



# LEADERSHIP

## Search

**Principal (Head of School)**  
Kodaikanal International School  
Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu, India

**Application Deadline:** March 31, 2025  
**Start Date:** July 1, 2025 (negotiable)



# A SCHOOL THE WORLD NEEDS

## Education with a Global Perspective

With a rich heritage spanning over a century, Kodaikanal International School (KIS) has been producing graduates who can thrive far beyond the classroom.

The school's greatest strength lies in its learning as a community – living together in an assortment of cultures, distinct faiths and varied experiences from across the globe. Embedded in a comprehensive educational system focused on the individual, the school's commitment to quality education, global diversity, and a continuous learning process empowers its students to be citizens of the world. The natural beauty and moderate montane climate of Kodaikanal adds to the warmth of its international community life. It is an ideal setting for learning!

## KIS Vision

We strive to be a school the world needs: Our graduates will be transformative leaders, caring humans and thoughtful ambassadors for a just, sustainable and peaceful world.

## KIS Mission

Kodaikanal International School (KIS) is committed to empowering young people from diverse backgrounds with vision, knowledge, compassion and cross-cultural understanding. We are a community that welcomes everyone and seeks our purpose in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

# ABOUT KODAIKANAL INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

The school leverages its unique location at 7,000 feet in the Palani Hills to provide students with an exceptional environmental experience, contribute to the local community, and embark on extraordinary adventures. The international community at KIS allows students to develop a range of music skills and excel in sports. Through multi-disciplinary foreign exchange programs, conferences, and competitions, our students engage in diverse national and international experiences.

For over 100 years, hiking and camping have been staples at KIS, offering students a break from routine and an opportunity to explore the natural beauty of the Western Ghats at our 100-acre off-campus property. Activities include rafting, canoeing, swimming, archery, ziplining, and climbing.

KIS welcomes students from diverse academic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Our strong support system enhances education for those with learning difficulties, promoting independence through tailored approaches. Student-focused programs aid in time management, organization, and study skills.

Extracurricular activities encourage students to positively impact the local community and sustain the environment, blending classroom learning with community initiatives that promote personal growth, civic awareness, and a progressive global outlook aligned with the KIS vision and mission.



480+  
Students



19  
Nationalities



129  
Staff  
Members



1:6  
Student-Staff  
Ratio





# OUR HISTORY

**Kodaikanal International School** has a rich history and tradition spanning well over a hundred years.

In the early 1880s, there was a great need for an English-medium school in South India, due to an ever-increasing Christian mission community in the area. Having a school at a hill-station would allow the children of missionaries to escape tropical diseases and provide a cool and open atmosphere that stimulated learning.

In the early months of the year 1900, a woman by the name of Margaret Eddy came to visit her son, who lived as a missionary in Tamil Nadu, India. Eddy was an educator and a remarkable administrator, who also had ample experience of India and the Indian culture. Seeing the need for a school, she decided to begin the process. She held the first Kodaikanal Conference on June 1, 1900, in which she established a Committee whose duty it was to find teachers and a building in which schooling would be held.

After commissioning The Highclerc Hotel as a building more than a year later, under the leadership of Mrs. Margaret Eddy, the Founding Principal, "Highclerc School" was opened to students on July 1, 1901. Mrs. Eddy served as principal of the school that was eventually named the Kodai School, without salary, from 1901 to 1905, when she was forced to return to America due to a sickness.

By 1930, the school had fully expanded into a high-school accommodating students from preschool through grade twelve, and that same year, Tracy Manley became the first student to receive a High School Diploma

from Kodai School. In 1944, Dayavu Dhanapal became the first Indian woman staff member to join the school. The school's boarding facilities and education program gave it a grand heritage, and a reputation for a fine education, allowing its students to return to their home countries to pursue professional education and higher studies.

In the 1970s, Kodaikanal School adopted the IB program, making it the first IB school in India, and only third in South Asia. Kodai School was later renamed Kodaikanal International School. Since then, the international community has expanded the horizons of students that enter through its gates.

In 1974, our foundation document was created with this goal: "to develop Kodaikanal School into an autonomous, multicultural, multinational, Christian school in mission as a Christian service to children and parents of all communities of Indian and international society, providing an opportunity for a quality education coupled with a specially designed opportunity for deepened spiritual development." As you can see, we were a truly international school right from the beginning. As our current foundation document, Design '18, says: *'What we continue to envisage is a residential school where students and staff of various nationalities, cultural backgrounds, and diverse experiences can learn from one another while they live and study together. The fact that the school is set in an Indian context provides a particular focus for the learning process.'*



# THE TOWN OF KODAIKANAL

## About Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu

Nestled in the Western Ghats, Kodaikanal is a picturesque hill station located in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, India. Known as the “*Princess of Hill Stations*,” Kodaikanal is renowned for its breathtaking landscapes, serene lake, and lush green forests, making it a popular destination for both tourists and residents alike. The town sits at an altitude of 2,133 meters (7,000 feet) above sea level, providing it with a unique climate and an idyllic environment.

The town is centered around the Lake of 24 hectares with a 5-km road around, made with a dam built in 1885 from watersheds on 3 sides, at an altitude of 2133 m.

## Connection to Nature

The proximity to mountains, valleys, waterfalls, clean air, wild animals, lakes, and meadows, is intentionally built upon by the school in the form of hiking, camping, outdoor sports, art, and Social and Environmental Education. This complex web of a naturally gifted world biodiversity hotspot provides a unique opportunity to connect with nature.

## Weather and Climate

Kodaikanal experiences a mild and temperate climate throughout the year, which makes it a refreshing escape from the hot, humid plains below. The weather is cool and pleasant, with temperatures ranging from 15°C (59°F) in winter to around 20°C (68°F) during the summer months. The monsoon season (June to September) brings lush rains, enhancing the natural beauty of the region. Kodaikanal’s

climate offers an ideal living and working environment, particularly for those who prefer cooler temperatures and a peaceful atmosphere.

## Demographics

Kodaikanal has a diverse population consisting of locals, including Tamil-speaking communities, as well as a mix of people from different parts of India and around the world. The town is known for its vibrant blend of cultures, with a significant expatriate community. The area has a moderate population, with around 50,000 residents, although this number swells during the peak tourist season.

## Accessibility

Kodaikanal is well-connected by road to nearby cities such as Madurai (approximately 120 kilometers) and Coimbatore (approximately 170 kilometers). The nearest airport is in Madurai, with regular domestic flights connecting the region to major Indian cities and international flights connecting to Singapore, Dubai, and Colombo. The town is also accessible by bus, making it convenient for visitors and residents alike to travel.

Kodaikanal International School is nested in Kodaikanal, with campuses dispersed throughout the town. Staff and students move between its properties on a daily basis.



# ABOUT THE ROLE

**Title:** Principal, Kodaikanal International School

**Reports to:** The KIS Council of Directors

## About the Role

The Principal of KIS...

- Serves as the Head of School and leader of the KIS community, responsible for the smooth and efficient functioning and management of all aspects of the school's performance.
- Passionately upholds the school's guiding principles as defined in [Design '18](#) and effectively communicates the Mission, Vision and strategic framework to all stakeholders, including parents, staff, students, alumni and the Kodai community.
- Leads an international and diverse staff in delivering exceptional educational, residential, and social-emotional programs at KIS.
- Is responsible for staff recruitment, development, and evaluation.
- Manages student recruitment, institutional advancement, and marketing efforts.
- Is accountable for property matters, legal issues, and the overall financial health of KIS.
- Builds, promotes, and maintains positive relationships with the many groups involved in the work of the school, including parents, students, alumni, and government officials.
- Reports to the KIS Council of Directors for the conduct of their work and maintains a strong working relationship with the Council, characterized by open communication, mutual respect, and trust.
- Is a committed Christian who strives to live out their faith through servant leadership.
- Cultivates an inclusive and welcoming school environment that values and celebrates diversity, ensuring all community members feel respected, accepted, and supported, regardless of their faith, cultural background, or identity.

## Qualifications and Attributes

Kodaikanal International School seeks a dedicated, community-minded, and experienced international educator who understands and embraces the school's guiding principles and intends to make a long-term commitment to the role. The incoming principal will possess the following qualifications and attributes:

- 10+ years of experience in international school leadership.
- Relevant degree(s) in Education highly preferred.
- Knowledge of all International Baccalaureate Programmes (DP, MYP, PYP, and CP) highly preferred.
- Experience in residential, co-ed education preferred.
- An open and approachable leadership style that values belonging and trust, and genuinely listens to diverse perspectives in a multicultural setting.
- Approaches learning as a joyful, holistic, and transformative endeavor that inspires students to discover their purpose and direction.
- An innovative academic mindset that appreciates the importance of student-centered, inquiry- and place-based learning and emphasizes student engagement with real-world issues.
- Leads by example with personal integrity and a genuine commitment to student and staff social/emotional wellbeing and growth.
- A genuine interest in, and willingness to learn more about, Indian culture and tradition.
- A strong commitment to environmental sustainability and environmental education.
- A systems-driven approach to strategic planning and financial management.



# KIS ON THE HORIZON

## Opportunities and Challenges

The next leader of KIS will work with the senior management team to optimize the following **Opportunities**:

- A state-of-the-art high school Library and Design complex due for completion in 2026.
- Multiple student pathways to success, such as through the IB Career-related Programme, authorized in 2024; and a transdisciplinary vision-based KIS course to be introduced in 2025.
- A strong scholarship program that improves diversity and addresses equity.
- A strong practice of external engagement and fundraising, including through alumni relationships and new Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. (And especially in light of the Quasquicentennial school celebrations planned for 2026, including the 75th anniversary of the Margaret Eddy Chapel and 50th anniversary of the IB at KIS).
- An established, unique Center for Environment and Humanity that addresses climate change issues and promotes sustainability, locally and globally, nurturing programs that facilitate student learning in a growing field.

- Green Campus and Biodiversity initiatives, such as waste management and renewable energy projects, and a move toward eco-friendly facilities and carbon net neutrality by 2030, that will help KIS continue to lead by example and maintain one of the highest Air Quality Index levels in India.

The next leader of KIS will work with the senior management team to confront the following **Challenges**:

- Competition due to the proliferation of international schools across India.
- Unregulated growth and overdevelopment in the township of Kodaikanal, and the related complex web of community and government relationships that require attention.
- Recruiting/retaining diverse and talented teaching staff who understand and can cherish the special identity of an international, residential school.
- Heritage infrastructure that requires constant improvement and maintenance to meet changing student and staff needs, including for sports and extracurricular activities.

# COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

**Compensation** is determined by the KIS Council of Directors and is based on a candidate's qualifications and relevant work experience.

**Benefits** include (but are not limited to):

- Housing in Benderloch, the Principal's traditional residence on Kodai Lake.
- Free education for school-age children (Pre-K through Grade 12).
- Medical coverage and insurance for self and qualified dependents.
- Annual round-trip travel for self and qualified dependents to Home of Record.
- Shipping allowance upon joining and at completion of service.
- School vehicle for official and personal use.
- Membership in the local Kodai Club.
- Retirement savings (with employee matching) through the Indian Employee Provident Fund (EPF).
- Paid professional development opportunities, such as IB and NESAC conferences.

## HOW TO APPLY

Interested candidates—internal and external—are invited to contact the search committee in confidence. Candidates will need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
- A current CV;
- A list of three professional references with name, current title, relationship, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate's permission).

And:

- A short video (between three to five minutes) in which the candidate shares their understanding of the KIS [Design '18](#) document and how it would inform their leadership.

Please send to:

KIS Search Committee  
[KISPrincipalSearch@kis.in](mailto:KISPrincipalSearch@kis.in)




A school the world needs



If you have queries, please reach out to us at [KISPrincipalSearch@kis.in](mailto:KISPrincipalSearch@kis.in).

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