


Kelly Sumner

Dean of Students



“This year is especially challenging—as we knew it would be—and the SLC is meeting the need to provide an extra layer of comfort and care to our students. All of our students are still processing the abrupt ending of school last spring, the loss of a summer as they would have experienced it, the daily challenges of mask wearing and social distancing, and the constant worry about what the rest of the year will look like. The SLC already feels like a ‘check in’ spot—not just for business but for yourself—a place to relax a bit, unwind, and meet with the adults on campus who are helping to guide you, support you, and cheer you on.

Our current challenges are gatherings, togetherness, and space. We are supporting students by helping them to reframe their expectations and find the beauty and the joy in getting to do things traditionally, but with a twist. We have had to reimagine what we do but are committed to capturing everything in a way that still honors the spirit of the event. It is easy to get caught up in something ‘not being the same’ just because it looks different, but it can still feel the same and have the same end result, maybe even a better one!

A silver lining is realizing a true appreciation for the opportunity to be together in community; students are gaining the ability to appreciate both what they have lost as well as what they still have in a way that wouldn’t have been possible without these restrictions. Daily conversations are happening in the SLC about triumphs, struggles, plans, ideas, worries, fears, and hopes. Questions are answered, tears are shed, complaints are heard, news is shared, excitement is expressed, and visions are co-created.” 

Photos by Meredith Frazier

6 WAYS ASHLEY HALL UPPER SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE STAYING *Connected*

- **MORNING MEETING:** Broadcast three times a week at the end of the first block class, it offers students a chance to learn news from their division and share in some community fun.
- **TRADITIONS:** We have been able to honor several cherished traditions in new ways, including tie-dying masks for Senior/Freshman week, Big Sister-Little Sister outdoor meetups, and seniors enjoying the Shell House, physically distanced of course.
- **HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS:** Holidays have always been a way to bring the Ashley Hall community together, and we created new ways to celebrate, including socially distanced Halloween parades, a broadcast of the Thanksgiving Assembly, and an outdoor tree for the Gift Giving Assembly to donate gifts for those in need.
- **ASSEMBLY PERIODS AND ADVISORY MEETINGS:** Students gather with their advisor and advisory group once a week to participate in Assembly and twice a month to eat lunch together.
- **COMMUNITY ACTION:** Students still serve others throughout the year, but we have redefined guidelines during the pandemic to help students find ways to support non-profit organizations within the parameters of our Panther Pledge.
- **GRADE LEVEL MEETINGS:** Eating together as a grade once a month, students meet in Davies Auditorium and often listen to music or play trivia to happily pass the time. This creates opportunities for students to develop new friendships.