POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

HEAD OF THE LOWER SCHOOL

Saint Ann’s School, an independent, non-sectarian day school enrolling approximately 1090 students in Pre-Kindergarten through High School, seeks a visionary, dynamic, experienced, passionate, and nurturing leader for its next Head of the Lower School, which encompasses grades 1-3. We seek an individual who is learned but not pedantic, serious but with a capacious sense of humor, someone who possesses the ineffable qualities necessary to form meaningful relationships with gifted and boisterous lower school students who hold a multiplicity of identities and come from myriad backgrounds and who has the qualities that make for a natural leader amongst a cadre of extraordinary teachers.

ABOUT SAINT ANN’S SCHOOL

Since its founding in 1965, Saint Ann’s has embraced a commitment to education for its own sake, oriented to the capacities of each individual student, free of the encumbrances of formal grading, prizes, and rankings. At the same time, we are unabashedly committed to excellence in all that we do. The lives of our graduates speak powerfully to the potential of an education based on these principles to ignite a passion for learning and to sustain creative energy in every field of endeavor. We accomplish this by offering talented students instruction shaped by creative and dedicated faculty, forming a true community of learners from pre-Kindergarten through high school. With a faculty and staff numbering more than 300, and 1090 students, Saint Ann’s is among the largest and most sought-after independent schools in New York City. Occupying space in seven separate buildings clustered in Brooklyn Heights, Saint Ann’s draws most of its students from nearby Brooklyn neighborhoods as well as Manhattan. Known for its commitment to an education that brings together passionate and talented teachers with gifted and motivated students, Saint Ann’s has earned an outstanding reputation in academic disciplines and the arts. Our accomplished teachers bring to the classroom experience as published authors and scholars, working artists, composers, performers and filmmakers.

We see our lower school students as independent beings with exquisite minds and a natural desire to learn. They are ready for any intellectual foray and capable of deep, authentic plunges into academic areas and the arts. We give our teachers great freedom to teach what they love—be it a Calvino story, ancient Egypt and Islam, or the Great Depression—and to carry out the difficult challenge of basing the teaching of academic skills on these meaningful content
areas, rather than as a separate, disconnected task. The students are also given great creative freedom and are invited to trust themselves, and to find deep satisfaction in learning for its own sake. We recognize each student's areas of strength and weakness while not using these as any kind of predictive, fixed measure for that student's future. The absence of formal grades encourages authentic relationships between teachers and students and sparks artistic and intellectual risk-taking. We know that differences in thought and identity, both in our student body and in our faculty, create a mosaic rich with potential for learning and discovery. Our vision as a school is achieved only when all of our students and faculty have a deep sense of belonging and inclusion, and feel affirmed with respect to multiple aspects of their identities. Whimsy, humor, playfulness, and an atmosphere of intellectual and artistic adventure are seen as valuable aids to daily discovery.

THE POSITION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Head of the Lower School reports directly to the Head of School and is charged with the comprehensive responsibility for all activities involving approximately 240 students in grades one, two and three, and the faculty and staff who teach and work in the division. Many of our students come to the Lower School from our smaller Preschool and Kindergarten programs, and about a quarter of the Lower School student body joins us for the first time as new 1st graders.

The core of our Lower School consists of twelve intimate home classrooms, each of which are led by a Head Teacher and an Associate Teacher. These teachers are tasked with an exciting challenge: to take a personal intellectual passion and build a curriculum out of it. The Head of the Lower School works closely with these teachers to ensure that these curricula are adequately rich and sophisticated. The content must sustain months of in-depth study; it must fascinate teacher and young students alike; and, it must be multifaceted enough for the teacher to integrate the teaching of core academic skills, artistic expression, and meaningful discussion. Some recent examples of curricula are: Lewis and Clark’s expedition, the Underground Railroad, the science of sound, and the Islamic Empire. The Head of the Lower school mentors and evaluates the twenty four classroom teachers in the development of these rich curricula and in the day-to-day planning and execution of classroom instruction.

Simultaneously, the Lower School works towards preparing students for a very different future structure – a unique fourth grade, where students will experience a completely departmentalized schedule and the increased independence and choice that comes with such a structure. In addition to working with the cadre of Lower School classroom teachers, Lower School students also take specialties taught by teachers in the departments of Art, Music, Theater, Science, Mathematics, Library, English (Poetry), and Recreational Arts. The Head of the Lower School works with Department Chairs of these departments to select teachers well-suited to this age group, and helps mentor and evaluate these teachers.
The Head of the Lower School also has overarching responsibility for the daily operations of Lower School that include mentoring students, communicating with parents, overseeing the physical plant, reviewing twice annual teacher reports on each student, and making and maintaining the daily schedule.

**Specific responsibilities of the Head of the Lower School include:**

- Ensuring the well-being of all of the students in the Lower School, by observing them in class, discussing their progress with their teachers, learning specialists, and parents, and, when appropriate, working closely with the Lower School Psychologist, the School’s Psychologist, the two Reading Specialists, and the Lower School Nurse, to be aware of the educational, physical, social and emotional needs of Lower School students.

- Communicating with teachers, specialists, and parents on academic, disciplinary, and health-related issues; helping put in place interventions that range from therapy, to work with a learning specialist or tutor, to finding an additional challenge for a voracious student.

- Leading the planning and presentation of Lower School events that bring the school together around our values of the arts and diverse perspectives, such as concerts and performances, and keeping the school community informed and involved in these activities.

- Supervising the Assistant to the Head of the Lower School.

- Mentoring teachers in the writing of narrative reports; reviewing and editing these reports, as well as the reports from the eight departments that write reports for Lower School students; assuring the timely completion and mailing of these reports.

- Assisting in the admission process for the testing, interviewing, and evaluating of applicants for enrollment in grades K, 1, 2 and 3; making admissions decisions for entry into these grades; visiting schools and/or calling teachers about students when additional information is needed; leading tours of the Lower School for parents of prospective students; participating in outreach programs that inform parents from different communities about the school and lead to applicants from a broader pool of parents.
• Working with the Director of Diversity and Institutional Equity to spearhead strategies and activities to become a more inclusive and equitable Lower School concomitant with the diversity and equity vision for the school as a whole.

• Working with Department Chairs of the eight academic departments that teach in the Lower School, meeting new applicants, weighing in on hiring decisions; observing, mentoring and evaluating specialty teachers, and discussing which teachers are suited to teach in the Lower School.

• Hiring new Associate teachers, promoting Associate Teachers as Head Teachers when there are openings; assigning classrooms and grade levels to each teacher, keeping in mind teachers’ strengths and professional needs.

• Supporting teachers in their own professional growth, encouraging them to learn new content area, teaching techniques, and to do whatever is necessary (travel, study, attend workshops and classes, etc.) to achieve this.

• Overseeing the Lower School building; helping plan and oversee building repairs, renovations, and cleaning.

• Working with the kitchen staff in serving nutritious and appealing lunches and snacks; helping run the dining room during lunch and ensuring students have a positive, healthy communal eating experience.

• Being a visible presence in all areas of the school; working toward a resolution of all problems – both routine and unique – as they arise; meeting regularly with other core administrators and department chairs; advising the Head of School on school policies and programs.

PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL REQUIREMENTS

• Education: BA required; advanced degrees preferred

• Work Experience: Minimum of five years experience in a relevant position that includes work with children in this age group, including teaching, administrative and supervisory experience, and student advising.

• Communication Skills: Superb written and oral communication skills that capture and effectively communicate the school’s mission to all constituencies and that enrich the school’s culture.
• Interpersonal Skills: Superior interpersonal skills, the ability to engage effectively with students, parents, faculty, and other members of the school community in a way reflective of the school’s culture and to project professional competence, leadership capability, discretion, judgment and personal maturity.

• Leadership: Proven track record as a leader of faculty, students and programs in independent schools.

• Charisma, wit, intelligence, empathy, humor and equanimity are expected.

COMPENSATION

A competitive compensation package, commensurate with level of experience, plus benefits.

TO APPLY

A cover letter, writing sample, resume, and list of references should be emailed to lowerschoolsearch@saintannsny.org. Candidates who identify as members of historically underrepresented groups are strongly encouraged to apply. Applications must be submitted by February 15, 2020 in order to ensure full consideration. This position has an anticipated start date of July 2020.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY

The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, gender, age, marital status, disability, national or ethnic origin or sexual orientation in carrying on its educational activities or in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, employment policies, financial aid programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.