



CANFORD

Senior Deputy Head

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

*Start Date: April 2026
preferred, but September
2026 will be considered*



Welcome



It is an exciting time to be at Canford. Our community is alive with ambition – in the classroom, on the sports field, on the river and the stage – and that energy is reflected in our ever-stronger academic results and our pupils' remarkable appetite to contribute, lead and grow. Last month, we announced the creation of the Canford Schools Group, a bold next step in our evolution. Our merger with Dumpton School will be the first of several partnerships with like-minded schools in the independent sector. Each will share in our ethos of collaboration and trust while retaining the distinct character and autonomy that make their communities thrive.

This culture of empowerment runs deep at Canford. We ask our pupils to think independently, act courageously and support one another with compassion – and we seek the same in our leadership. The Group is built on that same principle: a network of schools bound by shared purpose, not uniformity.

Within this, the new Senior Deputy Head will play a pivotal role here at Canford itself, working closely with me to drive ever greater excellence in all that we do. You will lead and inspire a talented and cohesive Senior Leadership Team: people who understand what makes Canford special yet are eager to keep learning and challenging the status quo. This is a role for someone who combines strategic acuity with warmth, humour and humanity – someone who can see both the detail and the horizon.

Our connection with The Bourne Academy continues to be a vital expression of our belief that education should reach beyond our gates. The Senior Deputy will help deepen that partnership and strengthen our place within the wider community.

If you are an ambitious leader – perhaps with headship in your sights – who believes that education should empower both people and ideas, then I would warmly encourage you to explore this opportunity. Together, we can shape the next chapter of Canford's story and continue to inspire generations to come.

If this is a role that excites you and you believe you have the requisite skills and experience, we would be delighted to hear from you.

CHRISTOPHER WHEELER

Headmaster



Background



Canford is one of the UK's leading independent schools, providing an exceptional all-round educational experience for pupils aged from 13 to 18. Situated in a magnificent 250-acre park in Dorset, the School combines academic success with a hugely diverse and inspiring co-curricular programme aimed at developing courageous and ambitious young people who seek to be leaders in tomorrow's world. Our boarding culture is a pivotal part of our offering and an area we are seeking to grow and develop.

The School is an HMC co-educational boarding school founded by Percy Warrington as one of the Allied Schools, a group of independent schools founded in the 1920s in the evangelical tradition. There is a strong and vibrant chaplaincy, and our Christian ethos continues to be an important part of our identity. Having only just celebrated our centenary, we are able to celebrate the best of our heritage but not feel tied down by tradition. Canford is vibrant and energised for the world of 2030 and beyond.

There are currently 650 pupils, a significant majority of whom board, with a team of 480 teaching and support staff. We have recently completed our first merger, forming the Canford Schools Group, the revenue for which will exceed £30m this year. We consistently generate significant surpluses.

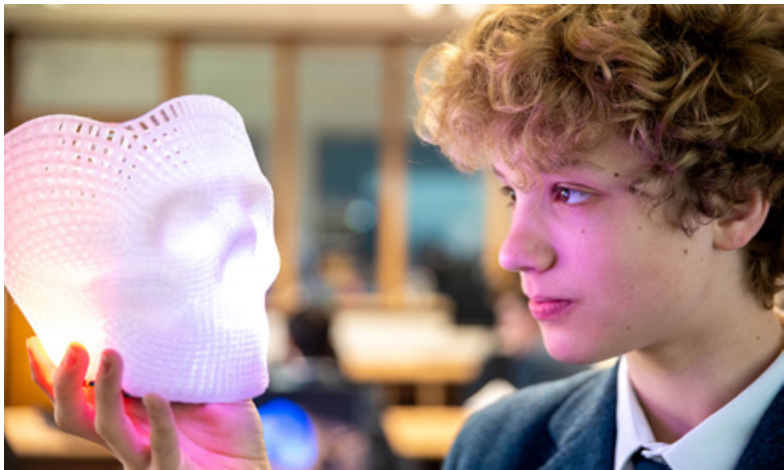
Canford is in the final stages of completing 'The College', an impressive new £20m facility which will offer our Sixth Form pupils outstanding provision. With U6th day pupils based in the Hub along with university-style services for Futures,

Welfare and Academic Support and boarders in the residential wings, the building is designed to ensure all pupils develop the independence they need to be ready for life beyond Canford, whether at university or one of the growing number of other post-school routes.

Having been at capacity in our boarding houses for many years, the creation of this new facility will create spaces across all boarding houses to grow and develop our boarding provision, which will be an important part of the vision for the coming years.

The 19th-century Canford Manor House sits at the heart of grounds and facilities, which are exceptional, including a semi-professional theatre, a 21st-century sports centre and pool, real tennis courts, a nine-hole golf course, a breadth of teaching accommodation, seven boarding houses, three day houses and the Sixth Form College. Our pupils benefit from one of the most beautiful schools in the land and appreciate all that they have on offer.

As Canford School and Dumpton merge to form The Canford Schools Group, the Senior Deputy Head will play a key strategic role within this exciting new chapter. The post-holder will serve on the Executive Leadership Team of the Group, representing Canford School and contributing to the shared vision, collaboration, and strategic development of this new family of schools united by common values, culture, and ambition.



Vision and Values



COURAGEOUS ATTITUDE

Being principled and strong, yet reflective and tolerant, takes courage.

We support members of our community to be bold in expressing thoughts, words and deeds yet respectful of the diversity in our world and society.

HUMBLE AMBITION

Pursuing goals without arrogance or complacency brings meaningful success.

We challenge members of our community to be energetic and resilient in pursuit of their goals but honest and grateful for fulfilment of them.

GRACIOUS LEADERSHIP

Fulfilling a duty to guide, support and include others makes a difference.

We urge members of our community to lead graciously and serve willingly for the greater good.

PURPOSEFUL ENGAGEMENT

Building a confident mindset develops positive life-long learning.

We inspire members of our community to be curious and determined in pursuit of knowledge and opportunity.



EXPLORE | EXPRESS | EXCEL | COMMUNITY

The Academic Leader

No. 1 school in the region* for top **A Level** and **GCSE** results.

HOW WE ACHIEVE THIS – THE FACTS:



1-1 support
to achieve the very best outcome for every pupil



Learning is not just accepted; it's **part of our culture**



Teaching **tailored** by year group, with College approach to Sixth Form



We do not simply select top-set pupils. We look for all-round potential



120 specialist subject teachers across 20 departments



Small class sizes
15 for GCSE,
10 for A Level**



Breadth of intake
120 Year 9s join from over 50 different schools***



Academic excellence, but not a results-at-all-costs culture. We grow confident, independent minds and focus on every child's best personal outcome

% RESULTS COMPARISON

	Canford	National
A Level		
A*	23	9.3
A*/A	55.4	28.2
A*/B	84	55
GCSE		
9	28.8	5.1
9-7	71.7	21.8
9-4	98.4	67.1

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Over 95% of our pupils currently choose to go on to university, with 80%+ offers from Russell Group/Top 12. But the world is changing fast. Our College Futures programme guides every path – from degree apprenticeships and Art Foundations to Medical Schools and international study. Our focus is on the best outcome for every individual Canfordian.

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* Based on Sunday Times Parent Power report 2025., co-ed independent senior boarding and day schools ** Average class sizes ***Canford tracked across independent and state schools

The Boarding Culture

Canford's genuine 7-day-a-week boarding school community offers rich experiences and lasting friendships for all pupils. There is flexibility for boarders to spend some Saturday nights at home if they want to, keeping families closely connected, while day pupils can take full advantage of everything on offer in the evenings and at weekends.

HOW WE ACHIEVE THIS – THE FACTS:



7-day-a-week
culture inclusive for
both boarding and day



21st-century model
– boarders can opt for some
extra Saturday nights at home*



4 out of 5 boarders
are in school every
weekend – there is no
'emptying out' culture



The mix of **fun and
skills-based** evening and
weekend activities are open to
all pupils, boarding and day

“Boarding is the
real deal.”
Talk Education

“Boarding opportunities extend the fun!”
Current boy boarder

On average, Canford tracked. *Boarders can leave after Saturday school a number of extra times each term in addition to exeat and half terms, but must return by Sunday evening.

Tiered Opportunities in **Sport and Activity**

HOW WE ACHIEVE THIS – THE FACTS:



50+ different sports, clubs and activities, inclusive and open to all



National semis/finals*

Hockey, Cricket, Netball, Tennis, Football

100+ teams play **1,000+** fixtures across **16 sports** every year, developing sporting skills, teamwork, confidence, and positive physical wellbeing.



OCs Beyond Canford

USA Golf #27 rank, U23 World Rowing Gold, U19 England Cricket, Bath and Leicester Premiership Rugby



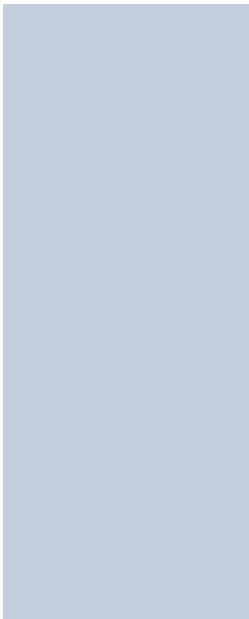
CCF – Best School**

260 CCF cadets,
26 Sixth Form NCOs

“ Sport here is everything you might expect in a school of this calibre and scope – and then some. ”

The Good Schools Guide

*2023-25, **The Week: Independent Schools Guide



The Role

The Senior Deputy will be a key member of the Senior Leadership Team and play a vital role in shaping and delivering the educational, pastoral and co-curricular life of the School. Working in close partnership with the Head, the Senior Deputy will provide visible leadership across the whole-school community, line managing the Deputy Heads and ensuring that pupils, staff and families feel supported, valued and inspired.

This role combines strategic responsibility with day-to-day operational leadership. The Senior Deputy Head will take delegated responsibility for specific areas, lead initiatives that contribute to the School's vision and development, and deputise for the Head when required. A focus on collaboration, inclusivity, high standards, and the wellbeing of pupils and staff is central to the role.

The Senior Deputy Head is expected to be fully involved in the School and take on a small teaching role of no more than 10% of a normal timetable.



Key Responsibilities

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

- Support the Head in the development and delivery of the School's vision and strategic plan, as agreed with the Board of Governors.
- Contribute to the operational planning of the School, taking delegated responsibility for specific priority areas to ensure delivery of the strategic imperatives.
- Provide visible and motivating leadership, fostering a culture where all staff can excel.
- Remain up to date with educational developments and contribute to discussions that inform the School's strategy.
- Deputise for the Head when required, including representing the School at key internal and external events.

BUSINESS AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- Support the Head and Bursar in ensuring that compliance and risk management policies and procedures are kept updated, effective and consistently implemented.
- Take responsibility for delegated financial management to ensure efficient running of the School, which has a revenue of c£27m.

EDUCATIONAL AND PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

- Support the Head in ensuring a clear educational vision, taking the lead on designated areas to ensure continuity and development of our pupils' outstanding academic achievements with a curriculum that matches our high aspirations.
- Support the embedding of the School's digital strategy, supporting and encouraging the use of new and emerging technology and innovation.
- Embrace the wealth of co-curricular offerings from the School to help fulfil the School's mission to provide a transformative experience for every student.
- Take an active interest in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including the thriving and lively chaplaincy work.





MANAGEMENT

- Implement and oversee policies and procedures delegated by the Head to ensure the efficient day-to-day running of the School.
- Build positive and collaborative working relations with staff to model high professional standards and encourage colleagues to excel.
- Work closely with the Head and Director of HR to ensure the relevant policies help to employ and retain the staff.
- Champion professional development and promote wellbeing initiatives across the staff body under the strategic direction of the Head.
- Lead by example in upholding the School's values, safeguarding duties and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

- Support the Head and relevant teams in ensuring marketing, communications and admissions activities are of the highest quality to ensure the School fills its newly created Sixth Form and Boarding capacity.
- Represent the School in the local community and independent school sector, promoting the School's ethos and maintaining its strong reputation. Deputise for the Head as and when required.

No job description can fully cover all aspects of such an appointment, and therefore, the successful person must be flexible and willing to take on other reasonable responsibilities and tasks in order to fulfil the role.



Person Specification



EXPERIENCE

- Significant and varied senior leadership experience in a broad range of school contexts, ideally with exposure to boarding.
- A proven track record of raising academic standards and securing strong outcomes for pupils.
- Experience of leading teams, managing change and delivering improvements across academic and/or pastoral areas.
- Evidence of contributing to the development, implementation and monitoring of school improvement plans.
- Experience of engaging and building relationships with staff, pupils, parents, governors and external stakeholders.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- A strong moral compass, inclusive and empathetic leadership and attention to detail.
- Warmth, emotional intelligence, open-mindedness, diplomacy, and a calm and approachable manner blended with resilience, drive, energy and the ability to support and build resilience in others.
- Academic and intellectual ability and strong strategic thinking skills.
- Powerful communication skills with the ability to inspire, motivate and influence colleagues and pupils.

- A strong understanding of the current and future challenges facing the independent school sector, with a willingness to contribute innovative solutions.
- Understanding of and interest in building an 'iron sharpens iron' coaching culture to shape self-improvement.
- Interest in the spiritual development of pupils and supportive of the Protestant and Evangelical tradition and principles of the Church of England.
- Ability to anticipate and manage complex issues, seeking inclusive and collaborative solutions with the Head and SLT.
- Excellent decision-making and problem-solving skills, with the ability to prioritise effectively.
- Knowledge of the regulatory, safeguarding and legal requirements relevant to a school.
- A commitment to driving educational excellence, intellectual curiosity, reflection and debate.
- An interest in the opportunities and challenges presented by developments in digital technology, including AI, in an educational setting.
- Desire to be part of a supportive and collaborative team.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Strong academic credentials, including a degree, ideally with additional leadership and/or management qualifications.

Life at Canford

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This camaraderie and friendship is rare in schools, and it makes the job so enjoyable.



Nicola Will

HEAD OF ART

Canford is a beautiful place to work. Working at the Arts University in Bournemouth for 15 years, I enjoyed the sense of belonging, and the move to Canford offered the same community feel, where everyone shares the same ethos. I enjoy the holistic approach, shaping educational experience, and getting involved in the wider activities; I am still working on my netball coaching skills!

As Head of Department, the school has supported me in allowing me to develop my vision and mould the department, physically and through curriculum changes. I work alongside a team of teachers who are professional, driven and creative.



Gary Shaw

HEAD OF CHEMISTRY

One of the major reasons that I chose to teach at Canford is the expectation that all staff will provide extensive co-curricular involvement. As a county rugby player, athlete, club hockey player and golfer, I am able to coach, referee or umpire and pass on my expertise in all these sports.

As Head of Chemistry, I really enjoy consulting with my colleagues and technician and feel that we are very supportive of each other and one's ideas. This is equally true when interacting with colleagues in other departments. This camaraderie and friendship is rare in schools, and it makes the job so enjoyable.

Benefits

We want everyone who works here to feel valued and supported and for Canford to have a positive impact on all areas of your life. We therefore offer both a highly competitive salary, which is based on the experience of the successful candidate, and a four-bedroomed house on the school grounds. Canford School also has a variety of new and existing initiatives that you can benefit from as a member of Canford staff; below are just a few of these:

- Discounted sports centre membership
- Staff wellbeing & health workshops
- Free healthy lunch
- Free cash plan
- Flu jabs

HEALTH

- Contributory pension scheme
- Death in service benefit
- Cycle to work scheme
- Free car parking
- Free financial advice

MONEY

- Your voice
- Appraisal scheme
- Professional development opportunities
- Use of NASH building
- Excellent working environment

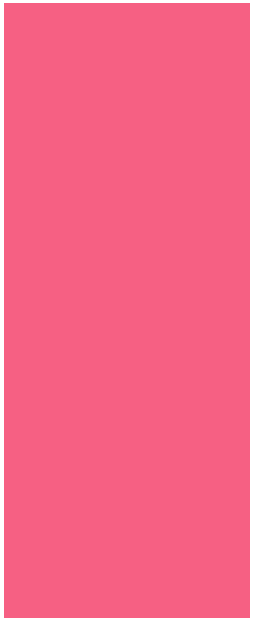
WORK

- Free access to Lifeworks portal, including online advice and support and access to free counselling
- Discounted golf club membership
- Facebook group for social events
- Staff discount on facilities hire
- Enhanced maternity/paternity and holiday allowance

LIFE

- Discounted sports centre membership for your family
- Family social events
- Reduced theatre tickets
- Free cash plan for children

FAMILY



Safeguarding

Canford School is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion in all areas of our community and encourages applications from all suitably qualified candidates. Canford School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

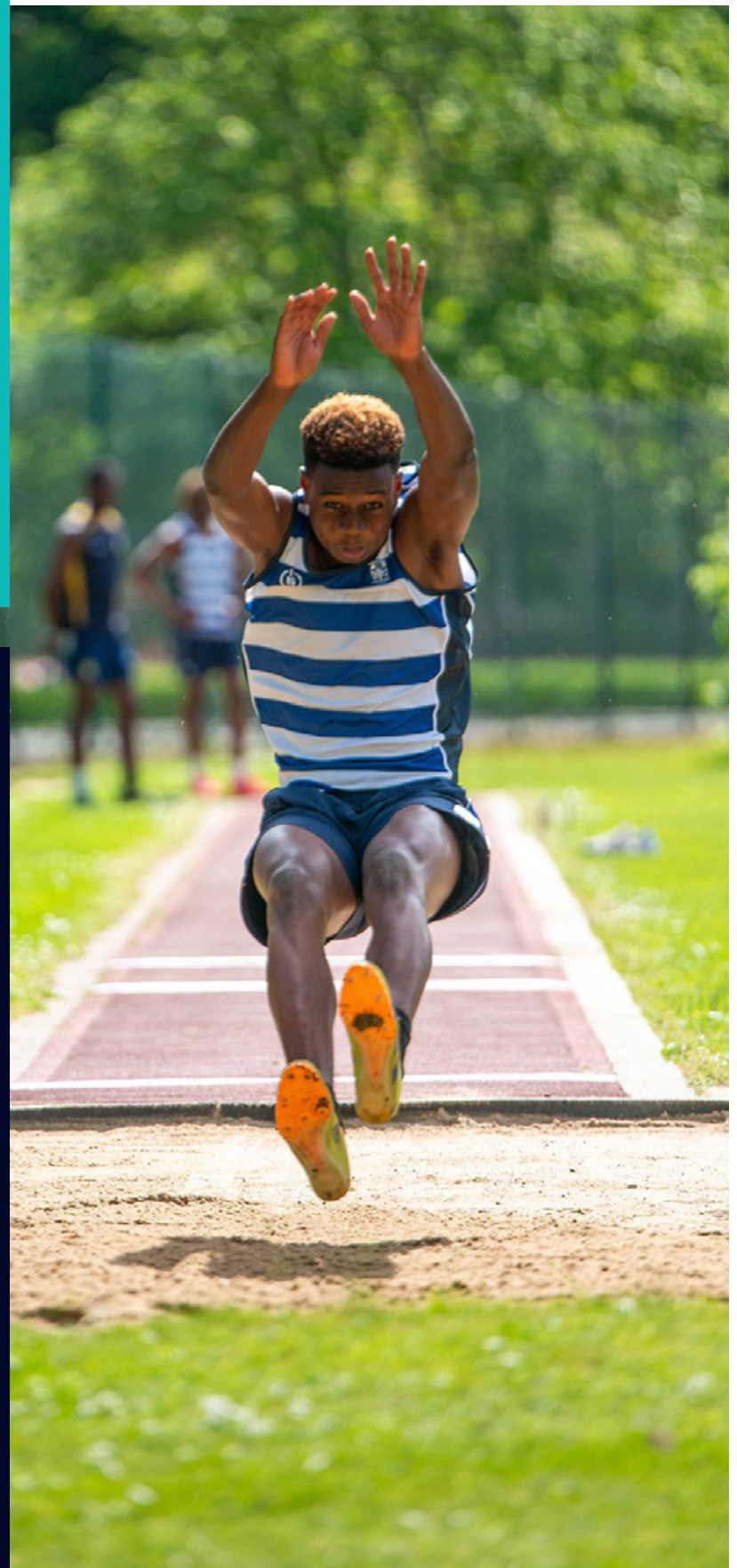
Please ensure that you read the policies below carefully prior to submitting your application. All policies may be found [here](#).

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedure

- Application and Recruitment Process Explanatory Note
- DBS Recruitment Policy Statement
- Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

All successful job applicants will be required to undergo child protection screening as part of our recruitment process, which will include:

- Safeguarding interview with our Designated Safeguarding Lead or nominated deputy
- Seek references prior to interview
- Online social media profile check



Application Process



The search for a new Senior Deputy Head for Canford School is being led by RSAcademics, and the new post-holder will be selected by a panel chaired by Chris Wheeler, Headmaster.

Interested candidates are invited to contact RSAcademics to arrange a confidential discussion with one of the consultants handling this appointment:

- Sarah Glencross, Head of Senior School Search:
sarahglencross@rsacademics.com
- Jo MacKenzie, Senior Advisor:
jomackenzie@rsacademics.com

Closing date: 10.00am on Monday 17th November 2025.

Applications should be made electronically to RSAcademics. To submit your application, please upload your documents according to the instructions on the RSAcademics [website](#).

You should submit the following (both in PDF format):

- A completed application form (available alongside this candidate information on the RSAcademics [website](#)).
- A covering letter addressed to Mr Chris Wheeler. The letter should explain your reasons for applying.

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

- Jonathan Barnes, Head of Operations (Leadership Appointments): applications@rsacademics.com or telephone: +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 our Head Office by telephone.
- Preliminary interviews will take place with Jo MacKenzie and Sarah Glencross of RSAcademics via Teams on Wednesday 19th November or Friday 21st November 2025.
- Successful shortlisted candidates will be given the opportunity to visit the School during the week commencing 1st December 2025.
- Shortlist interviews will take place at the School in the week commencing 8th December 2025.

Canford School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The appointment is subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks in accordance with the relevant statutory guidance, including an enhanced DBS check, satisfactory references, proof of identity and qualifications, and a satisfactory medical report.

N.B. Safer recruitment checks will be made at all stages in the recruitment process.