



CANFORD

Head of Admissions

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Welcome



Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the position of Head of Admissions at Canford School. I am delighted that you are considering joining our community at what is an exceptionally exciting moment in the School's history.

Founded in 1923 and celebrated our centenary in 2024, Canford has long been recognised as one of the country's leading co-educational boarding and day schools. Our academic achievements, rich co-curricular life and strong pastoral foundations are well documented, and we are proud to be widely regarded as a school that combines tradition with a modern, forward-thinking outlook. We are consistently named the top co-educational boarding and day school in the South West by the Sunday Times Parent Power report, won Tatler School of the Year in 2019 (finalists again this year) and won Best School in the South in the Independent School Awards, reflecting the commitment and passion of our staff and pupils alike.

As we look ahead to our merger with Dumpton School in December 2025 to create the Canford Schools Group, mark significant milestones, and to September 2026, Canford enters a transformative new phase: the opening of our new Sixth Form College. These developments strengthen our ambition to provide an outstanding education and outstanding opportunities for pupils aged 3 to 18. In this context, the role of Head of Admissions becomes even more pivotal.

The successful candidate will be a key ambassador for the School, often as the first face and voice that families encounter. You will lead a talented and dedicated Admissions team, ensuring that every prospective pupil and parent experiences the warmth, professionalism and high standards that are hallmarks of our community. You will work closely with colleagues across the School and with partner organisations and feeder schools, helping to shape the future of Canford's pupil body through thoughtful, strategic and relational admissions practice.

We are looking for someone with excellent knowledge of the independent sector, strong leadership skills, sound judgement and an instinctive understanding of outstanding customer care. Equally important is the ability to bring energy, clarity and kindness to a busy and varied role.

I hope that, as you read through the information in this pack, you will gain a sense of the vibrancy and purpose that define life at Canford and be encouraged to apply.

Thank you once again for your interest. I look forward to learning more about what you could bring to our community.

CHRIS WHEELER

Headmaster



Background



Founded in 1923, Canford School is set in 250 acres of beautiful parkland on the outskirts of Wimborne in Dorset. The School, which has some 660 pupils aged 13–18, the majority of whom board, is amongst the country's top co-educational boarding and day schools. The 19th-century Canford Manor House sits at the heart of the campus, and the facilities are exceptional. Canford has established a commanding reputation built on its excellent academic achievement, breadth of education and a fresh, lively approach. The School offers a superb sports and co-curricular programme for pupils, which is seen as amongst the best in the independent sector.

Having celebrated its centenary in 2023, Canford was a finalist for 'Public School of the Year' in the Tatler 2026 Awards, the Independent School Parent's 'Top School in the South of England 2025' and the number one-ranked co-ed boarding and day school in the South West for top A level and GCSE results in the Sunday Times Parent Power report 2025. It is an exciting time to be joining the School, with September 2025 seeing the arrival of a new Head, the opening of a new Sixth Form College and the announcement of the merger with Dumpton School to form the Canford Schools Group of charitable independent schools.

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.

Alongside its place as a school, Canford also offers excellent commercial facilities which are available to members of the public, including event and wedding facilities, a sports centre, a nine-hole golf course, real tennis courts and a semi-professional theatre.

This is an exciting time as Canford School and Dumpton merge in December 2025 to form the Canford Schools Group. Dumpton is a popular co-educational day prep school for pupils aged 2–13 years, three miles from Canford. A finalist in the 2025 Independent School of the Year 'Co-educational School of the Year' award, it has experienced continued growth in pupil numbers and record numbers of scholarships to senior schools in recent years.



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

“

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.

”

* 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

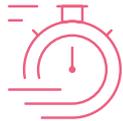
“ Boarding is the real deal. ”
Talk Education

“ 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 exeats 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



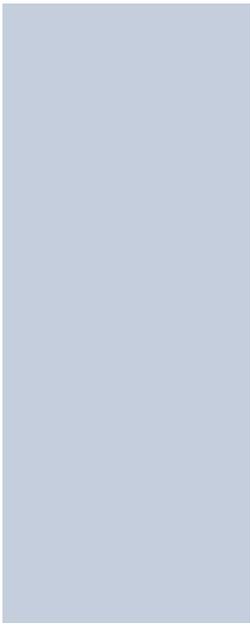
CCF – Best School**

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 Head of Admissions at Canford School plays a pivotal role in shaping the School's future through strategic, operational, and relational leadership of the Admissions function. Reporting to the Director of Engagement, the post-holder will lead a talented team to ensure the smooth running of all admissions activities, delivering a first-class experience for prospective pupils and their families.

This is a senior role within the External Relations Team requiring both strategic vision and operational excellence. The Head of Admissions will be responsible for managing the full pupil recruitment lifecycle, from first enquiry through to enrolment, ensuring that agreed recruitment targets are met and that all families experience a professional, welcoming and highly personalised journey.

Key responsibilities include:

- **Leadership & Management:** Lead, develop, and motivate the Admissions team; ensure operational efficiency; manage departmental budget and resources; provide regular reporting and insights to the Director of Engagement and Senior Leadership Team.
- **Admissions Operations:** Oversee and refine admissions and scholarship processes; ensure compliance with regulatory requirements; manage data and reporting; coordinate entrance assessments, interviews, and admissions events.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Build and maintain strong relationships with prospective families, feeder schools, and partner organisations; act as an ambassador for the School.
- **Marketing & Communications Interface:** Work closely with the Marketing and Engagement teams to align admissions activity with the School's broader recruitment strategy; contribute to events, campaigns, and communications that showcase Canford's distinctive offer.

The successful candidate will combine strong leadership and operational capability with excellent interpersonal skills, a customer-focused mindset, and the ability to represent the School with warmth, professionalism, and integrity. As the market shifts, the Head of Admissions will need to bring a strong understanding of data to Senior Leadership discussions to help shape our strategy. This is an exceptional opportunity to have a tangible impact on the future composition and experience of Canford's pupil body at a moment of significant growth and transformation.



Key Responsibilities

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Line manage, support and develop the Admissions team.
- Oversee the daily operations of the Admissions Department, ensuring effective workload management and delivery against deadlines and objectives.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of admissions plans and targets as agreed with the Director of Engagement.
- Prepare and manage the departmental budget in line with agreed objectives.
- Produce regular admissions reports and management information for the Director of Engagement and the Senior Leadership Team.
- Ensure compliance with all regulatory requirements relating to admissions, including the maintenance of accurate Admission and Attendance Registers.
- Maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders, both internal and external, including feeder schools and partner organisations.

OPERATIONS

- Manage and continually refine all admissions and scholarship processes.
- Oversee the organisation and delivery of open days, entrance assessments, scholarships and other admissions events, supported by the Events Officer.
- Liaise with feeder schools and families regarding applications, scholarship results and entry procedures.
- Represent Canford at feeder school visits, education fairs, and external events, strengthening relationships and promoting the School to prospective families and partner schools. Attendance at school fairs and similar events will be required throughout the year.
- Conduct interviews with prospective pupils and parents as required.
- Monitor and analyse admissions data and trends, providing reports and recommendations to the Director of Engagement.
- Ensure the admissions database is accurately maintained and GDPR compliant.
- Liaise closely with academic and pastoral colleagues to ensure a smooth transition for new pupils.
- Work with the Bursar's Office on financial aspects of admissions, including deposits and fees.





MARKETING AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS INTERFACE

- Work collaboratively with the Director of Engagement and the Marketing team to ensure consistent messaging and effective promotion of the School.
- Support the implementation of the feeder schools' engagement strategy and outreach events.
- Provide accurate admissions data to support marketing analysis and targeted campaigns.
- Contribute to the development and delivery of the annual admissions calendar and associated communications.
- Provide content updates for admissions-related sections of the school website and other materials.

INTERNATIONAL ADMISSIONS

- Support and lead the School's international admissions activity in line with Canford's growth strategy, ensuring a high-quality experience for prospective overseas families.
- Manage and develop relationships with international agents, partner organisations, and global feeder schools, acting as an ambassador for Canford in international markets.
- Represent the School at overseas events, fairs, and visits as required, with a willingness to travel internationally to support recruitment objectives.
- Oversee international enquiries and applications, ensuring seamless communication, accurate guidance on entry requirements, and culturally sensitive support for families navigating the admissions process.
- Ensure full compliance with visa and immigration regulations, working closely with relevant colleagues to manage processes, documentation, and reporting.
- Monitor trends in international recruitment, providing data-driven insights and recommendations to the Director of Engagement and Senior Leadership Team.

GENERAL

- Report to the Director of Engagement on admissions performance, issues and opportunities.
- Maintain an up-to-date understanding of independent school admissions trends and best practice.
- Work collaboratively with senior colleagues across all departments to ensure an integrated and positive admissions experience.
- Be fully informed about the School's academic, pastoral and co-curricular offer.
- Undertake any other reasonable duties as requested by the Director of Engagement or Headmaster.

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.

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

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 and to become familiar with the policies and procedures for safeguarding children and child protection, which can be found [here](#).





The Person



The Head of Admissions at Canford School requires a combination of strategic leadership, operational expertise, and exceptional interpersonal skills. The successful candidate will be an experienced, highly organised, and customer-focused professional, capable of leading a busy team while delivering an outstanding admissions experience. They will bring a thorough understanding of the independent school sector; a proactive and adaptable approach, and the ability to represent Canford with warmth, integrity, and professionalism. Above all, they will be someone who thrives on building relationships, solving problems creatively and ensuring that every family and pupil feels welcomed and valued.

QUALIFICATIONS AND KNOWLEDGE

- Excellent knowledge of the independent education sector is essential, ideally within a boarding context.
- Experience of school-based (or higher/further education) admissions and administrative procedures is highly desirable.
- Educated to degree level (a teaching background may be beneficial but is not essential).
- Strong understanding of customer service principles and relationship management in an educational setting.

EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS

- Proven experience managing or supervising a team in a busy, customer-focused environment.
- Demonstrable record of delivering high-quality admissions or customer service processes.
- Strong interpersonal skills, including a confident and professional telephone manner and the ability to represent the School positively with parents, pupils, feeder schools and colleagues.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with strong attention to detail and accuracy.
- Good analytical skills, with the ability to interpret and report on data effectively.
- High level of computer literacy; experience of CRM or admissions database systems is advantageous.
- Strong organisational and administrative abilities with the capacity to prioritise and work under pressure to meet tight deadlines.
- A collaborative, supportive and “hands-on” team player who leads by example.
- A proactive problem solver who can think ahead and adapt to changing circumstances.
- Reliable, approachable and customer-service focused with a positive, “can-do” attitude.
- A sense of humour; calmness under pressure, and the ability to cope with the unexpected.

Benefits

Contract type:	Permanent
Hours:	37.5 hours per week but variable to meet the demands of the role, which will include some evenings and weekends
Commencing:	ASAP
Salary:	An attractive remuneration package is offered, reflecting the significance of the position. The eventual salary will depend on skills and experience; however, it is anticipated that it will be in the region of £40,000 to £45,000 per annum

- 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

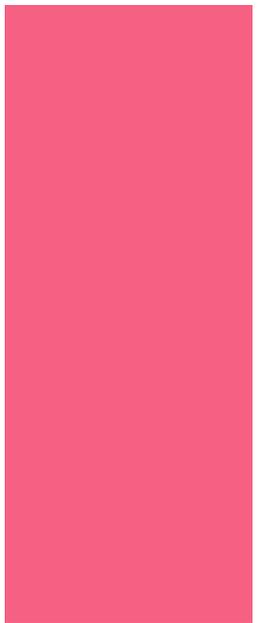
WORK

- 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



Application Process



Closing date: Sunday 21st December 2025.

Early applications are very much encouraged. We will review and shortlist candidates on an ongoing basis and may close the vacancy once the right candidate has been identified. Candidates are therefore advised to submit their applications promptly to avoid disappointment.

To apply, please visit www.canford.com/Job-Vacancies, where you'll be asked to complete our application and upload a covering letter.

Applicants are asked to submit a covering letter (no more than two pages) addressing the following:

- Why you are interested in the Head of Admissions role at Canford School.
- How your experience and skills meet the requirements of the role.
- Examples of leadership, operational expertise, and team management in a busy, customer-focused environment.
- Evidence of strong relationship management with parents, pupils, feeder schools, and colleagues.

- How your personal qualities, approach, and values align with the ethos of the School.
- Demonstration of your ability to contribute to the growth and success of Canford.

If you have any questions, please contact Abi Phillips, Director of HR: recruitment@canford.com / 01202 847590.

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 HR team.
- Preliminary interviews will take place on an ongoing basis until the vacancy closes.
- Formal interviews will take place by arrangement.

Canford School is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in all areas of our Community and encourages applications from all suitably qualified candidates.

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.