First Little Talk” is effectively employed: Teachers warm up (mental math, memory work) and set up (review, vocabulary) in each lesson.
- Teachers facilitate the lesson by making wise use of text and direct instruction.
- Teachers invite full, accurate recall of definitions and algorithms.
- The “Second Little Talk” is effectively employed: Avoiding lecture and explanation, teachers use open questions to ensure understanding of the principles and ideas (i.e., students can explain the why).
- An appropriate “Response” opportunity is given: Teachers provide adequate practice/use of the skill.
- Teachers facilitate student discovery and correction of errors when they occur, rarely giving direct correction of student error.

On-Method Inspirational Lessons

Ensure the following method steps are consistently applied in inspirational subject lessons throughout the Lower School:

- All students are engaged in performing the “act of knowing.”
- The “First Little Talk” is effectively employed: Teachers warm up (timeline, memory work) and set up (review of previous lesson, introduces unfamiliar terms, timeline, geography) in each lesson.
- Episodes of appropriate length are read during lessons.
- Teachers use narration after each reading.
- Teachers ensure understanding and explore ideas in the “second little talk.”
- Teachers minimize the use of declarative statements.
- Teachers facilitate student discovery and correction of errors when they occur (rarely give direct correction of student error).

Curriculum and Student Work

Uphold TAA's standard for quality and quantity of student work throughout the school by ensuring the following:

- Teachers know the breadth and depth of assigned curriculum and use it exclusively.
- Teachers access the ASI Educator Support site at least weekly.
- In all subjects, teachers are at least 85% on-pace with the scope and sequence.
- Teachers are knowledgeable of ASI standards for student work.
- Across all subjects, the quantity & quantity of written, oral, and ongoing work meets ASI standards.
- Teachers are current and remain up-to-date assessing all students' written, oral, and on-going work.
- Teachers avoid unit studies and projects. Independent student work is used judiciously.
- Handouts are only used in disciplinary subjects (mathematics, grammar) and are never the primary means of instruction.
- All written and oral work is of a "worthy nature." Students are never given busy work (i.e., color pages, puzzles, internet searches).
- Teachers systematically track the completion of all assigned homework for each student; written records are used for tracking in middle and high school.
- All students are given the opportunity to publicly display what they have learned (e.g., concerts, recitations, Shakespeare plays), with the emphasis on learning, not performance.
- Only ASI curriculum is used, with approved variances.
- All teachers understand and apply the "Method of a Lesson."

Supporting Growth

Build an alliance for growth with those teachers and students who struggle to maintain a high standard in relating to work and/or persons by:

- Identifying teachers and students who struggle to maintain a joyful, attuned presence and engaging in a proactive strategy to address these weaknesses (effectively supporting in relational dynamics/circuits).
- Keeping track of significant student weakness in behavioral habits and holding teachers accountable for a proactive strategy to address these weaknesses (effectively supporting students' relational/behavioral habit formation).
- Viewing parents as an important source of information and insights about students. Keeping regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences for the parents of all students and as-needed parent-teacher conferences to address specific student needs (involving parents to support students' behavioral habits).
- Keeping track of significant student academic weakness and holding teachers accountable for a proactive strategy to address these weaknesses (effectively supporting teachers in addressing students' academic weaknesses).
- Ensuring a strong partnership between teachers and parents in addressing academic weaknesses.
- Ensuring there are regular opportunities for parent formation and education in the dynamics of personal maturity, parenting, and the Ambleside/Charlotte Mason philosophy (e.g., Study Groups, Campus Meetings, FEW).

- Keeping track of significant student weakness in work habits and holding teachers accountable for a proactive strategy to address these weaknesses (effectively supporting habit formation in students' approach to work).
- Putting a strategy in place to address any teacher weakness in pacing.
- Identifying teachers with significant teacher weakness in effectively executing the method of a lesson and engaging them in a proactive strategy to address this weakness (effectively supporting teachers in the method of a lesson).
- Putting a strategy in place to address any teacher weakness in student work (quantity, quality, completeness, diversity of assignments).
- Conducting a regular sample review of all student work.
- Conducting classroom observations an average of four hours per week.
- Devoting a minimum of two hours per month to staff development in cultivating emotional-relational and spiritual maturity.
- Devoting a minimum of four hours per month to develop proficiency in the Ambleside/Charlotte Mason philosophy and method.
- Devoting a minimum of two hours per month to equipping staff with professional skills (hosting parent conferences, teaching Shakespeare, writing Reports of Growth, etc.).

Operational Leadership

Accept responsibility for all administrative operations, seeing to it that:

- Lower School enrollment is trending in a positive direction.
- Lower School personnel follow optimal procedures for assessing, accepting, and orienting new students and their families.
- Lower School facilities are safe. Adequate policies and procedures are followed to ensure the health and safety of school students and staff.
- The Lower School's facilities and equipment are appropriate for achieving the TAA philosophy and mission.
- The Board Policy Manual, Faculty Handbook, and Parent Handbook are adhered to, and additions, revisions, and updates are sought as necessary.

Miscellaneous Duties

Other duties include but are not limited to:

- Attending Board meetings as requested by Headmaster, in order to report on the Lower School.
- Being a visible, inspirational presence to students, staff, and parents, sharing lunch with students, and proactively engaging during times of community fellowship.
- Routinely dealing with conflicts, concerns, and grievances in a positive, affirming, and encouraging way, always expressing critical thoughts to the appropriate person in an appropriate manner.
- Ensuring field studies that support the curriculum are included in each Lower School grade.
- Reviewing Lower School student exams and Reports of Growth to ensure accurate and well-written communication.
- Ensuring adequate record keeping.

- Meeting weekly, or more, with Administrative Team.
- Ensuring the quality and regularity of school and classroom communication with parents regarding academic and behavior expectations, specific growth areas for the student, and regular school activities and events.
- Encouraging meaningful alumni, parent, and volunteer participation.
- Maintaining programs that contribute to relations with the local community.
- Writing thank you notes for contributions, services, etc., when related to the Lower School.

Minimum Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree, Master's or Doctorate preferred
- Prior exposure to Charlotte Mason's or Ambleside's educational philosophy, or willingness and aptitude to learn
- Exemplary spiritual maturity, full agreement with the Nicene Creed and TAA's Statement of Faith
- Demonstrated ability to lead others
- Exceptional written and verbal communication skills, including public speaking
- Solid business acumen, management, strategic and operational execution, and problem-solving skills
- Strong interpersonal, time management, leadership, and organizational skills
- Computer literacy, working knowledge of Microsoft Office and Google Apps
- Participation in ASI's Principal trainings, mentoring programs (including the Master Teacher Training Program, which is partially paid for by school, summer travel required)
- CPR and first aid certification (provided by school)
- Free and clear results on federal and state background check

Hours

Full time salaried position with tuition remission available for the Principal's school-aged children. Four full school days (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday) on site (except school holidays) with Fridays off-site. Occasional after-hours work required to complete school duties and events per the current year Academic Calendar. The Principal receives holidays and breaks according to the Academic Calendar. Three weeks of summer vacation are provided to the Principal.

This position includes teaching responsibilities. The amount of time in the classroom is informed by prior experience in the Charlotte Mason/ASI method of instruction and years of hybrid education.