



WHAT ARE THE REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHERS AT ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY?

We are looking for teachers who are well-educated, intellectually engaged, and models of the moral and intellectual virtues we seek to instill in our students. All teachers at Ashley River Classical Academy must possess, at a minimum, a Bachelor's degree. Teachers are all required to have certification in the areas they are teaching. We have a strong preference for teachers with advanced degrees in the subject areas in which they teach, particularly in the Upper School.

WHAT DOES INSTRUCTION LOOK LIKE IN CLASSROOMS AT ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY?

At Ashley River Classical Academy, instruction is teacher-led, multimodal, and content-rich. Teachers are subject matter experts who lead their classes in stimulating explanations, demonstrations, and discussions. All instruction engages the minds and senses of the students through seeing, hearing, reading, discussing, and writing about the subject matter they are studying. Instructional methods may include Socratic seminars, interactive lectures, writing exercises, presentations, science experiments, and other related activities, as appropriate to the grade and subject being taught. Furthermore, all instruction at ARCA is expected to be content-rich and focused on important and fascinating topics that equip students with the knowledge and skills to understand our world and succeed in all of their future endeavors.

WHAT DOES MY CHILD'S DAY LOOK LIKE?

While the schedules of each grade level and classroom differ, there are a few general rules that apply:

- In the Lower School (K-5), each day students have approximately 110-130 minutes of literacy instruction (including phonics, grammar, composition, poetry memorization, and literature), 80-90 minutes of math, 20-30 minutes each of history and science, 30-40 minutes of art, music, Spanish, or remediation/enrichment, 30 minutes of active physical education, 30 minutes of recess, and 30 minutes of lunch.
- In the Upper School (6-12), each day students will have 45-50 minutes of Literature, Composition, History, Latin or a Modern Foreign Language, Math, Art or Music (or another elective in high school), and either Government or Philosophy, depending on the grade level.

You will receive a copy of your child's class schedule from their teacher at the beginning of each school year.

WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR STUDENTS AT ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY?

Ashley River Classical Academy may apply for the lottery. When the lottery is conducted, open seats are randomly offered to students who have applied. If more students apply than there are seats available at a given grade level, the remaining students are placed on a waitlist in random order. Students who apply after the lottery are added to the waitlist on a first-come, first-served basis.

The only enrollment preferences given are for students who are residents of Charleston County, children of Ashley River Classical Academy faculty, staff, board members, founding board members, employees of the school, and siblings of enrolled students, as well as children of active military personnel residing in the state. Students are admitted without regard to demographics, past performance at previous schools, or any other factors outside of South Carolina residency.

IF MY FAMILY APPLIES TO THE LOTTERY WITH MORE THAN ONE CHILD, IS IT POSSIBLE THAT ONE CHILD IS OFFERED A SEAT AND ANOTHER SIBLING IS NOT?

No. If one student is selected via the lottery, our process automatically extends a seat to the other students in a family that have also made a lottery application. There will not be an instance when one student is selected for a seat and their sibling is not.

WHAT ARE ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY'S DISCIPLINE POLICIES?

Our school's culture, including discipline policies, is governed by our four school-wide rules: 1. Be on time, 2. Be prepared, and 3. Be respectful 4. Be Safe. In addition, we seek to establish a culture of mutual respect and joyful learning among our students and faculty through expectations of politeness, kindness, and engaged learning. Our full discipline policy, including both consequences and rewards, as well as expectations for school culture and decorum, may be found in the Ashley River Classical Academy Family Handbook.

WHAT IS ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY'S ATTENDANCE POLICY?

Classical education is highly interactive and requires students to be present consistently. Because much instruction in a classical classroom relies upon student and teacher interaction, students who are frequently absent will fall behind quickly and it will often be impossible to make up for lost learning experiences. In addition, Ashley River Classical Academy's attendance policy is governed by the South Carolina Board of Education Regulation (SBE) 43-274 who specifies the state requirements for school attendance. Our full attendance policy may be found in the Ashley River Classical Academy Family Handbook.

WILL ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY HAVE A HIGH SCHOOL?

Yes, Ashley River Classical Academy will start with grades K-5 and will grow by adding one grade level each year until we serve Kindergarten through 12th grade.

WILL ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY STUDENTS WEAR UNIFORMS?

Yes, all Ashley River Classical Academy students are required to wear uniforms. View uniform guidelines. More information to come about ordering uniforms from Max and Alice.

WILL ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION?

Unfortunately, Ashley River Classical Academy is not able to provide bus transportation at this time. We will be helping to connect parents to carpool options before the start of the academic year.

WILL ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY PROVIDE BREAKFAST AND LUNCH?

Ashley River Classical Academy is in the process of determining what food vendor will be used to provide breakfast and lunch for our students. More information will be provided at a later date.

It is important that all parents complete the application for Free and Reduced Lunch, even if you believe you will not qualify, as the completion of this form aids the school in making meals affordable for all of our students. Parents are also invited to join their child for lunch. You may sign in and out at the front office.

WHAT WILL SAFETY AND SECURITY LOOK LIKE AT ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY, INCLUDING WEATHER SAFETY?

The safety and wellbeing of our students is the highest priority for Ashley River Classical Academy. We will follow all South Carolina laws governing safety and security for public schools, including mandated drills, security features such as a single exit and entrance, cameras, required sign-in with background checks for all visitors, and additional security requirements. In addition, we are working closely with our facility advisors and construction group to ensure that our campus is secure and equipped with the latest safety and security features and equipment. Furthermore, we will make official announcements in regard to delays and closures due to severe weather.

WHAT EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING SPORTS AND CLUBS, WILL ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY HAVE?

Ashley River Classical Academy will also feature a number of clubs and other afterschool activities, including chess, dance, drama, computer programming, and others are grade level appropriate. A full list of club options will be provided at the beginning of each semester. Official competitive sports will be offered during the 2026-2027 school year.

WHAT FIELD TRIPS WILL ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY HAVE FOR STUDENTS?

Ashley River Classical Academy will host two field trips for each grade level each school year, typically with one in the fall semester and one in the spring semester. All field trips will be directly tied to the curriculum studied at that grade level. For the Lower School (K-5), these trips will include visits to local sites of historical, cultural, and natural significance. Upper School students will have several opportunities for lengthier overnight trips, including a trip to Washington, D.C. in 8th grade and an overseas trip in the summer preceding their senior year of high school.

WILL ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY OFFER ART AND MUSIC?

Yes, Ashley River Classical Academy will offer both art and music classes to all of our students. At Ashley River Classical Academy, art and music are never referred to as “extracurricular” or “resource” classes. Instead, art and music are a core component of our curriculum and often overlap with the history and literature being taught at that grade level. In the Lower School (K-5), students will have art and music once each week. In grades 6-8, students will rotate between art and music each day. In high school, students will have opportunities to take art and music electives. In addition to requiring all of our students to participate in art and music classes, Ashley River Classical Academy will grow a full art and music program, including art shows, drama and other performance art displays, and chorus.

WHAT WILL BE ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY’S HOURS?

The school day at Ashley River Classical Academy runs 8:00 am to 3:00 pm for students. Dropoff in the morning begins at 7:30 am. We will offer before and after school care. Before care will begin at 6:30 am and after care will end at 6:00 pm.

WHAT ARE THE RATES OF BEFORE- AND AFTER-SCHOOL CARE?

We are currently developing our before- and after-school care programs and determining associated costs for families. More information about these programs will be available in the spring.

WHAT IS THE SCHOOL CALENDAR?

Ashley River Classical Academy will follow Charleston County Public School’s calendar as closely as possible to determine the beginning and end of the school year, holiday breaks, and report card periods. Visit our website for an official calendar.

WILL ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY HAVE A PLAYGROUND?

Ashley River Classical Academy currently has multiple playgrounds for our Lower School students as well as additional outdoor green space for our Upper School students. All Lower School students have at least 30 minutes of recess and/or 30 minutes of active physical education each day.

HOW MANY CLASSES WILL ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY HAVE AT EACH GRADE LEVEL AND WHAT ARE THE CLASS SIZES?

The final number of classes at each grade level will be determined, in part, by total enrollment. The average class size will vary from 20 to 25 students per class and depending on grade level. At this time, the planned amount of classes and class sizes for each grade level in the 2025-2026 school year are:

Grade	Enrollment
Kindergarten	100
1	60
2	42
3	42
4	48
5	48

WILL KINDERGARTEN CLASSES HAVE INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANTS?

Yes, however the number of IAs will depend on finalized class sizes and enrollment numbers for the academic year. More information will be available in the spring!

WHAT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES WILL ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY HAVE FOR PARENTS?

Ashley River Classical Academy will have a Parent Service Organization (PSO) charged with supporting and encouraging teachers, fundraising for the school, and planning and implementation of school events. More details to come!

WHAT IS ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HILLSDALE COLLEGE?

Hillsdale College K-12 Education provides support to Ashley River Classical Academy in the form of training and professional development for teachers, leaders, and board members and through the establishment of a network of classical charter schools upon which ARCA can call for guidance and advice. Hillsdale College K-12 also provides Ashley River Classical Academy with guidance in establishing a rigorous, coherent K-12 curriculum and school culture. The Hillsdale K-12 team will lead professional development for Ashley River Classical Academy teachers, host Zoom sessions with teachers at classical schools across the country, gather classical educators for conferences on their campus, and occasionally visit our school to observe and provide feedback. In return, Ashley River Classical Academy makes a pledge to Hillsdale College that we will provide our students with an excellent classical education.

WILL COMPUTERS BE USED IN THE CLASSROOM AT ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY?

Classical education entails the prudent use of technology in the classroom. In a classical classroom, the teacher is the authority and the source of information. The teacher may use technology to supplement and enhance their teaching by, for example, showing historical art works and photography, maps, or projections of their own notes. Technology, however, does not replace or supersede the teacher in the classroom. Ashley River Classical Academy students, therefore, will generally not use computers in the classroom, though they may occasionally use them for testing or for the completion of typed written assignments.

WHAT SHOULD PARENTS EXPECT AS THEIR CHILD OR CHILDREN TRANSITION TO CLASSICAL LEARNING AND HOW CAN THEY HELP?

The faculty and staff of Ashley River Classical Academy understand that a transition to a new school with a new curriculum and a new way of learning can be difficult for children. It is important to remember that many of our teachers are themselves new to classical education. Frequent and open communication with a spirit of collaboration and cooperation between parents, students, teachers, and administrators is of the utmost importance, especially in the first few years in the life of our school. When questions arise, directing those questions to the appropriate person and pursuing dialogue and understanding are essential. Parents are encouraged to attend our monthly PSO meetings and curriculum nights, and other events to learn more about classical education and why Ashley River Classical Academy has the curriculum, pedagogy, culture, and policies that we do. In addition to fostering openness and teamwork between home and school, parents are strongly encouraged to engage with the curriculum their children are learning by, for example, discussing the historical and scientific concepts they are studying and reading the literature and poetry alongside them.

WILL WE OFFER A PLACEMENT EXAM FOR HOMESCHOOLED STUDENTS TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE PLACED IN THE APPROPRIATE GRADE?

Prior to Year 1, we will not administer a placement exam. However, at the start of the school year, all students will complete baseline assessments. At the end of the school year, students will take a final benchmark assessment, along with state-required assessments. These results, along with an evaluation of the school year's progress, will be used to determine promotion or retention.

For students new to the school, if it is determined that they are reading more than one grade level behind their peers, they may be advised to enroll in the grade level deemed appropriate by the teacher, the Dean of Curriculum and Instruction, and the Head of School. If parents choose to place the student in the originally enrolled grade level against the recommendation of these school leaders, they will be required to sign a document acknowledging this decision. This document will become part of the student's permanent record.

WILL WE OFFER THE OPTION OF DEFERRED ENROLLMENT FOR KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS (FAMILIES THAT WISH TO WAIT TO ENROLL THEIR STUDENT IN KINDER UNTIL THEY ARE 6 YRS. OLD)?

In South Carolina, children are eligible to enroll in kindergarten if they turn five years old on or before September 1 of the applicable school year. While kindergarten attendance is generally required, parents or guardians have the option to defer their child's enrollment until first grade. This deferral is permitted under South Carolina law, allowing families to wait until their child is six years old before starting school.

However, ARCA will not be providing formal guidance to parents regarding this decision, as we believe it is best handled on a case-by-case basis. If parents have questions about deferred enrollment, Ms. Spry is happy to answer their inquiries, but the decision will be based on their choice, not the school's recommendation at this time.

WILL FAMILIES BE GIVEN AN OPTION TO DECLINE THEIR STUDENT'S GRADE PROMOTION AT ARCA?

In South Carolina, the decision to promote or retain a student is primarily determined by the school's educational professionals, including teachers and administrators, based on the student's academic performance and overall development. While parents or guardians are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education and may provide input regarding grade placement.

That said, we believe these matters are best handled on a case-by-case basis. However, our policies about promotion and retention will be on our website in a few months. Ms. Spry is more than willing to meet with parents to discuss their concerns and provide guidance on the next steps. If parents have questions about deferred enrollment or grade placement, I am happy to address their inquiries and work collaboratively to determine the best course of action for their student.

WHAT IS THE HOMEWORK LOAD?

Ashley River Classical Academy places a strong emphasis on after school time being family and play time. For this reason, we limit the amount and scope of homework assigned to students, particularly in the Lower School. Our full homework policy can be found in our Family Handbook.

WHAT ROLE DOES RELIGION PLAY AT ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY?

As a public charter school, Ashley River Classical Academy is nonsectarian. Religion, however, is a part of the human experience and has played an important role in the events of history, the development of ideas, and the works of art, music, and literature that have been produced. For this

reason, students at Ashley River Classical Academy will encounter, learn about, and discuss world religions, including Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, within their historical and cultural contexts. Students will also encounter works of art, literature, and music with religious themes and these cultural productions will be analyzed, appreciated, and discussed in a manner that is appropriate to the subject and grade level. In addition, Ashley River Classical Academy recognizes the right of all students to freely practice their family's religious beliefs. If any religious accommodations are necessary for your child, please contact the Head of School to discuss.

WHAT ROLE DOES POLITICS PLAY AT ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY?

Etymologically, the word "politics" is derived from the Greek word *polis*, which refers to the ancient Greek city-state itself as well as the need for human beings to live in communities with each other, starting with the family and including the local community, the nation, and the community of the world. So far as politics refers to our attempts to establish communities and to find out how to best govern and live in harmony with one another within those communities, political topics may arise naturally from the history, philosophy, government, and literature within our curriculum. Students in the Lower School for example, will learn about the influence of Greek democracy and the Roman Republic on our Constitution and will learn about the form and substance of the American government under the Constitution. Students in the Upper School, for example, will read and discuss such explicitly political works as George Orwell's *1984* and Aristotle's *Politics*. In each instance, the teacher will encourage a classroom culture that facilitates the open exchange of ideas among students and will not advocate for a partisan political position of their own. In addition, political topics and other controversial subjects will be handled in an academic and age-appropriate manner.

HOW DO I ENROLL MY CHILD AT ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY? IS IT TOO LATE?

Starting November 4, 2024, Ashley River Classical Academy will accept applications for new students on a first come first serve basis. When seats are available, new students will be admitted in the order in which they apply. When seats are unavailable at a given grade level, new applicants will be added to our wait list in the order in which they apply.

WILL STUDENTS AT ASHLEY RIVER CLASSICAL ACADEMY BE REQUIRED TO TAKE THE STATE STANDARDIZED TESTS?

Yes, as a public charter school, Ashley River Classical Academy will administer the state standardized tests to its students at the appropriate time each school year. However, the tests do not drive our curriculum and pedagogy. Instead, we regard them as an opportunity for our students to demonstrate the excellence of the classical education they are receiving.