



RS ACADEMICS



CHELTENHAM  
COLLEGE

# Director of Development

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

# Welcome

Cheltenham College is excited to welcome a highly experienced and creative Director of Development to join our superb team. This is an outstanding opportunity to lead the Development Department of this dynamic and highly successful school as our new Head, Chris Townsend takes up his role in April 2026.

The College is almost 185 years old and it has an enviable history from which to draw stories of courage and creativity. Our entrepreneurial alumni are very supportive and engaged and our relatively new Cheltonian Society team has made a fantastic impact already with a variety of events increasing that engagement still further amongst past pupils and parents. In recent times, there have been a number of major gifts and the Development Office has raised significant sums, most recently £1 million for the Guy Dodd Bursary fund. Our first beneficiary is already benefitting from this, and the Edward Wilson bursary campaign is underway too.

During the past decade, the College has invested heavily in capital infrastructure, but there is most certainly a very real opportunity here for a new Director to create their own

new value-based strategy alongside the new Head and Senior team. The Council (Board of Governors) is highly engaged and there is a chance here to make a significant difference to the history of the school that has yet to be written.

Cheltenham College has strong pupil numbers, with a pupil roll of over 1100 across the school. The College, co-educational since the early 1990s, is still predominantly boarding with 25% of pupils living overseas in over 25 countries. The alumni in different countries are also highly engaged, and a lot of the groundwork has been done by the previous incumbent in this role, with the chance now to build on this in the months and years ahead. There are few opportunities in the development world as exciting as this one.

We look forward to receiving applications from ambitious and energetic individuals who can become a part of our 'family' here at the College, and this opportunity will be both a fulfilling and exciting one.



**Nicola Huggett**

Head





# Cheltenham College

Cheltenham College was founded in 1841 and is one of the country's leading co-educational independent boarding and day schools for over 1100 pupils aged 3 to 18. The school is made up of The Pre-Prep (aged rising 3-7), The Prep (7-13) and College (13-18). In College (13-18) around 80% of the 710 pupils board - the majority of whom are full boarders; and at The Prep, there are 420 pupils from The Nursery School to Year 8. The Prep boarding house is home to around 40 full boarders, who are joined by flexi boarders each week. Cheltenham College is also a major employer locally, with 650 teaching and support staff, 70 volunteers, and a further 110 catering staff.

The schools offer a sector-leading range of academic and co-curricular activities alongside excellent pastoral care. Examination results have placed the College amongst the top academic schools in the country, whilst we still offer great breadth and depth in our curriculum. Our pupils are encouraged to be true all-rounders, scaling

the academic heights and embracing a wide variety of new challenges, underpinned by a personalised and pervasive ethos of pastoral care rooted in the school's Christian foundation. The Good Schools Guide 2023 review stated, "every school says it produces all-rounded pupils – this one really does".

Over the past seven years the school has grown and evolved, and this has been recognised not just by our own community but nationally. We are very proud that both The Prep and College received an 'Excellent in all areas' in our most recent ISI inspection in 2023; and in the same year, our academic improvements were acknowledged by the Sunday Times Parent Power academic league table, as the College moved into the top 150 schools, increasing our position by 65 places. Also in 2023, Cheltenham College was awarded 'Independent Boarding School of the Year' by the Independent School Parent Magazine and has been shortlisted for 2025 Independent Boarding School of the Year by the same magazine.

## Location & Campus

Cheltenham College is located in the heart of the Cotswolds in the beautiful Regency town of Cheltenham. It is well connected with Bristol and Birmingham under an hour away and London just a two-hour journey by train. Cheltenham is traditionally known for its elegant architecture, high quality restaurants, vibrant bars and cafes, tranquil parks, and internationally recognised festivals.

College (13-18) occupies a town centre site including extensive playing fields and a splendid collection of Victorian, Georgian and modern buildings, many of which have listed status. At College there are 11 Houses

(boarding and day) situated around the campus and on adjoining residential roads. The facilities are excellent and include the stunning Chatfeild-Roberts Library in the main College Building, the completely refurbished science centre and the Grade 1 listed Thirlestaine House which is home to a teaching centre for Art, Music and Modern Languages.

The Prep School (3-13) is one of the very best in the region and is set in more than 15 acres of grounds with its own lake and sports fields. In 2022, an award-winning state-of-the-art Nursery was built at The Prep School with a 60-child capacity.







## International Schools

In 2021, College opened the first of its overseas schools in Muscat, Oman, and is due to open two further schools in Malaysia and Italy in the next year. It is engaged in early negotiations in respect of two other opportunities overseas.

We enjoy strong links with our overseas alumni and take pride in the long-term relationships we have built. We expect to work closely with our colleagues in our international schools in the coming years to develop their alumni networks and align such networks with Cheltenham College UK.

# The Cheltonian Society

The Cheltonian Society is an all-inclusive organisation for everyone who has, or has had, an association with College or The Prep. Membership is automatic and includes current and former parents, pupils, and staff. It is operated and managed by the Development and Society Office team which organises events and maintains links between current and former members and friends of College.

Funds raised from members of the Society support capital programmes as well as transformational bursaries. The Director of Development will lead the team to further nurture our current community and build strong ongoing relationships with our pupils and parents as a foundation for the Society in the future. The Higher Education and Careers team also work with the Cheltonian Society to maximise opportunities for work experience and mentoring with former parents and pupils.





# Development

Development at Cheltenham College is supported by a robust programme of events and communications. For 2025/26, there are 17 Cheltonian Society events. Three of these are specifically for Old Cheltonians: the 5-Year Reunion, the 10-Year Reunion, and the Decade Reunion (20-30 years since leaving). There are also sporting events e.g. Rackets weekend and Hockey organised by the Sports team and supported by Society.

The Development Office uses Toucan Tech as its CRM and has 9400 Society members contactable by email. Of these, 4800 are Old Cheltonians. There are established programmes for regular giving (1841 Society) and legacy pledgers (Hugh Reeves Society).

Historically, fundraising has taken place for capital projects across the site but more recently, the focus has shifted to two endowment funds for transformational bursaries: The Guy Dodd fund is complete (£1million); the Edward Wilson fund is currently at £275k raised out of a £1million target. Completion of the latter will be an early target for the incoming Director of Development.

It is envisioned that future fundraising projects might involve sports programmes, developing educational facilities to support a cookery programme for our pupils and carbon reduction projects across the schools.

In 2023, the College commissioned Gifted Philanthropy to conduct a fundraising research study to review its Development Plan. As part of this, 30 Old Cheltonians and parents were engaged in discussions about philanthropy at Cheltenham College. The Bursar has also been actively engaging with prospects over recent months so there will be several active leads for the Director of Development while they are developing a pipeline for future support.



## The Opportunity

Cheltenham College is seeking to appoint an exceptional Director of Development to grow College's fundraising programmes and instil a culture of philanthropy. College's advancement programme is integral to its future development and will require a Director of Development who can engage various stakeholders more fully in the institution and maximise fundraising revenue for College's strategic priorities.

The current Head (Nicola Huggett) and Head-Elect (Chris Townsend) are keen to work in partnership with a highly skilled Director of Development who will bring with them a successful track record of developing and implementing impactful fundraising and engagement programmes.

This is an exciting opportunity for an ambitious, experienced and highly motivated fundraiser to build on the successes of the past five years, creating and delivering a philanthropy and engagement strategy that is aligned with the College's strategic priorities. Alongside the completion of the campaign for Transformational Bursaries the Director of Development will work with and advise colleagues across the Senior Leadership Team, Common Room and Council as to where philanthropy could play a meaningful role in the long-term development of College's estate.

Beyond financial support, the Director of Development will build on the existing communications and events programme to strengthen engagement between the College and the Cheltonian Society.



The background image shows the interior of a Gothic church. A large, multi-paned stained glass window with intricate designs is at the far end, above a highly detailed stone altar. The altar features numerous statues in niches. Rows of wooden pews are visible in the foreground, leading towards the altar. The architecture is characterized by high vaulted ceilings and pointed arches.

# The Role

The Director of Development will report directly to the Head of College and be a valued member of the College Executive Committee. They will lead the Cheltenham College Development Office, line managing the Cheltonian Society Manager, Cheltonian Society and Development Administrator and Cheltonian Society Assistant.

Building effective professional relationships with key internal stakeholders is a critical aspect of this role and the Director of Development will work across the College and The Prep to raise the profile and understanding of philanthropy and engagement. These relationships will include members of the Senior Leadership Team (both College and The Prep), the Cheltonian Society and the Old Cheltonians, the Higher Education and Careers team, the Marketing team and the Council (Board of Governors).

This role will be directly responsible for:

- Leadership and management of all fundraising and Cheltonian Society activities;
- Generating new philanthropic income for the College's strategic priorities;
- Building a long-term culture of giving at Cheltenham College;
- Creating and delivering a strategic and impactful fundraising and engagement plan.

This role will be suited to a strategic, proactive and energetic fundraising professional with a track record in major gifts solicitation and building effective programmes and teams.

The successful candidate will have extensive knowledge of broad fundraising programmes gained from within or outside the education sector. They will demonstrate proven success in converting engagement to donations and be able to demonstrate sensitivity to the history and strong community of the Cheltenham College family around the world.

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

### STRATEGY

- Working with the Head and Senior Leadership Team, develop and implement an effective and sustainable values-led fundraising and community engagement strategy;
- Identifying potential fundraising projects in relation to the College estate;
- As a key member of the College Executive Committee, contribute, as appropriate, to the College's overall strategic plan.

### FUNDRAISING

- Leadership and management of all fundraising activities in support of the College's priorities;
- Take the lead in identifying, engaging and soliciting 5, 6 and 7-figure gifts from the College's HNWIs – with a particular personal focus on the Top 50 prospects;
- Define and articulate a compelling case for support, tailoring this to specific audiences as necessary;
- Build a comprehensive development programme including all areas of the fundraising mix which will allow donors to support a number of projects at any level;
- Ensure all donors are stewarded effectively and at an appropriate level for their support;
- Effectively engage the Heads, Council and other staff and volunteers in the fundraising process as appropriate.

### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Cultivate excellent relationships with Old Cheltonians (OCs), parents, former parents and other stakeholders to ensure they remain connected to Cheltenham College and engage with fundraising initiatives and other strategic activities;
- Develop and manage relationships with members of the Council and other senior volunteers, including (with support from the Society Manager) the Cheltonian Society Committee;
- Build a strong network of internal and external advocates for development activity;
- Recruit and support a Fundraising Committee;
- Review and build on the existing programme of events and communications to engage with as many Cheltonian Society members as possible;
- Collaborate with Marketing to ensure their activities and those of the Cheltonian Society are mutually supportive;
- Engage and inform the College's staff to enhance their understanding of philanthropy and engagement, how it can support their work and how they can partner with the Development Office;
- Develop a relationship with colleagues in Cheltenham College's international schools to ensure alumni and Society networks are aligned with those at College.

### LEADERSHIP

- Line manage and provide leadership and strategic direction for the Development and Society team, including training, mentoring and setting clear objectives and KPIs;
- Direct and oversee the Development Office, its systems and processes to enable it to meet engagement and fundraising goals;
- Provide leadership of fundraising and engagement to all staff and volunteers at the College, coaching and mentoring colleagues around best practice.

### COMPLIANCE & GENERAL

- Oversee all other administrative duties of the Development Office as required, ensuring the accuracy of the database (ToucanTech) and the timely acknowledgement of gifts and event attendance;
- Supply financial and administrative reports as required for the Senior Leadership Team and Council;
- Ensure that all activities undertaken by the Development Office are in line with relevant regulations (e.g. GDPR, Fundraising Regulator) and best practice as established by professional bodies such as the Institute of Fundraising and the Institute of Development Professionals in Education;
- Support the Development and Society team at a wide range of events which will include some evening and weekend working.



# Person Specification

## KNOWLEDGE & EXPERIENCE

- A track record of success in securing 5 and 6-figure gifts;
- A comprehensive and proven understanding of the principles and practices of fundraising and alumnae relations gained from working in the education, charity or arts sectors;
- Creating and communicating an articulate and persuasive Case for Support;
- A clear understanding of the full range of activities required to build successful and sustainable development and alumni relations programmes;
- Experience of seeing fundraising projects through to conclusion and, ideally, experience of managing a capital campaign;
- The ability to develop and implement effective strategic plans and deliver them operationally;
- A track record in creating and delivering effective and successful stakeholder and fundraising events and communications;
- Significant experience of managing a team and a personality to lead, inspire and motivate staff;
- Experience of working with HNWIs and senior volunteers;
- An appreciation of financial management and an ability to manage budgets and financial forecasts;
- Knowledge of tax-efficient giving in the UK and internationally;
- Knowledge and understanding of relevant data and regulatory compliance;
- Experience of working with Toucan Tech or similar CRM databases.

## SKILLS & PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Excellent strategic, organisational, time management and planning skills;
- A commitment to the vision and values of the College;
- Confident, robust outgoing personality with the presence and intellect to operate effectively at senior level;
- The ability to build and manage relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders with patience, tact and sensitivity;
- Client focused with an appreciation of the need to achieve agreed targets;
- First class oral and written communication and negotiation skills;
- Outstanding team working skills;
- Capable of inspiring and motivating staff;
- Self-motivated and results driven;
- Willing to travel internationally;
- Commitment to the safeguarding of children and young people;
- Values and promotes equality, diversity and inclusion.



# Appointment Terms



A highly attractive remuneration package is offered, reflecting the seniority and significance of the position. The eventual salary will depend on skills and experience. Some flexibility in working hours will be required in light of the role and responsibilities it entails. Flexible working arrangements may be considered.

- Annual holiday entitlement of 25 days (rising with service) plus statutory bank holidays
- 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
- Fees discount may be offered at the discretion of the Council
- 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.*

# Application Process

Interested candidates are invited to contact RSAcademics to arrange a confidential and informal discussion with:

Susannah Thompson, Search Consultant:  
[susannahthompson@rsacademics.com](mailto:susannahthompson@rsacademics.com)

Closing date: 10.00 am on Monday 3 November 2025

You should submit:

- A completed application form (available to download from [www.rsacademics.com](http://www.rsacademics.com))
- A covering letter addressed to the Head, Mrs Nicola Huggett. The letter should be a maximum of two pages and should explain your reasons for applying and outline your suitability for the role.

Applications should be made electronically to RSAcademics. To submit your application please upload your documents according to the instructions on the RSAcademics [website](http://www.rsacademics.com). If you have any questions about

uploading your application documents, please contact Jonathan Barnes, Head of Operations (Leadership Appointments) at [applications@rsacademics.com](mailto:applications@rsacademics.com). Jonathan can also be contacted by calling our Head Office on + 44 (0) 204 6269 791.

The process is as follows:

- All applications will be acknowledged by email. If you have not received acknowledgement that your application has been received within two working days of sending it, please contact RSAcademics' Head Office by telephone.
- Preliminary interviews with RSAcademics will take place via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 11 and Wednesday 12 November 2025.
- Longlist interviews will take place at Cheltenham College on Thursday 20 November 2025.
- Shortlist interviews will take place at Cheltenham College on Thursday 27 November 2025.



Founded in 2002 by Russell Speirs, RSAcademics has advised and supported over 700 schools and educational organisations in the UK and worldwide. Through our working partnerships with heads, leadership teams, boards, staff and parents, we specialise in supporting schools in five main areas: strategy, marketing and research; equality, diversity and inclusion; operational improvement; leadership and governance and philanthropy. We enable schools worldwide to thrive by finding and developing senior leaders, guiding decision makers, making connections and shaping debate. We are known for the calibre and spirit of our people. We exist entirely to serve schools because we believe that the world needs thriving schools. Please visit [www.rsacademics.com](http://www.rsacademics.com) for more information.

RSAcademics is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in schools and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.