



CAMPBELL  
COLLEGE

Est 1894  
BELFAST

# Chief Operating Officer

Candidate Information

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# Welcome

**T**hank you for your interest in the position of Chief Operating Officer at Campbell College. As the newly appointed Head, I am delighted to invite applications for this strategically significant role at an important moment in the life of the College. Campbell is a school with a proud heritage and a clear sense of purpose, and we now look ahead with ambition to the next phase of our development. Life at Campbell is vibrant, grounded in strong values, and enriched by the energy of our pupils, staff, and community. We are fortunate to be located in Belfast, a dynamic city whose cultural, educational, and economic strengths offer outstanding opportunities.

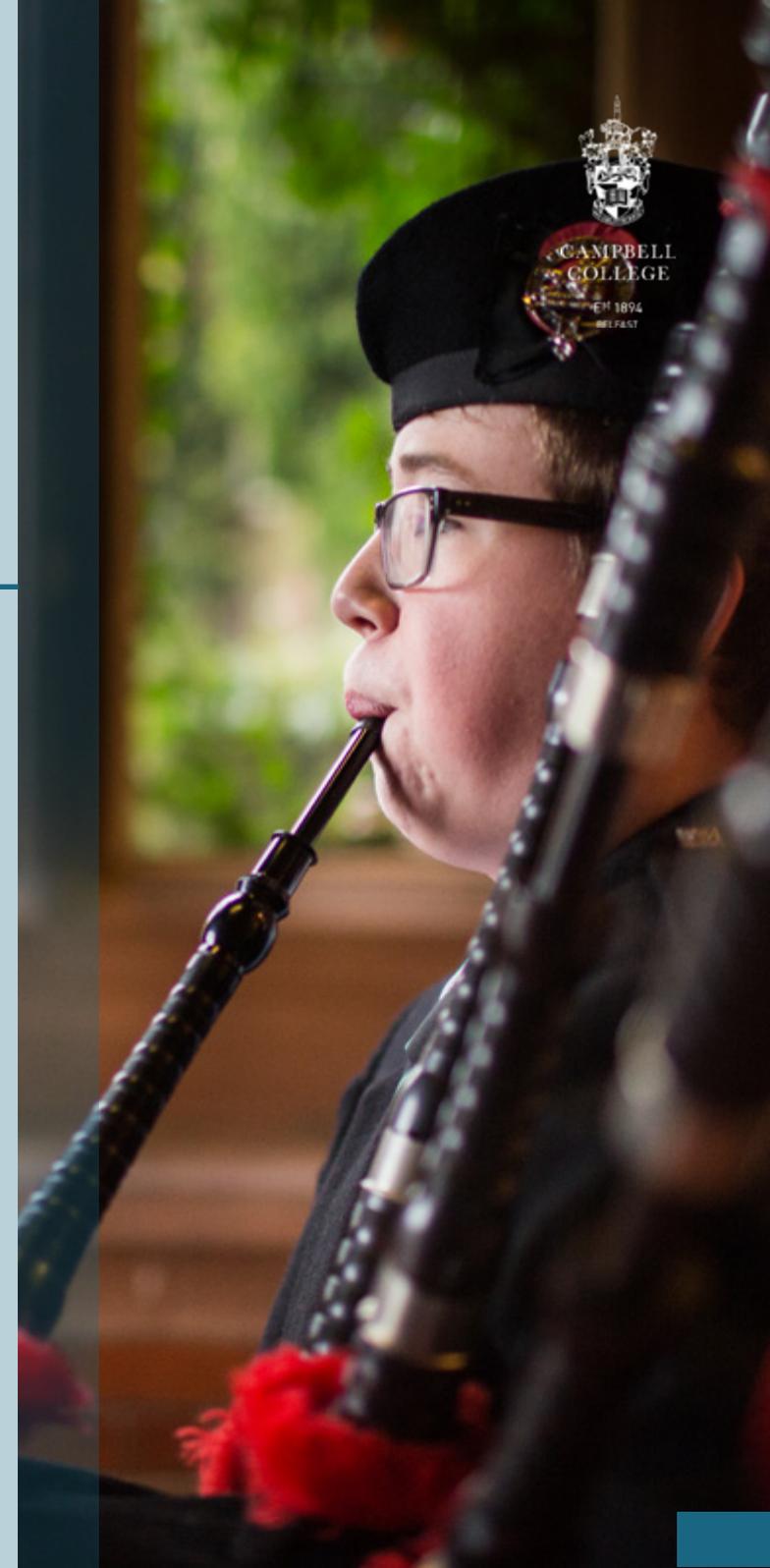
The COO will play a central role in shaping the College's future, ensuring that our operations, estate, and support

functions are aligned with our strategic direction. I am looking for a colleague with whom I can work closely, constructively, and effectively; someone who brings clarity and foresight to a broad and demanding brief. You will be joining a committed and cohesive Senior Leadership Team and a staff body that cares deeply about the College and its mission. Together, we are determined to build on strong foundations while embracing innovation and continuous improvement in all that we do.

If you feel you can contribute to this exciting period in Campbell's story, I warmly encourage you to apply. I look forward to meeting candidates who share our ambition and our belief in the transformative power of education.



**Jonathan  
Anderson**  
Headmaster





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## 03 About Campbell College

Campbell College is an HMC day and boarding school situated in a beautiful 100-acre wooded estate to the east of the busy and culturally vibrant city of Belfast. Founded in 1894 thanks to philanthropist Henry James Campbell, the College has a very strong reputation for the excellent all-round education of boys within an inclusive, values-rich and caring community.

Home to over 1,200 boys aged 3–18, the College comprises an independent Junior School with a Senior School funded through both government contributions and modest school fees. The College has added state-of-the-art facilities to the original Victorian buildings throughout its history, but the ethos has remained constant and true to the intentions of its founder – *Respect, Service and Leadership*. The Senior School works closely with its sister schools, Strathearn School and Bloomfield Collegiate, for some Sixth Form teaching and extra-curricular activities.

Boarding has been a central part of the College's provision from its foundation and remains an essential part of College life, with boarding numbers having more than doubled in recent years. There are now nearly 150 boarders from all over the world. About 40 per cent of boarders are foreign nationals, mainly from Europe and the Far East.

Campbell is particularly proud of its Sixth Form provision, which combines the opportunity for studying a broad and flexible range of subjects with an extensive and diverse extra-curricular offer. All of the academic programmes, whether studying subjects to A level, BTEC Level 3 qualifications or combining the study of A levels

with BTEC qualifications, offer excellent pathways into study at university or into higher education or training. About half of Sixth Form leavers go to Russell Group universities.

Sport is part of the fabric of the College, with rugby, hockey and cricket being the main sports. More than 120 boys learn a musical instrument, and the emphasis is on providing performance opportunities for all. The College is particularly proud of its Pipe Band, and there is a large choir, chamber choir, orchestra, jazz band and string quartet. The Drama department offers many opportunities for both on-stage and back-stage experience, with girls from Strathearn joining for large-scale collaborative musicals.

The College's ethos is personified in the lives of those alumni who were inspired by their time at the School. These include author and poet C.S. Lewis, whose *Narnia* was inspired by the woodland estate and the gas lamp which stands proudly in the College driveway; Nobel Laureate, Professor William Campbell, who was inspired to follow his passion for parasites on a College field trip; Snow Patrol's lead singer, Gary Lightbody, who was inspired by his English Teacher; the group's drummer, Jonny Quinn, who found inspiration as a member of the College Pipe Band; and Irish International Rugby players such as Mike Gibson, Gordon Hamilton and Paddy Wallace, who were inspired on Fox's Field and contributed to the College's 24 Ulster Schools Cups wins since the first in 1898 to the latest in 2018.

# Location, Buildings and Facilities

Nestled on the edge of East Belfast, access to Campbell College is very easy, and current pupils come from a range of destinations. The George Best Belfast City Airport is just five minutes by taxi from the College and offers a range of services to all London and regional airports in mainland UK and Europe.

The main building, with its imposing, red-brick façade and iconic Clock Tower, radiates the high Victorian ideals of the College's founders. The central hall, with its gallery and stained-glass rose window, is used for plays, concerts, assemblies and chapel services. Teaching, boarding, music, drama, sports and welfare facilities have been added and refurbished over the years, but in 2015–16, the Governors conducted an audit of the whole campus to identify needs and set priorities to ensure Campbell's buildings and grounds are fit for the future. The result was the ambitious £30m 'Building for the Future Campus Vision' comprising four key areas:

- Heritage
- Sport
- Science
- Creative Arts

The first major project of the 'Building for the Future Campus Vision' was the construction of new boarding accommodation to further increase capacity. Boarding is the heartbeat of the College and a vital revenue stream. The new boarding accommodation was completed in 2019. The College is now proud to offer state-of-the-art boarding accommodation; Junior boys (aged 11–13) share small rooms of up to five, and all Senior boys have their own study bedrooms. Upper Sixth boarders have a separate House with ensuite bathrooms. There are 24 boarders who

are funded by the Irish Football Association (IFA), some of whom attend the College.

Sport is one of Campbell's core strengths. The refurbishment of the old sports buildings into a new £6m state-of-the-art Sports Centre, complete with one of the largest school fitness suites in the whole of Ireland, integrated sports classrooms, a multi-purpose sports hall, a climbing wall, a studio and a public area, was completed in June 2025. This is in addition to the 11 rugby pitches (including the hallowed first XV Fox's Field, overlooked by Stormont), two synthetic pitches for hockey and a running track.

The conservation and restoration of the College's wonderful heritage buildings have commenced, and work will continue over the next decade. There are also plans to refurbish the College's Science facilities. All projects which are part of the 'Building for the Future Campus Vision' are dependent on funding in full or in part on the **'Building for the Future' Fundraising Campaign**, which was launched in 2018.

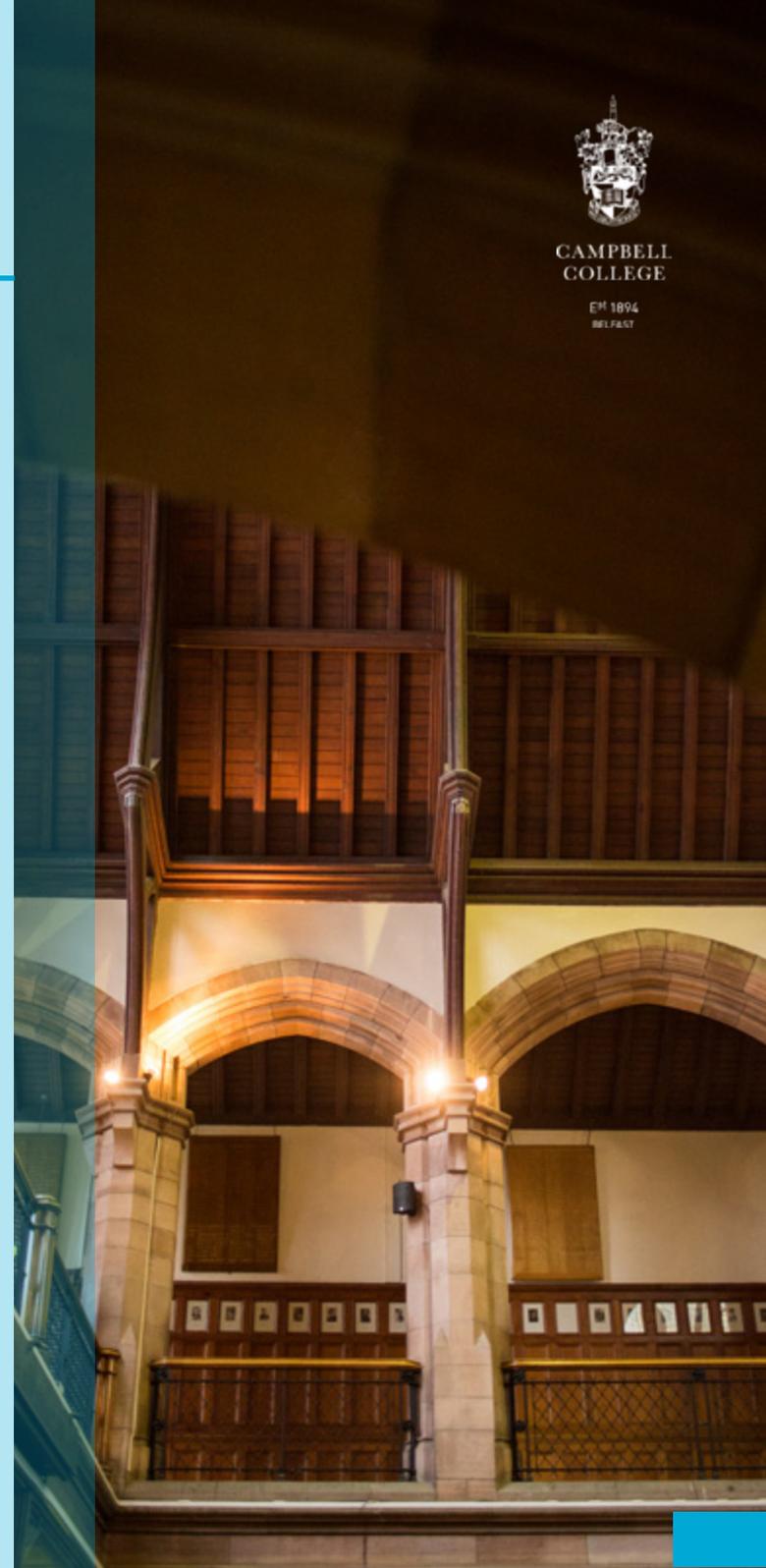
***"As you drive up the tree-lined avenue to the College, you are immediately drawn into the magic of Campbell; the impressive Victorian buildings set in a stunning 100-acre woodland campus with sports grounds as far as the eye can see – it is a truly unique and outstanding campus."***

The Good Schools Guide



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## The Junior School

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The Junior School and Kindergarten, for boys aged 3–11, is set in the College grounds but is physically separate from the Senior School, although it shares some of the facilities, such as Music and Drama, the Sports Centre, sports pitches and the dining hall. The Prep is a very well-designed multi-purpose space within which the classrooms are arranged around a main atrium space. It has its own ICT suite, library, and creative spaces. Outdoor learning, including the Forest School with its canopy classroom, is encouraged, making full use of the 100-acre site. More than £500k was invested in summer 2025 to refresh facilities, including the refurbishment of the Key Stage 1 building.

Entry to the Junior School is at 3+ or 4+, and some girls also attend the Kindergarten. Wraparound care is available from 8am until 6pm.

# Leadership and Governance

Campbell College operates as a Voluntary B grammar school, governed independently by a Board of Governors in accordance with relevant primary legislation. The Governors also serve as Trustees, holding the land and buildings in trust on behalf of the College's original founders.

The Governors are responsible for the strategic direction and overall management and control of the College. The Board of Governors meets at least three times a year. The work of overseeing strategy, monitoring performance and implementation of policies is devolved to seven sub-committees, which are Curriculum and Pastoral; Junior School; Finance; Estates; Development; Staffing and Salaries; and 'Building for the Future'. The Chief Operating Officer (COO) attends the meetings of the Board and has direct input to the Finance, Estates, and other committees as appropriate. There will be a separate Clerk to the Governors to support the administration of the Board and sub-committees.

Executive day-to-day management of the College is delegated to the Headmaster, who is supported by the COO, the Head of the Junior School and other members of the College-wide Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

The College is regularly inspected by the Education and Training Inspectorate, and the latest report can be found [here](#).



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## Finance

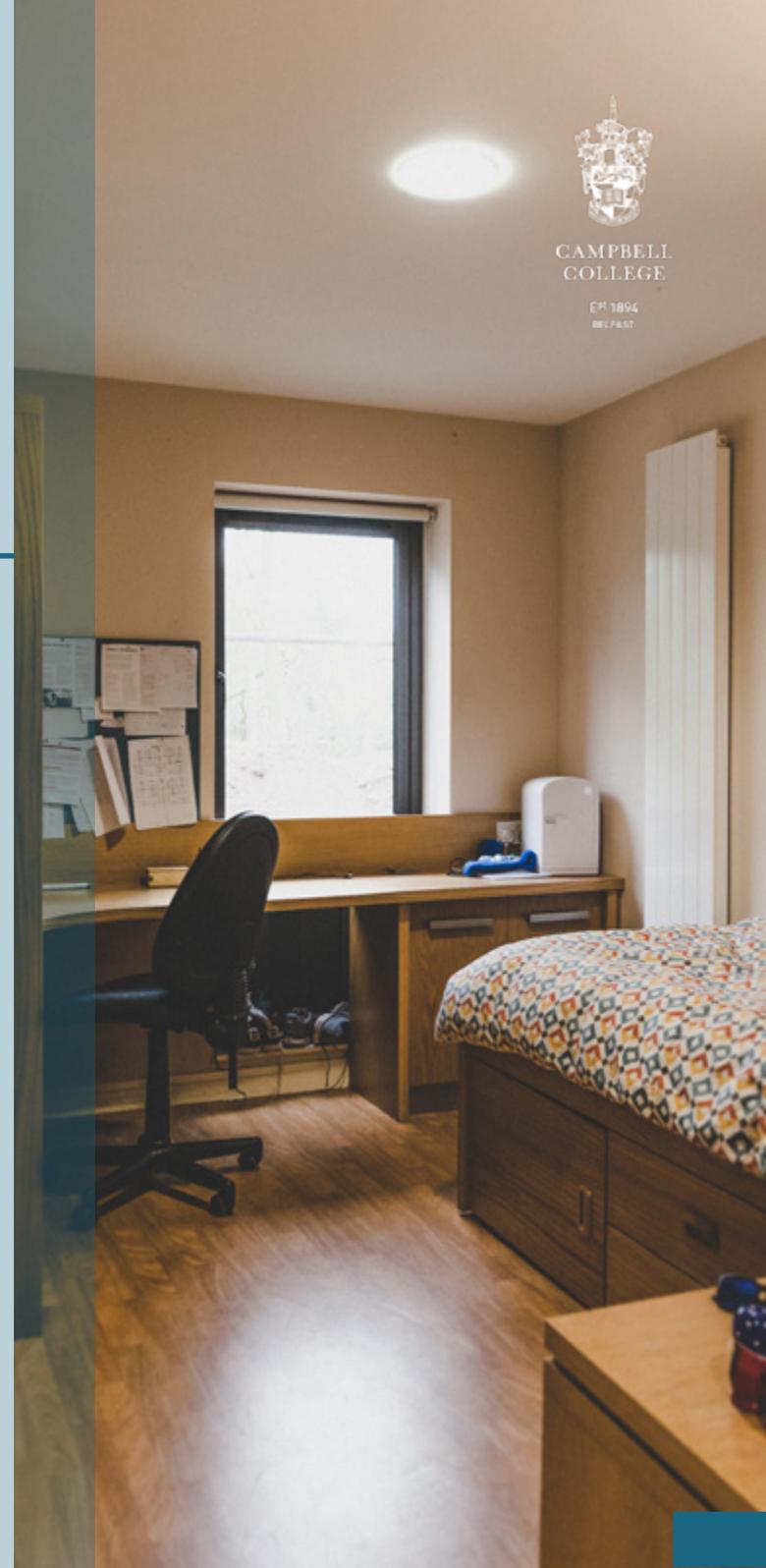
As a Voluntary B grammar school, all tuition costs, teachers' salaries, etc., in the Senior School are paid for by the state, but the College receives no financial assistance from the Government for any capital expenditure and has to fund the upkeep and development of the buildings. All capital costs are therefore self-funded through the pupil capital fee, College funds and the **'Building for the Future' Fundraising Campaign**. The Junior School receives a minimal revenue grant funding from the Government and relies heavily on fees and College funds to cover its costs. The College overall is in good financial health, and Governors are confident in its ability to support its ongoing Development Plan.

Fees for senior day tuition for EU passport holders are about half those for non-EU pupils. Fees are generally modest in comparison to other UK boarding schools.

Academic scholarships are on offer by way of a set reduction on fees, and the College offers means-tested bursaries of up to 100 per cent of fees.

The College has an extensive commercial lettings programme. The boarding accommodation is fully booked during the summer, and other facilities are let commercially during term time outside core school hours. The Governors and Headmaster consider optimising the commercial return from the College's facilities and other opportunities as a strategic priority to support the 'Building for the Future Campus Vision' and will be an important focus for the new COO.

Full financial information is in Campbell College's annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, which can be found [here](#).





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## The School Community

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Campbell College is a global family of pupils, parents and staff, past and present, that spans the continents and the generations. The Campbell College Hub provides an online platform for members of this engaged and extended family to connect with each other, hear news about the College and register for events. The Old Campbellian Society has over 5,000 members, allowing former pupils to stay connected. Old Campbellians are always keen to give back to the College and return to give talks about the world of work via the Leaders in Society programme.

The use of the College and its campus is a key part of the College's Public Benefit Strategy, which is focused on benefitting the development and education of young people, increasing access and building connections with the local community. The College is committed to opening up its facilities for the benefit of everyone. As well as hosting a plethora of its own events, Campbell welcomes over 8,000 people, including local and international groups, to utilise its campus and facilities throughout the year.



# The Opportunity

This is an exciting opportunity for an inspiring, collegiate and ambitious leader to drive the business and support functions of Campbell College. Working with the new Headmaster, Jonathan Anderson, the Governors and the SLT, the new COO will act as the College's commercial adviser, shaping and implementing the next phase of its strategic development and delivering its ambitious capital programme whilst ensuring its continued operational and financial success.

Reporting to the Headmaster and, through the Chair of the Finance Committee, to the Governors, the COO will be responsible for the effective leadership and management of the College's finance, estates and facilities, HR, compliance, catering and commercial activities. The relationships between the Chair, the Headmaster and the COO are key to the success of the College, as is that with the Chair of the Finance Committee.

Candidates will have a proven track record of senior leadership, commercial success and financial control, balancing the needs and challenges of large complex organisations, managing resources, delivering results, thinking strategically, and inspiring, motivating and developing high-functioning teams. A leader who can hold people, resources and organisational priorities in healthy balance, recognising that the College's long-term success depends as much on its people and their development as on its financial sustainability. An outstanding communicator, a sophisticated and diplomatic negotiator with the ability to navigate complex relationships, as well as execute

initiatives and projects, including major capital works, that will drive the College's success. The role requires ambition, energy and resilience complemented by empathetic, inclusive and authentic leadership, exceptional interpersonal abilities, and a well-developed sense of humour. A strong skill set, including finance (an accounting qualification is not necessary), strategic planning and execution, and operational delivery, is required.

Prior experience in the education sector is not a prerequisite. Applications are encouraged from candidates from a diverse range of professional backgrounds who can evidence strong commercial and operational expertise and a demonstrable track record of successfully leading multi-disciplinary teams through a collaborative and enabling style. Candidates will demonstrate empathy with and a commitment to single-sex boys' independent education and the values and ethos of the College.

The COO has overall responsibility for a diverse team of circa 65 operations staff, led and managed by a team of experienced and dedicated managers.

The COO has five direct reports:

- COO's Secretary
- Finance Manager
- Facilities Manager – oversees cleaning, catering, security and lettings
- Buildings Manager – oversees maintenance of buildings, grounds and capital projects
- IT Network Manager



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# Key Responsibilities

## *Strategy*

- Develop, in association with the Headmaster and Governors, the strategic plan for the next phase of the College's development.
- Work in close partnership with the Headmaster to implement the College's strategic and school development plans, particularly in respect of finance, capital builds, commercial development, alternative revenue generation and operational delivery.
- Work with the Head and Development Director to support the College's fundraising.
- Contribute beyond the core functions of the COO's finance and operational brief as a business planner and commercial thinker, ensuring that the College seizes commercial opportunities that the rapidly evolving external landscape present.

## *Leadership and Management*

- Lead and inspire the operations staff and facilitate strong working relationships between the teaching and operations staff.
- Promote and develop a culture where both teaching and operations staff are developed, valued and empowered to excel.
- Seek and implement opportunities to enhance the integration of support functions across the Senior and Junior Schools.

- Promote modern business practices and drive initiatives to ensure operations are consistent with a leading school whilst maintaining important and valuable traditions.
- Develop and nurture effective relationships with key external service providers, professionals, and partners, including banks, auditors, insurers and legal advisers, central and local government and the community.

## *Finance*

- Manage the financial performance of the College, maintaining a sustainable, forward-looking strategic financial plan.
- Advise the Governors, Headmaster and SLT on all matters relating to financial strategy, including allocation of resources and the impact of their decisions on the College's financial position and commercial matters.
- Ensure that a robust system of financial planning and control operates across the College consistent with strategy, policies and procedures.
- Advise the Headmaster and Governors on borrowing requirements and cashflow projections, manage debt and ensure compliance with any covenants.
- Oversee the work of the Finance Manager and their team, including budgets, forecasts, management and statutory accounts, Department of Education returns, the annual external and internal audits, billing, revenue collection, purchase ledger records and supplier payments, the processing of the payroll and pensions,

the Asset Register, VAT and other tax arrangements.

- Provide clear financial reporting to the Headmaster, Governors and SLT.
- Ensure fair and robust debtor management, including meeting parents when necessary.
- Work with the Finance Committee and investment managers to ensure the College's investment portfolio performs in line with the investment policy objectives and targets.
- Analyse College fees and costs and work with the Governors and Headmaster to set fee levels and salaries.
- Oversee the College's means-tested bursary and hardship application process.
- Ensure that the College secures best value from contracts and procurement arrangements.

## *HR*

- Oversee the provision of an effective, proactive HR function that follows best practice, including recruitment, induction and training, contract documentation, payroll, pension arrangements and benefits, relationships with unions, performance, professional development, retention, record management, including pre-employment checks, and staff wellbeing.
- Ensure the Headmaster, SLT and department heads have access to advice and data to manage employment matters.

## *Estates and Facilities*

- Develop and maintain an effective, forward-looking master plan that supports the strategic vision.
- Identify the College's infrastructure requirements in order of priority and drive the project programme from concept to delivery.
- Lead the delivery of capital projects to time, specification and budget with support from appointed project professionals and the Estates Manager.
- Ensure the effective management of the College's estate in line with its objectives.
- Ensure delivery of a planned maintenance programme for all College buildings and grounds, including amenity areas, gardens, sports pitches and all-weather pitches, to the required standard and compliant with statutory regulations.
- Seek to integrate sustainable solutions and initiatives to reduce the College's environmental footprint and energy consumption.
- Ensure the delivery of a first-class catering, front-of-house and housekeeping service for pupils, staff and visitors.
- Ensure appropriate arrangements for the security of the site.
- Ensure the College maintains and improves health and safety compliance and meets the standards laid down by the Health & Safety Executive (NI) and Education and Training Inspectorate.

## *IT*

- Work with the Network Manager to ensure the development, procurement, delivery and management of cost-effective IT infrastructure, data and services to support high-quality teaching and learning, communications and administration for all areas of the College's operations.
- Facilitate the safety, security and integrity of the College's IT network and digital data.

## *Commercial Activities*

- Oversee the commercial operations to optimise net income generation from the College's facilities and expand into new markets to develop revenue-earning opportunities.
- Proactively seek opportunities to identify, plan and implement new business initiatives to improve commercial performance.

## *Governance, Compliance and Risk Management*

- In liaison with the Clerk to the Governors, ensure that the College complies with all charity law and the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1998.
- Ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, ensuring policies, procedures and training are in place and championing their application throughout the College.
- Promote a positive health and safety culture throughout the College and fulfil all the COO's responsibilities in accordance with the College's Health and Safety Policy, including chairing the Health and Safety Committee.
- Drive the identification, assessment, and management of business risk, including the management of the risk assessment process and Risk Register.
- Ensure that the College has appropriate insurance cover for all key insurable risks.
- Advise on business continuity planning to ensure that the College is well prepared for any emergency.
- Promote good relationships with the Old Campbellian Society and Parents' Forum.

## *Safeguarding and Welfare of Children*

Campbell College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment and to become familiar with the College's policies and procedures for safeguarding and child protection, which can be found [here](#).



# Person Specification

The successful candidate will bring the following qualifications, skills and knowledge, leadership style and personal attributes.

## *Qualifications and Experience*

- Educated to degree level or equivalent.
- A professional qualification in a finance, business or accounting discipline (desirable but not essential).
- A strong track record of successful senior leadership experience in a complex organisation and working with a Board of Trustees or equivalent structure.
- Direct experience at a senior level of both strategy and operations.
- Experience of working within a complex budgetary structure and embracing, managing and promoting change.
- Proven experience of leading and developing high-performing, multi-disciplinary teams.
- Experience of project management and delivery of capital builds (desirable).
- Working within a regulatory framework.

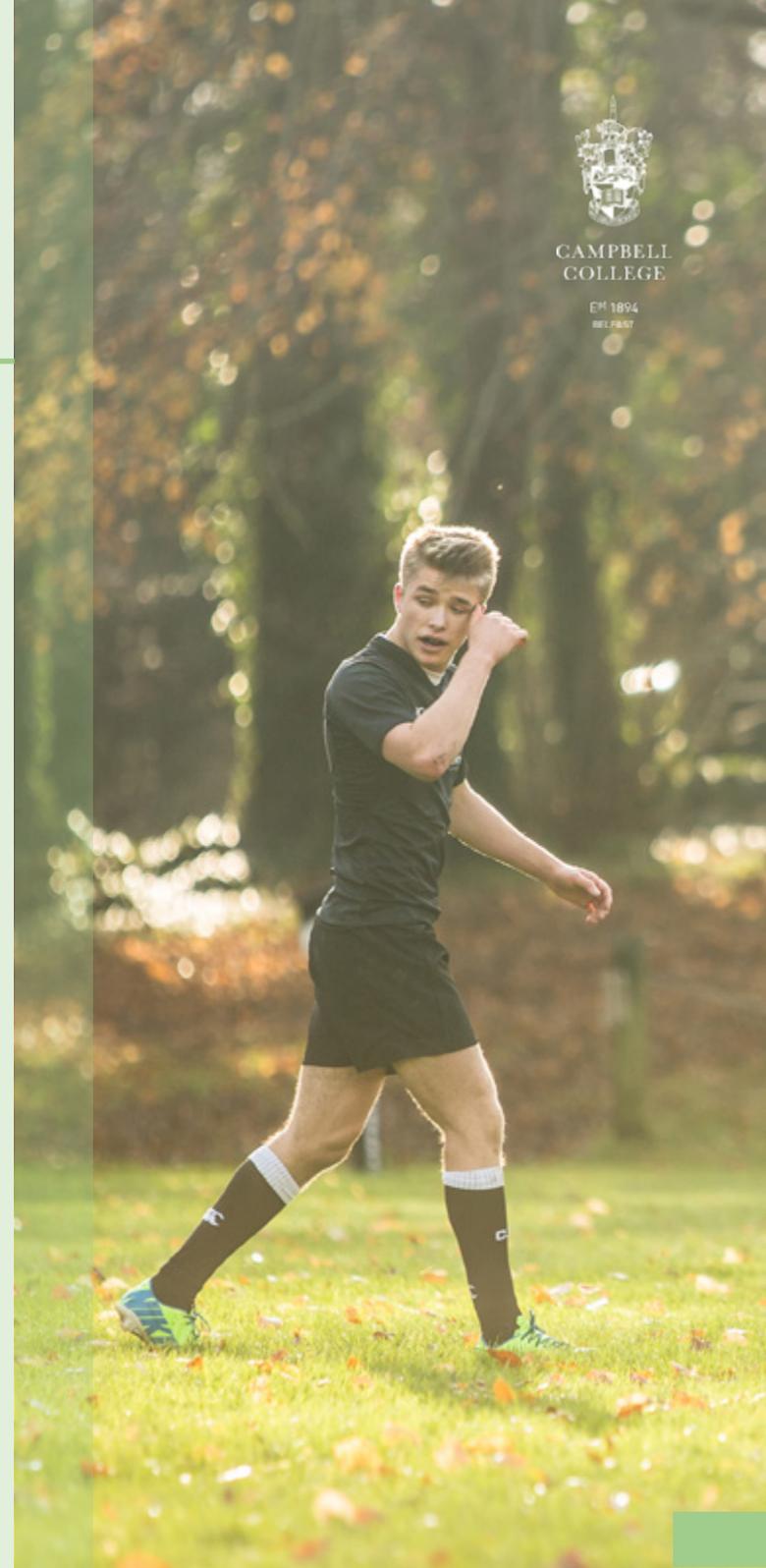
## *Skills and Knowledge*

- Strong strategic abilities and organisational skills with the capacity to guide whole-organisational development.
- Strong financial and commercial acumen with the ability to easily assimilate, analyse, interpret and present data and assess risk.
- Demonstrable knowledge of property, HR, IT, health and safety, legal and other issues.

- First-class communication and negotiation skills – able to balance robustness with constructive, positive discussion and diplomacy.
- Strong interpersonal skills and high levels of emotional intelligence.
- An understanding of the commercial, economic and financial imperatives in the leadership and management of schools.
- An understanding of the College's responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and child protection and a clear commitment to delivering best practice in safeguarding.

## *Leadership and Personal Attributes*

- A highly visible, compassionate and charismatic leader who can work both independently and as a key team member to inspire confidence in all stakeholders and encourage and motivate staff.
- Demonstrable energy, resilience and drive, with attention to detail and the ability to manage competing priorities.
- High levels of self-awareness, humility and flexibility, as well as an open and collaborative leadership style.
- Personal integrity, kindness, warmth and sound judgement.
- Dedicated, positive and with good humour.
- A commitment to and interest in being involved in the wider life of the College.
- A commitment to bursaries and partnerships, with a strong sense of social responsibility.
- Values and promotes diversity, equality and inclusion.





# Appointment Terms

A highly attractive remuneration package is offered, reflecting the seniority and significance of the position. The salary offered will depend on skills and experience.

This is a full-time, 52-week post, and some flexibility of working hours will be required in light of the role and responsibilities it entails.

The main benefits are likely to include:

- Annual holiday entitlement of 38 days of holiday each year, which includes bank holidays and College closures of Christmas week, Easter (2 days) and 12th and 13th July.
- Accommodation on site and relocation assistance may be available.
- Enrolment in the NILGOSC Pension Scheme, the Local Government Pension Scheme, with an employer contribution rate of 19%.
- A generous fee remission for sons who meet the entrance criteria after one year's service.

- Private health care.
- Complimentary use of sports facilities, including the gym.

Campbell College is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to equality of opportunity for all staff. Applications from individuals are encouraged regardless of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and marriage/civil partnerships.

Campbell 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 review of their social media presence, 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:

- Nina Lambert, Head of Professional Services  
Appointments: [ninalambert@rsacademics.com](mailto:ninalambert@rsacademics.com)

**Closing date: 10.00am on Monday 9th February 2026.**

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:

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

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

- Jonathan Barnes, Head of Operations (Leadership Appointments): [applications@rsacademics.com](mailto:applications@rsacademics.com) / +44 (0) 20 4626 9791

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 from Thursday 12th to Monday 16th February 2026.
- Longlist interviews will take place at the College or with the option of Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 24th February 2026.
- Shortlist interviews will take place at the College on Tuesday 10th March 2026.



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](https://www.rsacademics.com) for more information.

RSAcademics is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in schools.



Because the world needs schools to [thrive](https://www.rsacademics.com)