



Head of Upper School (6–8 Grades)

DEPARTMENT: EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATOR
REPORTS TO: HEAD OF SCHOOL
STATUS: FULL-TIME, EXEMPT
PAY SCALE: \$130,000–\$180,000
START DATE: July 1, 2026

Black Pine Circle School (K–8 independent school) seeks a thoughtful, collaborative, and mission-driven Head of Upper School (Grades 6–8) to lead a dynamic community of educators and students in Berkeley, California. The ideal candidate is an instructional leader who models curiosity, empathy, and integrity while fostering a culture of inquiry, belonging, and academic excellence. Our Lower School (grades K–5) supports approximately 125 students, and our Upper School (grades 6–8) supports approximately 180 students.

MISSION STATEMENT

BPC's mission is to create a learning community that encourages humanity, empathy, moral depth, cultural understanding, and freedom in intellectual pursuits. Socially, it is our goal to instill mutual respect, compassion, and a sense of belonging among all of our students.

POSITION SUMMARY

The head of upper school serves as a member of the executive administrative team and reports to the head of school. The head of upper school is responsible for the general oversight of the curricular scope and sequence in grades six, seven, and eight. This individual is an instructional leader and culture builder who is also responsible for managing the growth and development of the upper school faculty and staff.

The head of upper school provides academic leadership and oversight to maintain the academic rigor and integrity of the school, and must possess an energetic commitment to the school's mission, demonstrate the ability to participate effectively in an intellectual environment, as well as show a commitment to the school's philosophy and values. The person in this position will possess a deep commitment to the evaluation of curriculum, academic programming, faculty growth and development, relevant and intentional student experiences, and best practices in teaching and learning.

Working closely with the head of school and head of lower school, the head of upper school helps coordinate the 6–8 program and supports the day-to-day activities for 180 students in grades sixth through eighth.

AREAS OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE FOR HEAD OF UPPER SCHOOL

Leadership – The Head of Upper School leads with empathy, intellectual curiosity, and integrity, cultivating a professional culture grounded in BPC's mission and values. This leader inspires confidence, models thoughtful communication, and builds trust through visibility, collaboration, and shared purpose. A successful head will both lead the division by bringing ideas and curricular expertise to the table and facilitate the division by supporting and coordinating the talents and strengths of the faculty.

Curriculum – BPC’s Upper School builds on a Socratic and humanistic foundation that values deep thinking, inquiry, and care. The Head of Upper School ensures a dynamic balance between intellectual rigor and the social-emotional well-being of students, while empowering faculty to innovate, collaborate, and lead within a shared vision of teaching and learning. The head of upper school will stimulate and manage on-going discourse on curricular initiatives and issues germane to the goals and direction for the division. Effective use of professional development resources is essential. The social-emotional development of each student is a key component of the curriculum as are authentic experiences in service learning and outdoor education, the development of leadership skills, and the importance of ethical decision-making.

Diversity – Located in West Berkeley, the BPC community is characterized by a diversity of ethnicity, culture, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender, ability and thought. The BPC mission affirms the importance of diversity as a component of excellence and the importance of respect among all members of the community. The Head of Upper School leads ongoing reflection and action around diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, ensuring that curriculum, community practices, and policies reflect BPC’s mission and values. This leader fosters a culture where every student and adult experiences belonging, voice, and respect.

Communication – The Head of Upper School communicates with clarity, transparency, and consistency, ensuring alignment across faculty, families, and students. Through timely updates, visible presence, and active listening, this leader strengthens trust and reinforces the school’s commitment to partnership between home and school. Excellent writing and speaking skills required; timeliness and clarity are equally important. Highly developed organizational skills are necessary. Follow-through, efficiency, attention to detail, and consistency are crucial for success.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Works closely with the head of school to stimulate and manage ongoing discourse on curricular initiatives in the upper school division.
- Has thorough knowledge of curriculum theory and practice for grades 6–8 as well as experience and creativity in curricular design and implementation.
- Responsible for the articulation of the school’s philosophy and program to all constituencies.
- Ensures academic programming and pedagogy align with BPC’s mission, values, and K–8 curricular progression.
- Assists in supervising curriculum integrity and articulation across the US divisions
- Supports best practices in curriculum and pedagogy.
- Leads, develops, and leads meetings, task forces, and other programming as needed
- Has an ability to understand the intellectual and emotional needs of independent school parents, as well as the needs of an experienced and highly motivated faculty.
- Effectively leads professional development initiatives, with the ability to affirm and support experienced teachers.
- Fosters an inclusive community through intentional leadership, equitable practices, and celebration of diverse voices.
- Participates in board meetings and strategic discussions as invited by the Head of School.
- Plans and collaborates on special events, class demonstrations, and presentations.
- Plans and implements admissions events and evaluation of students, in collaboration with the director of enrollment and admissions.
- Examines the program and practices of matters of DEIB in order to build and sustain a cohesive and inclusive school community.
- Contributes to organizational design and succession planning to ensure stability, continuity, and distributed leadership within the Upper School.
- Other duties as assigned by the head of school.

SCHOOL-WIDE DUTIES

- Participates in school committees as needed and appropriate
- Attends all school-wide mandatory events

QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

1. Bachelor's degree required, with a master's degree in administrative leadership or related field
2. Five years of experience in a leadership role in an independent school strongly preferred
3. A minimum of five years of teaching experience across K-12 grades
4. Collaborative decision-making and team-building capabilities with multiple constituents who are sometimes headed in different directions
5. Keen understanding of students needs across grade levels
6. Demonstrated success in establishing and maintaining policies, procedures, and controls
7. Proven track record of advising at the highest level and participating in major strategic decisions that have profound long-term implications for an organization
8. Demonstrated success in leading a capable team, including hiring knowledgeable professionals, articulating and evaluating individual and department goals, and providing ongoing evaluation, motivation and feedback
9. Self-directed and well organized, with the flexibility and practicality to respond to changing priorities and unexpected situations
10. Honesty and personal integrity in dealing with others
11. Availability to work evening and weekend special events
12. Excellent writing and speaking skills, as well as timeliness and clarity in communication

COMPENSATION

The anticipated base compensation the school reasonably expects to pay candidates for the position of head of upper school is \$130,000 to \$180,000, depending on factors such as experience and education as well as internal pay equity with current employees.

BPC's board and administration are dedicated to offering competitive salaries and benefits, including medical benefits, retirement plan employer contributions, and professional development opportunities.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Required to lift and carry up to a maximum of 25 lbs., in a correct manner consistent with the appropriate training provided by the School. Reaching with hands and arms, climb stairs, bend, stoop, twist, lift, reach, push, pull, grasp, balance, kneel occasionally. Use of telephone, computer, copier, and other office equipment. Required to sit (or stand) for prolonged periods of time while operating a computer for approximately 6–8 hours daily. Repetitive motion for typing and other keystroke needs.

Black Pine Circle School is an Equal Opportunity Employer and is committed to a policy of equal employment opportunity for all applicants, employees, and volunteers, and the School makes decisions based on the merits of each candidate. We have an ongoing commitment to the creation of a workplace free of discrimination and harassment, and prohibit discrimination based on an individual's culture, race, ethnicity, sex, religious beliefs, ancestry, sexual orientation, gender identity, reproductive health decisions, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, military and veteran status, citizenship status, marital status, genetic information, height, weight, or any other status protected by federal, state, or local law. Black Pine Circle will afford equal employment opportunities to all qualified applicants, employees, and volunteers as to all terms and conditions of employment, including, without limitation, compensation, hiring, training, promotion, transfer, discipline, and termination.