



CHELtenham
COLLEGE

Director of Admissions & Marketing

CANDIDATE INFORMATION



Welcome

I am delighted that you are considering applying for this vital leadership post at Cheltenham. Cheltenham College is a wonderful environment in which to learn and develop, and the warmth of the welcome here is without parallel. The strong community is created in an all-through school, with Cheltenham Nursery and Prep Schools taking young people from the age of 3 before they move on to the College in Year 9.

This is a very exciting time in the development of Cheltenham, and I am seeking to build on the excellent work of our outgoing Registrar, Simon Conner, in adding a key strategic lead to our Admissions and Marketing Teams. This individual will be an integral part of the College Executive Committee (CEC) that develops the blueprint to ensure that Cheltenham continues to thrive now and into the future.

In a time of challenge, you will act as an expert strategic leader, working closely with me and our Council to shape our offer to the Cheltonians of the future. You'll have an excellent team to partner with and the remit and support you need to bring your vision to life.

At Cheltenham, you will find highly committed and dedicated staff, aspirational pupils and an education that genuinely goes beyond and above, whether in the classroom, in sports or in the creative sphere. I would love to be able to show you all that Cheltenham offers and look forward to your application.

With best wishes,

Chris Townsend

Head





Cheltenham College



Founded in 1841, Cheltenham College is one of Britain's great independent schools – a school of genuine breadth, ambition, and character that combines a proud and distinguished history with a thoroughly modern outlook. With over 1,100 pupils across the College and Prep, a campus of exceptional beauty in the heart of one of England's most desirable towns, and a growing international family of schools, Cheltenham occupies a compelling and distinctive position in the independent sector. Its motto, *Labor Omnia Vincit – Work Conquers All* – speaks to an ethos that has shaped generations of remarkable individuals and continues to define the culture and spirit of both schools today. From the outset, it was built for breadth: a school that would educate the whole person, not merely the academic. That founding instinct has never left it.

THE COLLEGE

The campus on Bath Road is one of the most striking in English education – a sweeping collection of Victorian, Georgian, and modern buildings set across 72 acres in the centre of Cheltenham, anchored by a chapel of breathtaking proportions that rivals King's College Cambridge in its ambition and whose walls record the names of over a thousand Old Cheltonians who gave their lives in two World Wars. Fourteen of them were awarded the Victoria Cross – a number surpassed only by Eton and Harrow. The College's history is not decorative. It runs deep.

Academically, the College has grown in stature considerably in recent years. In 2023, both the College and the Prep received 'Excellent in all areas' from the ISI – the highest possible judgement – and the College's A-level and GCSE results place it firmly among the leading academic schools in the country. In 2025, 51% of A-level grades were A* or A, with 82% at A*–B, and the Sunday Times Parent Power table recognised the College's upward trajectory with a jump of 65 places. Russell Group universities – Bristol, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, and Manchester – dominate the leavers' destinations, alongside a growing number heading to top institutions in the US and Europe.

But academic results only tell part of the story. From the outset, Cheltenham College was built for breadth: a school that would educate the whole person. That founding instinct has never left it. The College's reputation for sport is formidable: nationally and internationally competitive in rugby, cricket, hockey, equestrian, polo, and the gloriously arcane sport of rackets, in which Old Cheltonians have dominated the world rankings. Music, drama, the CCF, and an extraordinary range of co-curricular activities complete a picture of a school that takes the development of the whole person seriously and delivers on it.

THE PREP

The Prep is an exceptional institution and is widely regarded as one of the finest prep schools in the region. The school is set in over 15 acres of its own grounds, with a lake, sports fields, and an award-winning state-of-the-art Nursery (opened in 2022). The Prep educates around 450 pupils from Nursery through to Year 8. With a dedicated and passionate staff and a warm family atmosphere that celebrates what is special about each child, the Prep is a genuinely special place to be. Around half of Year 9 entrants to the College come from the Prep; the remainder arrive from over 50 prep schools across the country, drawn by the College's academic reputation, its boarding culture, and its offer of genuine breadth.

The relationship between the two schools is one of Cheltenham College's genuine strengths. Pupils who join the Prep at three or four and leave the College at 18 benefit from 15 years of education within a single, coherent, values-driven community – one that knows them well, invests in them fully, and sends them into the world with the confidence, resilience, and character to thrive.





Old Cheltonians

Cheltenham College has been producing remarkable people for 184 years, and its community of former pupils is wider, more distinguished, and more globally connected than is generally appreciated. Among them: Patrick White, the 1973 Nobel Laureate in Literature; Tim Bevan CBE, co-founder of Working Title Films; Edward Wilson, the Antarctic explorer who perished alongside Scott at the South Pole; and 14 recipients of the Victoria Cross.

The Cheltonian Society counts over 9,400 contactable members worldwide – an active, loyal network of former pupils, parents, and staff with real affection for the College and real potential as a source of advocacy, philanthropy, and support. For the incoming Director, it is both an asset to be harnessed and a relationship to be deepened.

Cheltenham: Britain's Festival Town

To work at Cheltenham College is to work in one of the most culturally vibrant and consistently celebrated towns in Britain. Regularly voted among the best places to live in the UK by The Times, Cheltenham is the most complete Regency town in Britain – a place of elegant architecture, excellent independent restaurants, and a quality of life consistently ranked among the best in the country.

The town's festival calendar is without parallel for a place of its size. The Cheltenham Literature Festival, the Jazz Festival, the Science Festival, the Music Festival, and the Food and Drink Festival together make this a place that draws the world's finest writers, thinkers, and performers to its Regency squares every year. Then there is the racing – the Cheltenham Festival and its Gold Cup, the

pinnacle of the jump-racing calendar, which transforms the town each March into the most glamorous sporting occasion in the English countryside. And hosting the world's longest-running cricket festival? That happens in the College grounds.

Bristol and Birmingham are under an hour away; London is two hours by train from Cheltenham Spa station. The Cotswolds begin, quite literally, at the edge of town. For candidates weighing up a move or looking for a place to put down roots, Cheltenham offers something genuinely rare: a town that combines cultural seriousness, natural beauty, sporting excitement, excellent schools, and a strong sense of community – without any of the compromises that usually come with that list.





Cheltenham College International

Cheltenham College's ambitions extend well beyond the Cotswolds. The College opened its first international school in Muscat, Oman, in 2021, and further schools in Malaysia and Italy are in development, with early negotiations underway in relation to additional opportunities. This growing international family of schools – aligned through shared values, a common educational philosophy, and the Cheltenham name – represents both a significant statement of intent and a practical asset for the Director of Admissions and

Marketing, whose remit for international pupil recruitment will increasingly be shaped by, and connected to, the College's global footprint.

The international dimension also enriches the domestic story. With approximately 20% of College pupils coming from over 25 countries and an alumni network that spans every major city in the world, Cheltenham College is already a genuinely international community. The task for the incoming Director is to tell that story more boldly and to build on the considerable foundations that already exist.

The Role

This is an exciting and newly created post which signals a significant inflection point in Cheltenham College's development. The arrival of a new Head, Chris Townsend, has brought with it a clear and ambitious intent: to place pupil recruitment, brand, and external relations at the heart of strategy and to invest in the senior leadership needed to deliver that agenda with vision and momentum. Bringing together the separate admissions functions of College and Prep and the Marketing Team under a single, strategic leader is a deliberate expression of that ambition – and it creates an exceptional opportunity for the right individual to join Cheltenham College at a genuinely exciting moment in its history.

Reporting directly to the Head and a member of the College Executive Committee – the most senior strategic body for the organisation as a whole – the Director of Admissions and Marketing is a pivotal leadership role with responsibility for everything that shapes how Cheltenham College is perceived, how its story is told, and how effectively it recruits and retains the pupils who will define its community. The postholder will sit on the

Senior Leadership Teams of both the College and the Prep, working in close partnership with both Heads to develop and deliver a strategy that is genuinely integrated across the full 3–18 age range, and will have both the freedom and the full support of the Senior Leadership Team to shape a department that is ambitious, collaborative, and fit for the future. As brand custodian, the postholder will be the authoritative voice on how Cheltenham College presents itself to the world – ensuring coherence, quality, and distinctiveness at every touchpoint. A prominent ambassador, the postholder will also articulate and promote Cheltenham College's distinctive ethos, values, and educational vision to a wide range of audiences locally, nationally, and internationally and will play an active and visible role in the life of the community.

This opportunity will most likely attract either an experienced education sector professional or an outstanding individual from a commercial background who brings both an instinctive understanding of the independent education landscape and the strategic, commercial, relational, and creative skills to thrive in a role of this complexity and ambition.





Primary Purpose

The Director of Admissions and Marketing will own and drive Cheltenham College's approach to pupil recruitment, brand, and external relations across both the College and the Prep. The primary objectives of this high-profile leadership role are to:

- Develop and deliver a bold, integrated recruitment and marketing strategy across the full 3–18 age range, ensuring it is evidence-based, appropriately differentiated, and aligned with Cheltenham College's wider strategic ambitions.
- Build and lead a unified, high-performing Admissions and Marketing Team with the culture, capability, and clarity of purpose to deliver outstanding results consistently.
- Ensure sustainable enrolment growth, setting and achieving recruitment targets across all key entry points and maintaining a healthy and well-balanced pipeline.
- Strengthen the Cheltenham College brand and reputation locally, nationally, and internationally, ensuring that the story is told with confidence, creativity, and consistency across every channel and at every touchpoint.
- Lead Cheltenham College's communications and PR strategy, developing its external voice, supporting both Heads and senior colleagues in building profile and thought leadership presence, and providing sound counsel on reputational matters.
- Oversee an exceptional admissions experience for every prospective family, embedding a culture of warmth, professionalism, and commercial drive from first enquiry through to enrolment.
- Drive a proactive and well-resourced approach to international pupil recruitment, developing the College's presence in priority markets and building the agent and partner relationships on which sustainable international growth depends.
- Provide strategic counsel to the Heads, the College Executive Committee, and the Council, using data, market intelligence, and forecasting to inform decision-making and to keep the College ahead of developments in an increasingly competitive sector.

Key Responsibilities

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Working closely with the Heads, develop and own an ambitious, integrated recruitment and marketing strategy across the full 3–18 age range that positions Cheltenham College as a destination of choice for families locally, nationally, and internationally.
- Contribute proactively and substantively to both Senior Leadership Teams and the College Executive Committee, providing strategic counsel on market trends, demographic shifts, competitor positioning, and reputational risk.
- Hold ultimate accountability for the fill of both schools, setting and owning pupil recruitment targets across all entry points and providing high-quality forecasting and pipeline analysis.
- Report regularly to the Head, College Executive Committee and Council on admissions performance, pipeline health, and market context, developing and refining management information to support effective governance, including attendance at the termly Governors' Marketing Committee.
- Establish and maintain a robust performance management framework for the department, defining clear KPIs, tracking performance rigorously, and using data and insight to drive continuous improvement and intervene proactively where targets are at risk.

- Assess the capability, structure, and resource needs of the combined Admissions and Marketing department and, in time, develop and implement proposals for a longer-term operating model that best supports the College's recruitment ambitions.
- Prepare and manage the departmental budget, ensuring that expenditure is targeted, evaluated, and has demonstrable impact.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant regulations, policies, and procedures.

ADMISSIONS – COLLEGE AND PREP

- Take overall strategic responsibility for pupil recruitment, ensuring that the admissions journey from first enquiry to enrolment is seamless, professionally managed, and reflective of Cheltenham College's values and ambitions.
- Drive conversion at every stage of the pipeline, embedding a proactive, commercially minded, and relationship-based approach throughout the Admissions Teams.
- Ensure that processes, systems, and data management practices across College and Prep are seamlessly integrated and fit for purpose, creating a coherent, frictionless and outstanding customer experience for families navigating the journey from Prep through to Senior School and across all key entry points.

- Lead the planning and delivery of open events, assessment days, taster days, and other recruitment activities across both schools, evaluating their effectiveness and continuously raising the standard of what they offer to prospective families.
- Maintain oversight of the admissions assessment strategy for both schools, working closely with relevant academic leaders and the Heads.
- Provide strategic oversight of the scholarship programme, ensuring that the highest-quality candidates are proactively identified, nurtured, and recruited and that scholarship assessments are well-designed, well-run, and aligned with academic and co-curricular aims.
- Take responsibility for Cheltenham College's Admissions Policy, ensuring it is reviewed annually and is fully compliant with all relevant regulatory requirements.
- Ensure the admissions database is accurate, used effectively, and managed in full compliance with GDPR.
- Forecast, analyse, and report on pupil admissions data across all entry points, always ensuring clear visibility of the pipeline; maintain a rigorous approach to conversion analysis, non-joiner research, and market benchmarking to ensure that the admissions strategy is continuously informed by evidence.
- Build and drive an ambitious international recruitment strategy, identifying and prioritising the markets that offer the greatest opportunity for the College and developing a compelling, tailored proposition for each.
- Build and manage a network of trusted agents and international partners, providing them with the support, materials, and relationships they need.
- Represent the College at recruitment fairs and events overseas and lead or oversee international visits as appropriate.
- Take full accountability for the College's obligations as a UKVI-licensed sponsor, encompassing both the admissions of international pupils and the ongoing management of current pupil visas – ensuring that the department has the expertise, systems, and processes in place to meet all regulatory requirements accurately, consistently, and in a timely manner.
- Bring specific strategic focus to pupil retention, with particular attention to key transition points at 11+, between Prep and College and into Sixth Form.
- Work with academic and pastoral colleagues to understand and address the factors that influence departure decisions and develop proactive retention strategies.
- Ensure that the Admissions and Marketing Team plays an active role in strengthening the relationship with current families, as well as prospective ones.

MARKETING AND BRAND

- Working through the Marketing Team, take ultimate responsibility for how the brand is defined, protected, and expressed across both schools and all channels and ensure that every piece of external-facing activity reflects the quality and character of the College.
- Develop and implement an ambitious whole-College marketing strategy that raises Cheltenham's profile locally, nationally, and internationally in support of its pupil recruitment and wider reputational objectives.

- Commission and interpret market research, competitor analysis, non-joiner feedback, and other data to assess the effectiveness of marketing activity and to inform future strategy.
- Ensure that digital presence – website, social media, and digital campaigns – is dynamic, innovative, current, and effective in reaching and engaging target audiences.
- Develop and oversee a structured approach to word-of-mouth marketing, equipping current parents, pupils, and alumni with the materials, messaging, and opportunities to act as authentic and effective ambassadors.
- Ensure the highest standards of quality across all marketing output – print, digital, and multimedia – so that all content accurately reflects the character and ambition of a Cheltenham College education.
- Oversee the management of agency and supplier relationships, including PR, creative services, web development, and media, ensuring value for money and a consistent standard of output.
- Develop a PR strategy that proactively identifies opportunities to raise the profile in local, national, and, where appropriate, international media, positioning Cheltenham College as a leading voice in independent education.
- Support the Head and senior colleagues in the preparation of speeches, articles, and opinion pieces and in developing external thought leadership presence.
- Lead and advise the Senior Leadership Teams and College Executive Committee on crisis communications planning and management, supporting the Head and Governors on matters of reputational risk.
- Ensure that internal communications relating to admissions, marketing, and pupil recruitment are clear, timely, and well-received across the school community.
- Work with the Head to drive excellence in parent and pupil communications that generate advocacy before, during and after school life.

COMMUNICATIONS AND REPUTATION

- Lead the development of the external communications strategy, ensuring that Cheltenham College speaks with a confident, consistent, and distinctive voice across all channels and to all audiences.

TEAM LEADERSHIP

- Lead, shape, motivate, and develop the combined Admissions and Marketing department, building a culture of high performance, accountability, and genuine collaboration. (There are currently 14 admissions and marketing professionals across three separate teams with distinct working histories.)

- Set clear expectations, monitor performance against agreed objectives, and provide the coaching and support that team members need to develop professionally and deliver at their best.
- Manage change sensitively and effectively, building trust across the department and with the wider school community and challenging protectionist or siloed working patterns where these inhibit collective performance.
- Ensure that all staff understand their role in promoting and representing Cheltenham College, providing clear direction on brand and messaging, equipping colleagues to act as confident ambassadors, and fostering a whole-school culture of recruitment awareness.
- Work collaboratively with the College's other external relations and commercial functions – including Development, Lettings, and other revenue-generating activities – to ensure that the College's brand and external relations strategy supports the organisation's broader income objectives and that messaging is consistent across all externally facing activity.
- Elicit and act on feedback from prospective families, current parents, non-joiners, and feeder schools to inform continuous improvement in admissions and marketing practice.

SAFEGUARDING AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN

All staff are responsible for the safeguarding of children and young people in line with Cheltenham College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The Director of Admissions and Marketing is expected to maintain up-to-date knowledge of relevant legislation and best practice and to ensure that safeguarding considerations are embedded in all admissions activity.

No job description can fully cover all aspects of such an appointment. The successful candidate must be willing to take on other reasonable duties and responsibilities commensurate with the seniority of the role.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

- Act as a key public ambassador for Cheltenham College, building strong and productive relationships with feeder schools, educational agents, prospective families, and other key stakeholders in the UK and internationally.
- Network proactively within the independent school sector, maintaining awareness of market developments and attending relevant events and forums.
- Work in close liaison with the Finance Team on fee income projections, bursary strategy, and admissions-related financial planning.

The Person

The successful candidate will be a visible and influential leader at the heart of Cheltenham College's future – someone who combines the strategic intelligence and commercial drive to transform a complex function with the emotional intelligence, relational skill, and personal warmth to bring people with them. This is a role that demands both IQ and EQ in equal measure: the ability to analyse, challenge, and make a compelling case for change at the most senior levels of the organisation, alongside the ambassadorial presence and interpersonal confidence to engage and inspire prospective families, feeder schools, agents, and partners.

We are seeking a bold, forward-thinking professional who thrives on defining clear strategy, delivering measurable impact, and building high-performing teams. The role will suit either an experienced senior leader from within the education sector or an exceptional individual from a commercial, sales, marketing, or business development background who brings a genuine instinct for this market, its customers, and the values that underpin the offer.

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- Demonstrable success at a strategic level in a senior leadership role – whether in admissions, marketing, sales, business development, or a comparable commercial discipline – with clear accountability for performance and growth and a track record of developing and delivering integrated strategies that achieve measurable outcomes in recruitment, reputation, or revenue.
- Proven ability to build, inspire, and lead high-performing teams across complex, multi-stakeholder environments, with experience of managing change effectively and embedding collaborative cultures.
- Commercial acumen combined with strong analytical and strategic planning skills, with the ability to translate vision and data into practical action and hold performance rigorously to account.
- Exceptional interpersonal, communication, and presentation skills, with the ability to influence and inspire confidence at all levels.

- Demonstrated success in engaging, building and managing stakeholder relationships with warmth, emotional intelligence, and diplomacy.
- The ability to write or edit compelling copy and to oversee the production of creative content of the highest quality across print, digital, and multimedia channels.
- Strong working knowledge of CRM systems, data management, and pipeline analytics, with the numeracy, rigour, and analytical confidence to build robust performance frameworks, track conversion at every stage, and use insight to drive strategic and operational decisions.
- A creative, proactive, and results-driven approach, with the ability to manage multiple priorities effectively.
- Prior professional experience in the education sector, whilst helpful, is not essential.
- Strategic thinker with the critical intelligence to challenge assumptions, analyse performance and the market systematically, and make a compelling case for change.
- Ability to translate an ambitious vision into meaningful plans, gain commitment from across the staff community, and deliver against targets with pace and rigour.
- High professional and personal standards, combined with creativity, initiative, and drive.
- A genuine empathy for and commitment to the values and ethos of independent boarding and day school education and a desire to become a visible and engaged member of the Cheltenham College community.
- Willing to work flexibly, including evenings, weekends, and travel within the UK and internationally as required.

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Confident presence and authority, with the skills to represent Cheltenham College at the highest levels and engage a wide variety of stakeholders as a trusted and credible brand ambassador.
- Collegiate and collaborative, with a genuine commitment to leading change in a positive, solutions-focused, and inclusive way and the resilience to bring any reluctant stakeholders with them.
- A clear commitment to delivering best practice in safeguarding and an active champion of diversity, equality, and inclusion.

Appointment Terms

A highly attractive remuneration package is offered, reflecting the seniority and significance of the position. The salary will be in the region of £80,000 – £90,000, depending on the skills and experience of the successful candidate. Some flexibility in working hours will be required in light of the role and responsibilities it entails.

- Annual holiday entitlement of 25 days (rising with service) plus statutory bank holidays and discretionary shutdown over the Christmas period.
- Defined contribution pension scheme (8.4% employer contributions subject to completion of probation period).
- Life insurance (4x salary).
- Support with relocation.
- Lunch during term time.
- Subsidised health scheme membership.
- Car and cycle salary sacrifice schemes.

- Generous fee discount for children attending Cheltenham College.
- Use of College sports facilities.

Cheltenham College is committed to equality of opportunity for all staff, and applications from suitably qualified individuals are encouraged regardless of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and marriage and civil partners.

Cheltenham College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. Applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post. The appointment is subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks in accordance with the relevant statutory guidance, including an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check, satisfactory references, proof of identity and eligibility to work in the UK, a satisfactory medical report and proof of qualifications.

Details of the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy can be found [here](#).



Application Process

Interested candidates are invited to contact RSAcademics in the first instance to arrange a confidential discussion with Cat Sutherland-Hawes, Search Consultant:
catrionasutherland-hawes@rsacademics.com

Applications should be made electronically to RSAcademics. To submit your application, please upload your documents according to the instructions on the [RSAcademics website](https://www.rsacademics.com). You should submit the following (both in PDF format):

- A completed application form (available to download from www.rsacademics.com).
- A covering letter addressed to the Head, Mr Chris Townsend. The letter should explain your reasons for applying and your suitability for the role.

If you have any questions about uploading your application documents, please contact:

- Laura Cave, Project Coordinator:
applications@rsacademics.com /
 +44 (0) 204 6269 791

All applications will be acknowledged by email. If you have not received an acknowledgement within two working days of applying, please contact RSAcademics as above.

Closing date: 10.00 am on 10 August 2026.

The schedule is as follows:

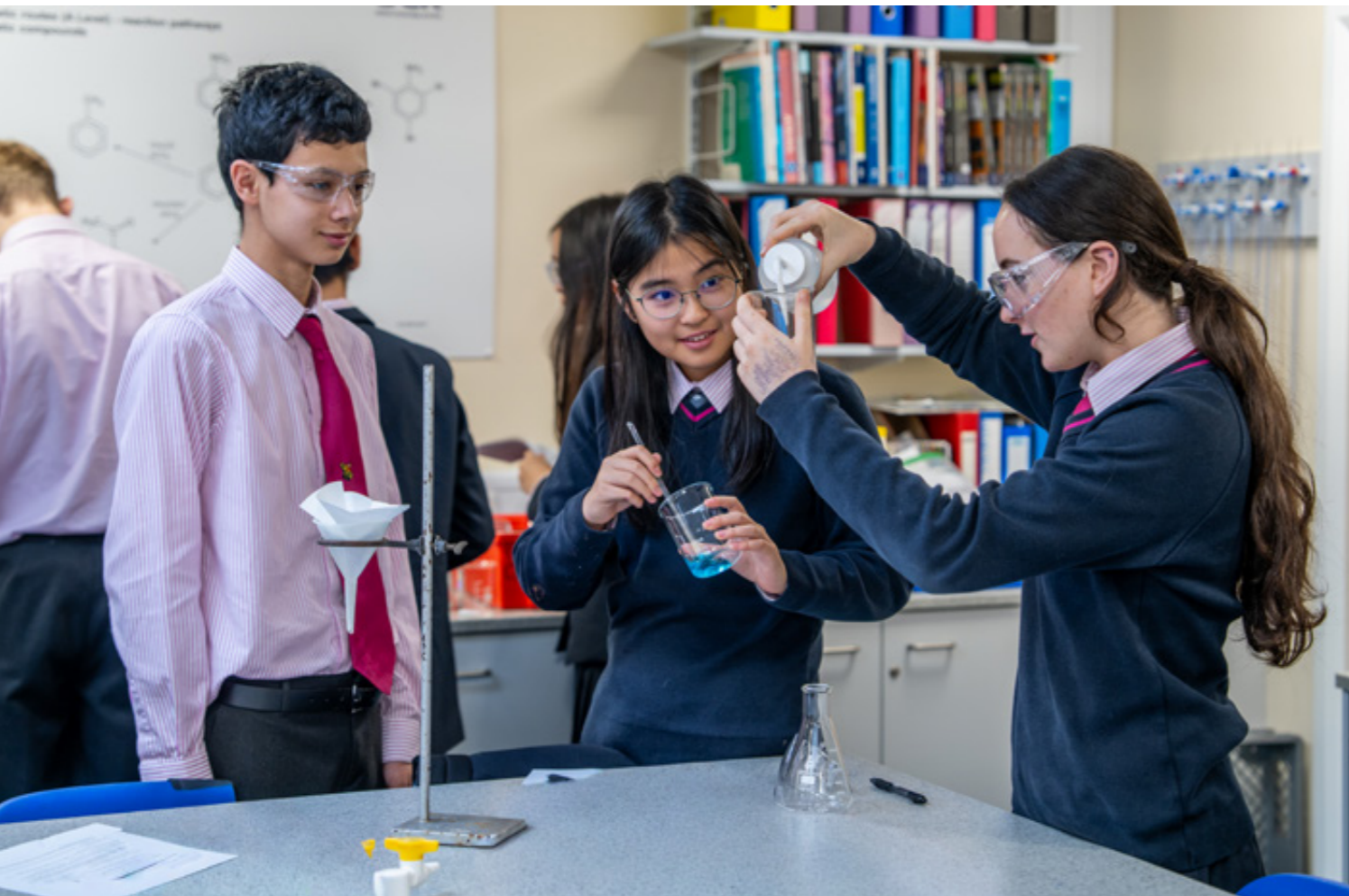
- Preliminary interviews will take place with RSAcademics via Teams w/c 17 August 2026.
- Longlist interviews will take place at Cheltenham College w/c 7 September 2026.
- Shortlist interviews will be held at Cheltenham College w/c 21 September 2026.

Cheltenham College reserves the right to accelerate the process and appoint ahead of this schedule should an outstanding candidate apply.

RSAcademics is a global executive search and consultancy firm working exclusively with schools. For more than 20 years, we've supported governors and leaders at pivotal moments – whether they are appointing senior staff or making complex strategic decisions. What makes us distinctive is the depth of first-hand experience in schools across our team – as heads, governors, bursars and senior professionals – combined with specialist expertise in areas such as strategy, research, marketing and finance. This blend is continually enriched by our ongoing consultancy and appointments work with schools worldwide, so our advice is always current, practical and evidence led. Please visit www.rsacademics.com for more information.



Because the world needs schools to **thrive**





CHEL TENHAM
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