




Head of Religious Studies

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

WALTHAMSTOW HALL
SEVENOAKS



“Thriving girls’ day school in Sevenoaks. Produces quietly confident young women with a ‘can do’ attitude and an adventurous spirit. The strong academic results are a ‘happy by-product’ of all this.”

The Good Schools Guide

Introduction

Walthamstow Hall is a thriving girls’ day school based in Sevenoaks, Kent.

A well-qualified, efficient, enthusiastic and inspirational teacher is sought for the role of Head of Religious Studies at Walthamstow Hall. This is a well-organised and high-achieving department, which aims to nurture the students’ knowledge, skills and interests in all matters related to Religious Studies.

One of the oldest girls’ schools in the country, and certainly the oldest in Kent, the School has a long track record of excellence. The School enjoys marked academic and sporting success, consistently placing it high within the UK’s top 100 schools. Walthamstow Hall carves out a unique space for every individual to aspire, flourish and set the world alight.

Walthamstow Hall offers a **dynamic education**. This is a fun, grounded School of boundless opportunity and passionate teachers.

Walthamstow Hall has a focus on students leading **purposeful lives**, committed to making a positive difference in the world.

Pupils are **empowered to flourish** in an inspiring environment that cares for the whole person.





History, Ethos & Values

Since our foundation in Walthamstow in 1838 as a school and home for daughters of missionaries, Walthamstow Hall has been sending accomplished, confident young women into the world to lead purposeful lives, making a real difference in their chosen fields. Our earliest pupils went to work in far-flung locations, often as medics and teachers. Today, with an ever-greater wealth of opportunity open to them, this confident spirit of adventure (represented by the School's emblem, the Ship) is more relevant than ever. The development of character, endeavour, resilience and flair within a Christian setting remain central to the School's aims, and at each stage, pupils are actively prepared for what lies beyond and provided with new challenges. Through both the curricular and co-curricular programmes, they are enabled to explore and test their talents and embrace opportunities to

lead and serve within a supportive community and beyond. Pupils and parents alike are appreciative of the rich education and opportunities the School has to offer.

In 1882, Walthamstow Hall moved out of London to its present site in Sevenoaks; since then, it has become a cherished and established part of the wider community. Development in the recent past included a period in which the School was the girls' grammar school in Sevenoaks under the Direct Grant System in the 1970s before becoming fully independent in 1976. The School built one of the first school theatres in 1989. In September 2025, pupils in Years 3 to 6 will move to Blackburn House, their original Holly Bush Lane home and currently being renovated for their return.

“ Pupils' achievements are excellent, and their very high rates of progress throughout the Junior and Senior Schools ensure that they are highly successful in moving to the next stage of their education or the world beyond school. ”

“ Pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong and take full responsibility for their own conduct, with the result that exemplary behaviour is the norm within and beyond the classroom. ”

“ Pupils of all ages engage fully, and achieve outstanding success, in a very wide range of extension activities to support the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities. ”

“ Pupils' social development is excellent. They are confident in their dealings with adults and value one another's thoughts and opinions when supporting and collaborating with each other and their teachers. ”

“ The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent. ”

“ Pupils have excellent attitudes towards their learning. ”

“ Pupils are exceptionally positive in their commitment to improving the lives of others. ”

Independent Schools Inspectorate

“ No matter who you are, the Sixth Form at Wally encourages you to be the best you can, and not just in your studies. There are so many co-curricular opportunities that help to build confidence, self-esteem and a sense of achievement. ”

Grace, Year 13

“ When I talk to my friends from other schools it strikes me that that they aren't known properly by their teachers, but I am known as an individual here. ”

Isabella, Year 11

“ I found it very easy to settle in at Wally Hall because both my sisters went here and I knew everyone was very friendly and welcoming. At Wally, there is something for everyone to be a part of. ”

Valya, Year 9

Location, Buildings, Development & Finance

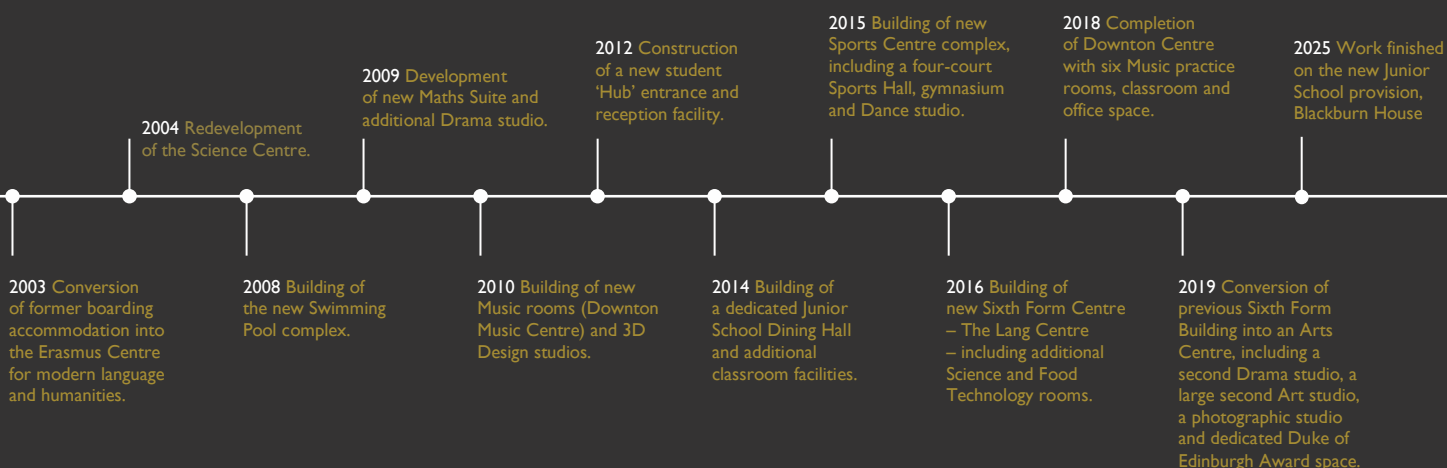
The School enjoys views of Knole Park and the Downs whilst being close to the centre of Sevenoaks and to the station with its fast (22 minutes) and frequent links to London.

Since moving to Sevenoaks in 1882, every Walthamstow Hall building, from its original Arts and Crafts heart to the new Sports Hall, Swimming Pool Complex and Sixth Form Centre, has been designed and purpose-built to meet the School's present and future needs as it has expanded and evolved.

In 2025 we introduce our new Junior School provision, Blackburn House, hosted on the Senior School site.



The past 20 years have been a period of estate development, including:



The latest major development was the construction of the £5.7 million Sixth Form Centre. This four-storey building includes an additional Science/Technology suite as well as dedicated Sixth Form teaching rooms and communal spaces. Subsequent refurbishment projects have included the previous Sixth Form Building, additional Music practice rooms and completion of the Downton Music Centre.

For over 185 years, the School has constantly evolved: investing, building and planning for the future. We now plan to bring girls in Key Stage 2 back onto the Holly Bush Lane site, bringing the School back onto one site with the enhanced community spirit that offers.



Curriculum

At Key Stage Three, our Theology and Philosophy courses are designed to develop in the girls both key understanding of religious literacy and critical thinking. They help the students to understand how belief structures give meaning and purpose to lives and to think critically about what knowledge is and how we might find it.

During Years 9 to 11 all girls take the Eduqas RS GCSE Short Course.

In Year 12 and 13, students can opt to study the OCR A Level Religious Studies course and some go on to study Philosophy at University.

In addition to the Head of Religious Studies, the teaching staff consists of two part-time teachers.

RESULTS

Walthamstow Hall's record of academic excellence is long established and can be seen at every point of external assessment.

In the Senior School, pupils typically take an average of 10 subjects at GCSE and 3 at A Level. The EPQ is a popular addition taken by Sixth Form students, and achievement is very high.

In 2024, 86% of A Levels were awarded at A*–B, with 63% at A*–A and 33% at A*. 34% of GCSEs in 2024 were awarded at 9, with 57% at 8–9; and 74% of all GCSEs taken achieved a 7, 8 or 9.

Value-added analysis is equally favourable: for Year 7 to 11/GCSE in 2024, Walthamstow Hall is ranked in the top 10% out of 283 Independent Schools. At A Level, Walthamstow Hall's value-added results have put us in the top 7% of independent schools nationally.

In 2024, A Level Religious Studies students attained 77% A*–C and 44% A*–A.

Religious Studies GCSE results were excellent with almost half of the cohort achieving a grade 9 and 85% achieving Grades 7–9.

THE DEPARTMENT

The department is highly experienced and supportive with excellent results, resources and established schemes of work in place.

At Key Stage Three, girls have one double lesson a week. Homework is set weekly and it is returned at the start of the following lesson. Tests are held at the end of topics to monitor pupils' progress and to encourage them to learn as they go along, and School exams are set in June each year.

From Year 9 all pupils start the Eduqas RS GCSE short course and have two lessons a week followed by end of year exams in Year 9 and 10 and a mock GCSE examination taken in January of Year 11.

Year 12 and 13 students have a total of eight periods each week, shared by two teachers. They follow the OCR Religious Studies A Level course. Any student desiring to apply for Oxbridge will attend the Thinking Beyond Lectures and enter Essay Competitions.

Weekly departmental meetings are held to ensure a unified approach to teaching and learning and to encourage the sharing of best practice.

As a department we contribute to the enrichment of the students by going to the Candle Conferences and have consistently managed to get outside speakers such as Keith Ward and Jack Symes of the Panpsycast Podcast in talk to the pupils; we also encourage students to use their initiative to go and see talks and lectures in London.



Co-curricular Enrichment

Co-curricular learning is key and Service all components of everyday life at Walthamstow Hall.

SPORT

The School 'punches above its weight' in the sporting arena with significant numbers of pupils competing and winning medals at the national level across a wide range of sports, including athletics, badminton, cross-country, lacrosse, show jumping, gymnastics, swimming and tennis. Sport is not just about the elite: 'Sport for all' is encouraged and celebrated at every stage. Pupils enjoy five lessons of sport in Year 7 and, counter to national trends, participation and enthusiasm continue right through to Year 13. The addition of the Sports Centre has made provision for senior students to use the new gym and dance studio alongside, or instead of, competitive sport.

The Sports Centre was opened in 2015 by six former pupils, all of whom were national competitors or champions in different sports. Indoor cricket nets were opened in 2024, thanks to a generous parental donation.

MUSIC & DRAMA

Walthamstow Hall is renowned for the exceptional quality of Music and Drama on offer. A third of pupils take weekly lessons in an instrument, and a third also take Trinity Drama lessons. Over 90% of Trinity Drama grades are passed at the highest level, Distinction. There are formal and informal concerts every term, involving the orchestra and a wide range of chamber groups and choirs. Singing in the Year 7 choir is compulsory for all Year 7 pupils. Plays take place in The Ship Theatre every term. Recent productions have included Peter Pan, Coram Boy, A Christmas Carol, Mary Stewart, The Sound of Music, and Guys and Dolls. All backstage support is run by pupils who follow the same backstage protocols employed by The National Theatre.

Large numbers of pupils contribute on stage or behind the scenes to highly successful drama productions.

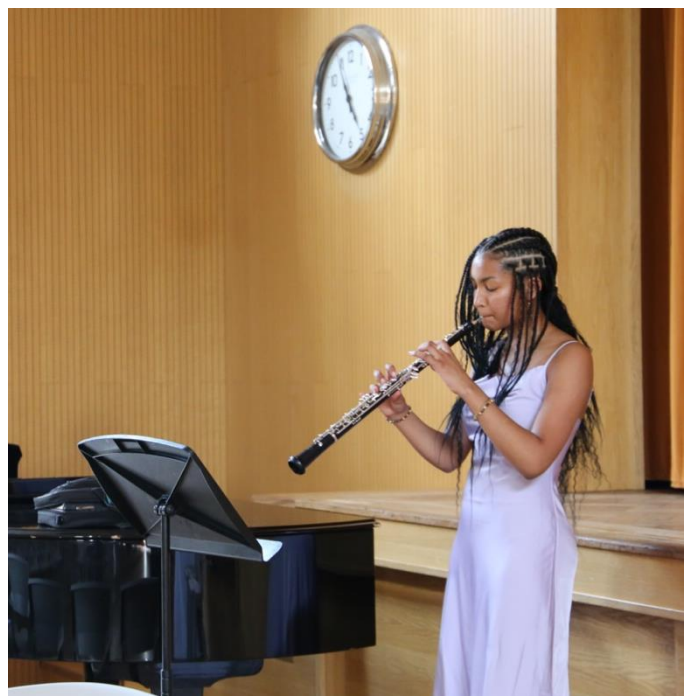
ISI Inspection

DUKE OF EDINBURGH, ENTERPRISE & VOLUNTEERING

The School has an impressive record in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme: it is an accredited Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme Centre, has had a highly experienced Duke of Edinburgh Manager in post since 2018, and has a dedicated area for meetings, expedition planning and preparation. Students go through to Gold Award every year. As they progress through the School, pupils are encouraged to participate in community service and a variety of volunteering activities. Walthamstow Hall has a strong link with neighbouring primary schools where our pupils put on performances, lectures and help with events.

Team, group or individual achievements in drama, music and sport are recognised at local, county and national level.

ISI Inspection





Community

A strong sense of community, respect for self and others and the pride that comes from sharing a great tradition make Walthamstow Hall a school where every pupil can flourish, achieve and make lifelong friendships. It is a setting in which achievement can be celebrated and where effort is rewarded and recognised. The strong, positive and supportive relationships between staff, students and parents are a fundamental component of the School's success, and effective teamwork is prized at all levels. There is a palpable sense of community spirit, affection, fun and pride in what the School represents. This is all underpinned by skilled and highly committed governance by Governors who know the School well. The extremely active vertical House system enables pupils and students to mix across year groups and engage in friendly competition, and it complements the pastoral structure and increasing focus on Pupil Voice.

“ Parents ... showed their appreciation for the way that leadership and governance carefully monitor and develop arrangements for pupils. ”

ISI Inspection



Pastoral Care & Wellbeing

Walthamstow Hall is a harmonious community in which all individuals are respected and feel able to contribute. Our success is built on the conviction that strong pastoral systems underpin academic progress and that emotional, personal and intellectual development go hand in hand. Great value is placed on every student's happiness and personal development, and they leave as accomplished, assured and happy young adults.

Pastoral Heads and Form Tutors provide guidance and monitor personal and academic well-being, working alongside their tutees, who are actively involved in reviewing their own progress and setting targets. There is plenty of praise and advice when needed.

Discipline in a school where pupils are known, valued and well-motivated is rarely a problem. There is a School Code, formulated in consultation with pupils, covering topics including standards of behaviour and relationships. The School has firm policies on behaviour, and minor transgressions are swiftly dealt with. Consideration for others, self-discipline and good behaviour are the norm, and rewards and sanctions are applied consistently and fairly. Pupils respect this, themselves and each other.

Pupils have a strong voice in school matters formally through the Student Council, Food Council and Eco Council and more informally in the friendly and respectful contact between staff and pupils.

Close and regular communication between the School and parents is encouraged, and the School takes pride in the productive partnership which exists between parents, staff and pupils.



Senior Leadership Team



From September 2025, The Senior Leadership Team will comprise of the Headmistress, Bursar, Senior Deputy Head, Deputy Head Academic, Head of Blackburn House, Heads of Key Stages 3 and 4, Head of Sixth Form, and Director of Digital Services and Innovation.

The Headmistress and Bursar attend all Governor committee meetings, with other members of the Team attending those relevant for their role.

Good communication is prized, and the team operates particularly effectively together, as well as in individually delegated roles.

There are four pastoral sections at the School: Key Stage 2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6), Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 and 9), Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11) and Sixth Form/Key Stage 5 (Years 12 and 13).

Every member of staff has pastoral as well as academic responsibilities. There are also six Staff Heads of House who support the student House Captains in making the House system such a success within the School.

We are committed to:

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.
- Equal opportunities in respect of any protected characteristic.
- Recruiting the staff who have the vision and competencies to lead the School into its next exciting phase.



The Appointment

From September 2025, we seek to appoint a well-qualified, efficient, enthusiastic and inspirational teacher for the role of Head of Religious Studies.

This is a well-organised and high-achieving department, which aims to nurture the students' knowledge, skills and interests in the subject. Applicants should be able to teach Religious Studies from Years 7 to 13, including preparation for Oxbridge entrance. The position would suit an existing Head of Department or an ambitious teacher looking for a leadership role.

Responsibilities

Strategic Direction and Development of the Subject Area

- To draw up, monitor, evaluate and update a strategic plan for the department in accordance with the school's priorities in its 3-year School Development Plan and yearly Action Plan.
- To create a positive climate and a shared understanding of the subject's importance and of the short, medium and longer term plan for its development.

Curriculum

- To inspire all pupils across all ages and aptitudes to develop their understanding and skills in Religious Studies, in order to achieve their full potential in the subject.
- To keep up to date with developments in Religious Studies and in Religious Studies teaching, especially leading to changes in examination requirements.
- To write and update programmes of study and schemes of work for all year groups.
- To teach across all Key Stages at the school.

Teaching and Learning

- To ensure that the aims, objectives, curriculum coverage, teaching strategies, assessment and reporting procedures and risk assessments are kept up to date in the Department's Handbook and Schemes of Work.
- To ensure that each member of the department is clear about the department's teaching objectives and methods that will challenge each student and enable them to achieve their full potential.
- To establish and implement policies and procedures for assessing, recording and reporting student progress and for relating this to previous performance and to potential, including those with particular needs, whether AGT or SEN.
- To make effective use of data (ALIS; MidYIS) to help in monitoring standards of learning and teaching and to identify under-performance of students as well as those who are gifted and talented.
- To observe lessons on a regular basis to evaluate the quality of teaching and to identify and promote good practice.
- To identify and promote opportunities for students to develop their ICT skills and to become increasingly independent learners.
- To liaise with pastoral heads, tutors and parents about student performance and matters of discipline.





Leading and Managing Staff

- To establish positive working relationships and clear expectations within the departmental team.
- To line-manage departmental staff and to make recommendations about their professional development.
- To participate fully in appraisal/performance management procedures of staff in the department, assisting them in personal target setting and in developing to the full their potential as teachers.
- To take an active part in arrangements for recruiting, inducting and supporting new staff and in covering for absent staff.
- To hold weekly department meetings, ensuring that minutes are kept.
- To liaise with Senior Leadership in all matters relating to teaching and learning and about developments within the department.
- To promote a positive and purposeful culture and a thriving environment within the department.
- To encourage all staff members to further the aims of the department as much as they are able.
- To oversee and coordinate the teaching and learning of Religious Studies at the school.

Resources and Equipment

- To encourage the use of ICT, by both staff and pupils, and to keep abreast of new technology that may enhance teaching and learning.
- To provide online and paper resources for teachers and pupils, including worksheets, tests, videos, simulations, textbooks etc.
- To bid for an annual budget from the school and to oversee expenditure.
- To liaise with ICT staff, maintenance staff and others to ensure the smooth and safe running of the department.

Health and Safety

- To prepare risk assessments also for activities outside normal teaching time.

Examinations

- To oversee the teaching, learning and recording of examination courses.
- To prepare test papers and internal examinations.
- To write and mark scholarship and entrance papers.
- To introduce and prepare new examination courses as and when necessary.
- To provide extra lessons in preparation for this and for Oxbridge entry.

Co-curricular Activities

- To organise Religious Studies trips and visits.
- To coordinate activities and displays for the two Open Days each year and the Sixth Form Open Evening.
- To lead and support other Religious Studies activities and clubs as required.



General

- To uphold and implement the school's stated mission and to safeguard its ethos, including the support of the pastoral system and wider life of the school.
- To expect and encourage the highest standards of work and behaviour from students at all times.
- To support and implement whole school policies and practices and evaluate their own teaching critically in order to improve personal effectiveness in the classroom.
- To ensure that each pupil is treated as an individual and enabled to fulfil their academic potential.
- To take responsibility for their own professional development and keep up to date with developments relating to subject matter and pedagogy.
- To set a good example to students through personal presentation and conduct and to maintain appropriate personal boundaries with students.
- To establish effective working relationships with professional colleagues.
- Colleagues are expected to contribute to the outstanding pastoral care provided.

Subject Teacher

- To implement fully the department's schemes of work and to comply with policies and procedures in both the department's handbook and schemes of work on such matters as:
 - programmes of study and syllabus requirements
 - teaching strategies and differentiation
 - lesson preparation and marking
 - monitoring and assessment for students including the use of base-line data and projected grades
 - recording and reporting procedure
 - homework policy and discipline
- To keep accurate records of attendance, work covered and attainment as well as progress against prior attainment and to complete reports as scheduled.
- To attend staff meetings, department meetings, parents' consultation evenings and other functions and to share in representing the department at Open Mornings etc.
- To liaise with the appropriate Form Tutor and Pastoral Head about individual students.

Knowledge and Understanding

In addition to the points above it is expected that all subject staff will demonstrate competence in the following areas specified by the DfE as those expected of teachers with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)

- Have a secure knowledge of their specialist subject.
- Have a detailed knowledge of the relevant aspects of the curriculum and examination specifications.
- Understand progression in their specialist subject, including before their specialist age range.
- Cope securely with subject related questions which pupils raise.

Planning and Setting Expectations

- Identify clear teaching objectives, content, lesson structures and plan sequences of lessons appropriate to the subject matter and the pupils being taught.
- Set appropriate and demanding expectation for pupils' learning and motivation and set clear targets for pupils' learning based on prior attainment.
- Be aware of and plan for pupils who have special educational needs, including gifted and talented pupils, and plan and teach in such a way as to give positive and targeted support. Seek specialist help where relevant.

Managing Pupils

- Ensure effective teaching of whole classes, groups and individuals so that momentum and challenge are maintained and best use is made of teaching time.
- Set high expectations of pupils' behaviour, maintaining a good standard of discipline through positive and productive relationships and well-focused teaching.
- Use a range of teaching methods to keep pupils engaged including effective questioning, clear presentation and good use of departmental resources.

Assessment and Evaluation

- Assess pupil progress to establish what has been achieved and to inform future teaching.
- Mark and monitor pupils' class and homework regularly, providing constructive oral and written feedback which effectively supports learning.
- Prepare informative and constructive written reports for parents which identify specifically how each pupil can improve their personal performance.



Person Specification

Qualifications and Experience

- Essential:
 - A degree in Religious Studies/ Theology / Philosophy or a closely related subject.
 - Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).
 - Proven experience teaching Religious Studies across Key Stages 3 to 5.
 - Experience in preparing students for Oxbridge entrance.
 - Demonstrated success in improving student outcomes in Religious Studies.
- Desirable:
 - Previous experience as a Head of Department or in a leadership role within a Religious Studies department.
 - Experience in teaching of Eduqas Religious Studies GCSE and OCR Religious Studies A Level.
 - Experience in organising and leading co-curricular activities related to Religious Studies.

Knowledge and Skills

- Essential:
 - Strong subject knowledge in Religious Studies and a passion for the subject.
 - Up-to-date knowledge of the Religious Studies curriculum and examination requirements.
 - Ability to inspire and motivate students of all abilities.
 - Excellent classroom management skills.
 - Proficiency in using ICT to enhance teaching and learning.
 - Strong organisational and administrative skills.
- Desirable:
 - Knowledge of recent developments in Religious Studies education.
 - Experience in using data to monitor and improve student performance.
 - Ability to develop and implement innovative teaching strategies.

Personal Attributes

- Essential:
 - Enthusiastic and inspirational with a commitment to high standards.
 - Strong leadership and team management skills.
 - Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
 - Ability to work collaboratively with colleagues and contribute to departmental and whole-school initiatives.
 - Commitment to continuous professional development.
 - A positive attitude and a proactive approach to problem-solving.
- Desirable:
 - Willingness to participate in and contribute to the wider life of the school.

Safeguarding

- Essential:
 - Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.
 - Understanding of and adherence to the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.



Terms & Conditions

Notice: One term

Holidays: School holidays

Remuneration: To be commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Benefits:

- Staff fee concession for any daughters attending Walthamstow Hall. If not already at the School, any child would have to meet all of the normal entrance requirements.
- Reciprocal staff fee concessions for sons attending New Beacon School and Tonbridge School.
- Refreshments/meals during working hours.
- Salary sacrifice on pension scheme.
- Cycle to Work Scheme.
- Use of the School's Fitness Room and Swimming Pool (at allocated times).
- Free onsite parking.

Pension: Member of the School's teaching staff pension scheme, with a generous contribution by the School.

Note: The job description sets out the School's principal expectations of the Head of Religious Studies' professional responsibilities and duties. However, it should be noted that it is not intended to be a comprehensive statement and we are looking for an adaptable individual who has the capacity to work flexibly, taking the initiative to ensure that the Head of Religious Studies pro-actively supports the flourishing of the School.





Application Process

Closing date: 10am on Monday 12th May

You should submit:

- A completed application form.
- A covering letter addressed to Ms Louise Chamberlain, Headmistress HR@whall.school. The letter should explain your reasons for applying and outline your suitability for the role. There is no need to submit a CV.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to the School for interview on Friday 16th May.

Walthamstow Hall is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including but not exhaustive, checks with past employers, prohibition from management, online checks, and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Safeguarding checks will be undertaken on all successful candidates.



Headmistress: Ms L Chamberlain, BSc Hons, PGCE
Holly Bush Lane, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3UL | 01732 451334 | headmistress@whall.school
www.walthamstow-hall.co.uk

Walthamstow Hall is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales.
Charity Number 1058439. Registered Office: Walthamstow Hall, Sevenoaks TN13 3UL. Company number 03245514.