

# POSITION STATEMENT

# SAN FRANCISCO FRIENDS SCHOOL

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA



HEAD OF SCHOOL SEARCH  
START DATE: JULY 1, 2026 OR 2027

san francisco  

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FRIENDS  
SCHOOL





## OVERVIEW

San Francisco Friends School (SFFS) is a remarkable school, full stop. One of a kind. As the only Quaker school on the West Coast, this K–8 school is preparing to celebrate its 25th anniversary and presents an extraordinary opportunity for an experienced leader who resonates with a values-aligned Quaker community; with San Francisco’s cultural, civic, and educational landscape; and with a program of distinctive depth and purpose.

Located in the dynamic heart of the Mission District of San Francisco, the School lives its Quaker values on a daily basis. The campus is breath-takingly original and inspiring in its own right and a living symbol of the blend of purpose and place at SFFS. Community partnerships are authentic and connected to the neighborhood surrounding the School, just steps away. All students, K–8, sit silently for Community Worship every week, gathered together in a room with benches reworked from the original wood used in the 1906 Levi Strauss factory on Valencia Street and reflecting the School’s commitment to

environmental sustainability. Grade 8 students opine on how much they have come to appreciate the power of silence and reflection. In the most recent all-school assembly, students pondered in silence: “Do I do the right thing, even when there will be difficult consequences?” There is a humility and a groundedness in the hallways of this School, where students and adults seek to identify the inner light in each person. The interior glass walls of the School are etched with inspiring quotations, chosen by each graduating class. The concurrent commitment to creativity and curiosity in the classrooms, equity and belonging throughout the community for students and adults alike, and Quaker practices that inspire respect and kindness are palpable.

The challenges are noteworthy and exciting: how to knit the “fearless, bold, and courageous” history and development of San Francisco Friends School with a vision for its future growth and development in the context of an always-changing, yet never-changing San Francisco. How and when to proceed on master plan projects for a new entrance and for facilities that will incorporate the recent acquisition of a multi-story adjacent building (with its original pizza oven still in place). How to clarify the definition of academic excellence, delivered through a constructivist, hands-on, inquiry-based program. How to be the chief storyteller and spokesperson for the School. Leading San Francisco Friends School is a rich and special opportunity.

The next head of school at SFFS need not be a practicing Quaker, but must resonate deeply with and embrace the Quaker mindset and practices of this K–8 school that has carved out a bespoke identity in the landscape of San Francisco independent schools. The position for the next head will begin in July 2026 or 2027, and we invite you to consider this professional opportunity of note.

# MISSION AND VALUES

## Mission

At San Francisco Friends School, students learn in a community grounded in the Quaker values of reflection, integrity, peaceful problem-solving, and stewardship. Our teachers challenge students with a dynamic curriculum that inspires curiosity, cooperation, and hard work. We teach children to listen to all voices and to trust their own. We engage with the world around us with kindness and conviction, working toward the Quaker ideal of a caring and just society.

## Values, or the Spices

San Francisco Friends School is committed to Quaker values, also referred to as testimonies: simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship (SPICES). These principles guide teaching, learning, decision-making, and interpersonal interactions across the community:

## The Spices

- **Simplicity:** Clearing the way for deeper engagement in ourselves, our community, and our education
- **Peace:** Creating peace in ourselves and our community
- **Integrity:** Being true to oneself and one's values and honest with others
- **Community:** Respecting and valuing every person's place in our lives
- **Equality:** Respecting every person's right to fairness and respect
- **Stewardship:** Valuing the gifts we have been given



On a yearly basis, the School chooses one of the SPICES to emphasize. Currently, the questions, termed “queries”, that greet students on a daily basis center on “integrity” and are posted throughout the School:

- What helps me to feel brave and act with integrity?
- How can I act with integrity when taking care of places, spaces, people, and things?
- How might integrity change the world?

Learn more about the values and testimonies embedded in the life of the School here: <https://www.sffriendsschool.org/quaker-values/testimonies>

## THE PROGRAM

Central to the academic philosophy of SFFS is an understanding of the blending of academic achievement with the “inner growth and outward engagement” asked of each student on the road to becoming thoughtful and compassionate people, dedicated to making a positive impact in their communities. This important blending of mind, heart, and hands—intellect and character—captures the goals the School aspires to achieve for each student. And critical to the successful outcomes for each student is the support and input from the entire community of the School, aligned to these goals.

The educational program at SFFS is built on the constructivist theory, which defines learning as an active process that uses student experience to construct knowledge and understanding. Central to the classroom experience is a talented, caring teacher who supports problem-solving, experimentation, hands-on projects, simulations, and investigations. Critical thinking is a key objective for a student’s intellectual growth. At the same time, teachers set the stage for students by providing age-appropriate content, challenges, and the requisite academic skills. There is a commitment to effective differentiation to identify the “exact right” challenge for all learners in the classroom.



Fostering innovation and preparing students for their future also informs the program at San Francisco Friends School as students and teachers are faced with new opportunities to engage in interdisciplinary units of study and to use technology and AI-generated avenues for teaching and learning. Engagement and challenge characterize the SFFS program.

Quaker tenets central to the program at SFFS:

- Inner light: Students develop a mindset grounded in curiosity and creativity.
- Reflection is an essential part of learning.
- Learning is rooted in community.
- We nurture the confidence that comes from persistence.
- Joy is an essential part of learning.
- Our teachers are thoughtful guides who know their students deeply.

Learn more about the curriculum of the School here:

### **Lower School Curriculum Guide:**

<https://www.sffriendsschool.org/academics/lower-school/lower-school-curriculum-guide>

### **Middle School Curriculum Guide:**

<https://www.sffriendsschool.org/academics/middle-school/middle-school-curriculum-guide>

### **Rich programming in the arts and athletics are woven through the SFFS program:**

<https://www.sffriendsschool.org/student-life/arts-events>

<https://www.sffriendsschool.org/student-life/athletics>

And after-school programs and care also provide engaging activities for students, everything from woodworking at Mission Community Woodshop, jewelry-making, stop motion animation, photography, chess, and improv, as well as instrumental and vocal lessons.



Integral to the program at SFFS is an intentional commitment to Community, capital “C,” that supports the growth and development of each student.

Outside of the School, community partnerships are robust, and every grade has an age-appropriate, active partnership in San Francisco, from first graders dancing with senior citizens at a local assisted-living facility to seventh graders supporting a local cafe that supports refugees through sales of coffee beans. Students at SFFS take on real challenges in the community around them, from studying homelessness to reading to children in the neighborhood.

San Francisco Friends School also supports The Horizons Program, a national organization that provides academic and enrichment experiences for students in San Francisco's public schools. The School provides space to support the program, both by housing the staff of the local chapter of Horizons on campus during the school year and contributing space for summer programs:  
<https://www.sffriendsschool.org/about-us/horizons-at-sffs>

The School embraces a similar commitment to building and supporting the SFFS community within the School as integral to living the



Quaker values of Equality and Community:  
<https://www.sffriendsschool.org/quaker-values/diversity-matters>

The long-standing queries for the value of Equality, or Striving Towards Social Justice, in the Quaker tradition are as relevant today as they were hundreds of years ago:

- How can I help things be more fair so everyone is included and thriving?
- What do fairness and belonging feel, look, and sound like in our community?
- How do our actions help to create a just planet where everyone is treated with dignity and respect?

The School recently adopted this additional commitment that is paired with the School's mission: *In service of our mission, we commit to nurturing a diverse, inclusive, and equitable community. Our Quaker testimonies and practices guide us to reflect and deepen our understanding and appreciation for one another's differences while acknowledging we each possess distinct power, privilege, and responsibility to advance equity. SFFS commits to fostering belonging and connection among its members within and beyond our school community. This ongoing, essential work is furthered and sustained through dialogue, reciprocal learning, and engagement.*

## THE PEOPLE OF SFFS

**Students:** The School currently enrolls 417 students, and 27% of students receive some form of tuition adjustment. Students arrive from 28 Bay Area zip codes, and students of color make up 52% of the student population.

The students at SFFS are singularly articulate about what they love about their School: the long-standing traditions, the Buddy Program between grades, the project-based learning that incorporates the importance of “failure, cooperation, and how to give feedback.” (Yes, Middle School students said this!) They were exceedingly positive about the “chill time in Morning Meeting,” reflecting on what they came to appreciate as they learned about time for quiet and reflection. They appreciate the schoolwide self-selected affinity groups that capture interests and identity and service projects, and they also commented on knowing their neighborhood, “not just the school.” High schools consistently describe Friends students as thoughtful leaders—academically capable, emotionally grounded, and motivated to make a positive impact on their communities—in short, “good people.”

**Faculty and Staff:** The School currently employs approximately 150 faculty and staff. In recent years, teacher and senior leader transition has been higher than desirable. The School benefits from a cadre of veteran educators who carry forth Quaker grounding and institutional knowledge, and newer faculty members are clearly committed to Quaker values and practices.

Faculty members come to Friends because its mission resonates deeply and because the work feels meaningful. They describe their colleagues as “sensitive, intelligent, and reflective,” and there is a heartfelt professional commitment to serving the students in their care. Teachers

know students well, create inclusive and joyful classroom communities, and center inquiry, reflection, and purposeful challenge in their practice. Across the board, teachers are dedicated and mission-driven, and they seek renewed clarity, communication, and direction as Friends moves into its next chapter.

**Senior Leadership:** The senior leadership team, known as Rivets, is a hardworking, mission-aligned group deeply committed to the life of the School. (“Rivets” is not an acronym but refers to the brass button that we find on a pair of sturdy jeans that holds them together, an appropriate and fun nod to the original purpose of the School’s facilities and the value of a good leadership team!) Together, senior leadership stewards the Lower and Middle School divisions, K-8 academics, equity and belonging, admissions, finance and operations, development, and communications. Several team members are relatively new to their roles. This moment presents an opportunity to bring greater clarity to roles, strengthen systems, team cohesion, and communication pathways, and build coherence across a dedicated team. The next head of school will inherit a group of thoughtful professionals eager for the next phase of dynamic leadership at SFFS, strengthening the team’s shared purpose and the structures that support long-term success.



**Parents/Guardians:** SFFS benefits from a Parent Guardian Association (PGA) that is self-described as “robust, hardworking, and passionate.” Currently, there are 19 committees, each co-clerked by two or more parents and supported by additional volunteers. Committees include the Annual Fund, Service Committee, Library Committee, EIB (Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging) Committee, Learning Support Committee, Digital Wellness, and many more. The Co-Clerks of the PGA see their role as building community school-wide, supporting the Co-Clerks of each committee, and serving as a bridge between parents and faculty/administration. PGA leadership meets monthly with the head of school and “we truly value this partnership.”

Parents at SFFS have chosen the School because of its vision to create “citizens of the world.” They love the combination of “academic rigor and kindness,” the commitment to deep Quaker traditions, and inculcating “values that last a lifetime” for their children. They describe SFFS as a “heart-centered school,” and they love the “scrappiness” and “lack of formality” that characterizes the community. “Our community is diverse, and it works here!” They love the “joy and humor” and “authenticity” that characterize the School.

Families hope to see a deeper commitment to academic excellence and curricular strengths as well as better retention of talented faculty and senior leaders going forward. They also prioritize better communication and highlighting the positioning of SFFS in the San Francisco landscape, given the singular strengths and mission of SFFS.

**Governance and the Board of Trustees:** The SFFS Board of Trustees is dedicated, mission-focused, and deeply committed to stewarding the school’s long-term health. They are committed to having a San Francisco home for Quaker-inspired education. They also affirm



the importance of Quaker values in governance—committed to the Quaker process of “durable decision-making”—and are thoughtful partners with senior leadership in ensuring the School’s sustainability. The Board meets monthly and entrusts the head of school with administrative decisions related to operations, academic programs, strategic plan implementation, enrollment, and personnel. As the School moves into a new leadership chapter, the Board is ready to work closely with the head of school to bring the School’s strategic goals to fruition.

## FINANCES, FUNDRAISING, AND FACILITIES

**Finances:** The financial picture at SFFS is stable. The 2024-25 audited financial statements reflect a positive increase (surplus) in net assets. The operating budget reflects a deficit due to lower enrollment than in past years. A five-year forward look shows that the School’s operating budget will return to the positive even if enrollment remains at the current level. An enrollment increase of 5% next year would put the operating budget back in a surplus position. Annual gross tuition for 2025-26 is almost \$20MM, and 22% (\$4.4MM) of that is used to provide financial assistance. The board-

designated funds plus endowment funds total \$27.3MM as of 6/30/25. The school has long-term debt of \$21MM related to the purchase and retrofit of its historic building that houses the School at 250 Valencia Street in San Francisco. Additionally, the school owns outright the neighboring building which presents an opportunity to raise funds to renovate the building and have a significant impact on the school's future spaces and programming.

**Fundraising:** SFFS is continually focused on cultivating a culture of philanthropy in line with its Quaker identity. Currently, the school raises nearly \$1.5M in annual giving. The school has a tradition of raising significant major gifts through capital campaigns to both purchase and renovate its campus and to build its growing endowment. Through the active Parent and Guardian Association (PGA), the adult community is actively involved in helping the school through teacher & staff appreciation, event support, and committee engagement.

**Facilities:** SFFS is housed in a historic San Francisco building, an original Levi Strauss Factory. It has been reconfigured into a beautiful, light-filled, and engaging learning environment where students and faculty can thrive. In 2018, Friends purchased a property next door and is working to reimagine this space. The Mission neighborhood is vibrant and in the heart of the city and provides a bustling, active environment. Still, the limitations of a city campus are real. It requires constant engagement, robust carpool planning, and attention to life outside the school fence. The School has both outdoor play space and a full-size gym where basketball, volleyball, and futsal are all played, and physical education classes are held. The School also has a black box theater in which multiple theater productions are produced each year and where students in Grades 4-8 are enriched through coursework in drama.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The next head of school at San Francisco Friends School will build on the School's strengths and work collaboratively with all constituencies to take on the opportunities and challenges ahead:

- Lead the next chapter of strategic growth and development of SFFS. Knit together the School's courageous founding path with the strategic vision for the future of SFFS. Ground this work in purpose and move forward with humility and confidence. Embrace the unique advantages of the School's location in the Mission neighborhood of San Francisco.
- Communicate and listen with authenticity to build trust and confidence in the School's mission, values, and direction, and galvanize the community. Embrace the School's Quaker identity and commitment to equity, inclusion, and belonging. Be an inspiring storyteller and compelling spokesperson for the School.
- Bring expertise to the support and growth of an outstanding teacher cadre. Retain and support the high-performing teaching and leadership teams and recruit with care for alignment with the School's strengths. Inspire and lead collaboration and team-building, schoolwide.





## THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE FOR THE LEADERSHIP OF SFFS WILL BE:

- Provide strategic leadership for enrollment management and admissions to attract mission-aligned families and students and to ensure financial sustainability for the School. Generate enthusiasm and articulate the compelling reasons for attending SFFS.
- Build cohesion and organizational coherence through dynamic management skills. Clarify roles and responsibilities, strengthen systems, and reinforce expectations and decision-making protocols. Implement appropriate goal-setting and performance management feedback. Manage change effectively and with thoughtful collaboration and reflective process.
- Ensure delivery of an outstanding, challenging SFFS curriculum for all students, and communicate this curriculum effectively and frequently. Support the creative, constructivist pedagogy in place and enhance the curricular systems needed to prepare SFFS students for their futures. Ensure support for robust professional dialogue and growth for the faculty on curricular matters.
- Bring expertise and enthusiasm for continuing to develop the strong culture of philanthropy at SFFS. Launch a campaign for facilities projects and endowment needs as outlined in the School's recently adopted strategic plan.
- A visionary and mission-aligned leader who wholeheartedly embraces and “lives” Quaker values and practices.
- An exceptional community builder who listens deeply, cultivates belonging, and strengthens trust across all constituencies.
- A bold, compelling communicator capable of telling the SFFS story, in admissions, advancement, and the broader community, with warmth, clarity, and resonance.
- An educator with deep experience in elementary and middle school pedagogy, committed to academic excellence, reflective practice, and the joyful, human-centered nature of K–8 learning.
- An experienced organizational and instructional leader who can stabilize, strengthen, and build coherence across the School.
- A leader who acts with warmth and empathy, unquestioned integrity, palpable humility, compassion, and courage, who is comfortable navigating complexity and guided by their inner light.
- A leader who delights in creativity and curiosity, and can be decisive and clear.
- And finally, without question, someone with a great sense of humor!



## SALARY RANGE AND BENEFITS

The anticipated salary range for this role is \$525K-\$625K, inclusive of a housing allowance and commensurate with experience. SFFS offers a competitive benefits package, including a retirement plan with employer contributions, comprehensive insurance benefits, and support for professional growth.

## TO APPLY

San Francisco Friends School has retained Resource Group 175 (RG175) to support the search for its next head of school. Interested candidates should prepare a cover letter, an updated resume, and a writing sample(s) as part of the application materials. Five references are also a required component of the application materials.

The application deadline is February 1, 2026, for a start date of July 1, 2026 or 2027. Candidates are encouraged to submit their materials in a timely manner (and well before the actual application deadline) at <https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>.

For any questions about this exciting leadership position and to register your interest, please contact the RG175 consultants directly:

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