



RUGBY
SCHOOL
GLOBAL

CANDIDATE BRIEF FOR THE POSITION OF

Principal Rugby School Dubai

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Introduction

The Rugby School Group's fourth international sister school opens in Dubai in September 2026. Rugby School Dubai will be a day school for 2,300 students aged three to 18 located on a spectacular campus in the heart of one of the world's most exciting cities. It will offer the full Rugby experience focusing upon the development of the whole person. Students will follow the Rugby curriculum, leading to IGCSE and A-level studies, and this will provide them with access to the world's leading universities. Rugby School Global and its operating partner, Aldar, wish to appoint a dynamic and inspirational Principal to lead the school community from September 2026, or earlier.

Founded by Royal Charter in 1567 during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, Rugby is one of the world's most famous boarding schools. Today, it educates 850 students aged 13 to 18 and 360 boys and girls in its Prep school. Described by Tatler as 'a school at the top of its game', Rugby's students achieve outstanding GCSE and A-level results within an educational environment where the whole person is the whole point.

The cornerstone of a Rugby education is its focus upon the importance of an all-round education in the tradition of its greatest Head Master, Dr Thomas Arnold (1828-42), who transformed British education in Victorian England and developed a model that many other schools have since adopted. He recognised, as Rugby continues to do today, that education should address the formation of character, going beyond an understanding of learning as simply the acquisition of knowledge. Our goals are to foster academic excellence, to nurture individual talents, and to equip our boys and girls with the tools to maximise their individual learning. Critical thinking, memory skills, goal setting and the use of new technology are blended with reflection, self-awareness and stillness. And through service we aim to form young people who can contribute intelligently and effectively to the welfare of society. In other words, the whole person is the whole point.

Rugby's House structure has been central to its strong sense of community for almost 200 years. Its 15 Houses, led by their Housemasters and Housemistresses, together with a team of Tutors, each have their own unique character and offer a true home away from home.

Throughout its four centuries, Rugby has produced Prime Ministers of European nations, an Archbishop of Canterbury and a Nobel Peace Prize winner. Rugbeians have contributed to stage and screen, to politics, the arts, philosophy, medicine and public life. They have upheld justice as judges and lawmakers, helped to run governments, schools and universities, founded businesses and won Olympic gold medals. Its alumni network is one of the UK's most distinguished. During a game of football at the School in 1823, Rugby student William Webb Ellis caught the ball and, 'with a fine disregard for the rules...took the ball in his arms and ran with it, thus originating the distinctive feature of the rugby game'.

Rugby School Group International

The Rugby School Group is now committed to developing a worldwide family of schools, shaped by Rugby's distinctive educational ethos, offering girls and boys around the world the opportunity to benefit from a Rugby education. In addition to Rugby School itself, there are its two Prep schools in the UK, Bilton Grange Preparatory School and Aysgarth School, and the Rugby School Global family of schools, comprised of Rugby School Thailand - which opened in 2017 and educates 1,200 students on a striking 80-acre campus outside Bangkok - and Rugby School Japan, which opened in September 2023 on its urban campus in the Greater Tokyo area and will educate 780 students aged 11 to 18, as well as Rugby School Nigeria, which opens its doors in September 2025 and it will eventually accommodate 1600 students ages 11-18, including 400 boarders. Rugby School Dubai will become the fourth international school within Rugby School Global and the seventh member of the Rugby School Group.

Rugby School Dubai will be a day school for 2,300 students aged three to 18 located on a spectacular campus in the heart of one of the world's most exciting cities

Rugby School Dubai

Rugby School Dubai will open in September 2026. The school will start from a strong base with a current roll of 1,400 students aged three to 18 across its Pre-Prep, Prep and Senior sections. It will offer Rugby's academic and co-curricular programmes, including its day House pastoral structure and a wide range of co-curricular

activities to support and enhance students' academic achievements, enabling them to access the world's top universities. Students at Rugby School Dubai will participate in Rugby Global, Rugby's enrichment programme, which involves an exchange programme with other schools within the group.

Job Description

Job Title	Principal
Department	Rugby School Dubai
Function	Leadership of the School
Reports to	Chair of Governors
Location	Dubai

The Role

The Principal of Rugby School Dubai will be accountable to its Governing Body for all aspects of its leadership and operations, and for delivering Rugby's vision to become one of the leading schools in the GCC. We are seeking to appoint an experienced, dynamic and inspirational school leader who is a skilled strategic thinker and someone able to build effective relationships and manage change. The Principal of Rugby School Dubai will work collaboratively with the CEO, the Deputy CEO and the Director of Education of Rugby School Global and with the Head Master of Rugby School in the UK and the Principals of Rugby School Thailand, Rugby School Japan and Rugby School Nigeria. They will promote the Rugby model of education, embracing the vision of 'The Whole Person, the Whole Point' and embedding 'The Rugby Way' as an approach to teaching and learning within the school.

Key Objectives

- Ensure that the school has strong strategic, financial and operating frameworks that enable sustained pupil growth and high performance, including the delivery of an excellent academic education and pastoral care, in the context of its mission as a member of the Rugby School Group
- Provide a compelling and inspirational educational vision for the school, which reflects the aims and ethos of Rugby, within a safe and inspirational learning community
- Maintain excellent working relationships with the school's operator and with the Executive Leadership Team of Rugby School Global
- Lead on external relations, communication and advocacy, liaising with a range of stakeholders including pupils, parents, the Knowledge and Human Development Authority, Rugby alumni and representatives of the local and wider communities

Key Responsibilities

- Lead the whole school community in line with the strategies and objectives agreed by the Governing Body
- Ensure the welfare, health and safety of the whole school community
- Report to the Governing Body on all aspects of the school's performance, including educational; pastoral care and safeguarding; residential, financial; human resource; and external relations

- In consultation with Rugby School Global, develop and keep under review new strategies and initiatives
- Chair the School's Senior Leadership Team
- Determine the school's overall academic staffing structure and recruit, lead, inspire, develop and retain a world-class academic staff
- Oversee the pupil enrolment process
- Determine marketing and recruitment strategies to meet the school's enrolment targets
- With the Senior Leadership Team, shape the academic, pastoral care, boarding and co-curricular provision of the school
- Ensure that the appropriate human and financial resources, systems and policies are in place to support the school's strategic development and operational requirements
- With the Senior Leadership Team, ensure that the necessary policies, systems and processes are in place to maintain regulatory compliance with the Knowledge and Human Development Authority, for the purposes of third-party accreditation and inspection and in relation to Rugby's School Operating Standards
- Develop the school's alumni network as part of the wider Rugby School Group
- Ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibility and duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils; staff must be aware of the systems within the School which support safeguarding and must act in accordance with the School's Safeguarding & Child Protection policy and Code of Conduct. The Principal will ensure that staff receive appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated.

Key Relationships

The Principal reports to the Chair of the Governing Body (who represents Aldar Education). She or he will build and maintain close and effective working relationships with the school's operator, Aldar Education and members of the school's Governing Body. She or he will also work closely with the Rugby School Global team – the executive leadership team of Rugby's international arm – working collaboratively with them to ensure that the school embodies best practice across the range of its activities, as established across the group of schools.

Senior Leadership Team

The Principal chairs the school's Senior Leadership Team, which comprises of:

Head of Senior (Years 7 to 13)

Head of Prep (Years 3 to 6)

Head of Pre-Prep (Nursery, Reception and Years 1 and 2)

School Operations Manager

Director of Marketing and Admissions

The Heads of the Pre-Prep, Prep and Senior are responsible to the Principal for the day-to-day leadership and management of their respective sections of Rugby School Dubai. They lead their teaching staff and chair their respective senior management teams.

The Person

This person specification is an indication of the strengths and qualities that Rugby School Dubai seeks in its Principal; the recruitment process will consider candidates against this list of experience, qualifications, values and attributes.

Preferred Experience

The role of Principal requires an inspirational leader with the vision, gravitas and ambassadorial skills to establish Rugby's fourth international sister school in an exciting and highly competitive marketplace.

The Principal will have a proven track record of highly successful British-curriculum school leadership experience, as well as proven experience of leading, developing and motivating high-calibre, diverse teams with a strong commitment to the continued professional development of colleagues.

The Principal will have strong academic and intellectual credentials to command the respect of staff, pupils, parents and the wider community.

The Principal's role will require stamina and energy, and they will have the interpersonal skills to command the respect of a wide range of stakeholders from different cultural backgrounds, and the intellect, sensitivity and humility to engage broadly, whilst shaping strategy and policy in tandem with the Governing Body, Aldar Education and Rugby School Global.

Candidates will be required to demonstrate a clear commitment to Rugby's aims and ethos and be able to articulate the unique offering of Rugby School Dubai.

Skills and Knowledge

- Be a first-class strategic thinker with the capacity to provide energetic and clear leadership.
- Have outstanding communication skills, with a demonstrable ability to act as an effective and compelling ambassador for Rugby School Dubai in a highly competitive market.
- Have high levels of commercial acumen and a strong understanding of the business aspects of successful, modern headship.
- Have a proven track record of successful delivery of the British curriculum and a demonstrable commitment to the importance of a dynamic, sector-leading co-curricular programme.
- Have a commitment to educational innovation and a broad knowledge of the rapidly changing sector, internationally.
- Have high levels of emotional intelligence and the cultural sensitivity and global perspective to relate well to people at all levels and from a diversity of backgrounds.

Personal attributes

The Principal will be:

- A highly visible leader with the charisma, energy and ambition to inspire and motivate the different constituencies which make up the Rugby School Dubai community.
- An empathetic relationship-builder with a sophisticated understanding of how to work effectively with multiple stakeholders, build strong teams, delegate effectively and bring out the best in colleagues.
- Someone with demonstrable commercial acumen.
- Someone who shows sensitivity towards different cultures.
- Someone of sound judgement, high levels of self-awareness, resilience and stamina, and a strong sense of personal and professional integrity.

How to Apply

Rugby School Group and Aldar Education have engaged the services of Odgers Berndtson to assist with the recruitment of the Principal for Rugby School Dubai.

- The closing date for applications: 9.00am Gulf Standard Time on **Friday 13 June 2025**.
- Longlist interviews will be held online during week commencing **Monday 23 June**.
- Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview at Rugby School in the UK on **Thursday 3 and Friday 4 July**.

An appointment decision will be taken immediately thereafter and will be subject to KHDA approval.

In order to apply, please submit a comprehensive CV along with a covering letter which sets out your interest in the role and encapsulates the aspects of your experience relevant to the required criteria. Please include current salary details and the names and addresses of three referees. Referees will not be approached until the final stages and not without prior permission from candidates.

Applications should be emailed directly to Tamara Ilic at: tamara.ilic@odgersberndtson.com

All applications will receive a response.

For an initial discussion, please contact:

- Conor Wilson: +971 (0) 58 304 8114 - conor.wilson@odgersberndtson.com
- Lydia Haldane : +44 (0) 131 563 5410 - lydia.haldane@odgersberndtson.com
- Tamara Ilic: +971 (0) 52 262 2689 - tamara.ilic@odgersberndtson.com

Personal data

In line with GDPR, we ask that you do NOT send us any information that can identify children or any of your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and / or biometric data) in your CV and application documentation. Following this notice, any inclusion of your Sensitive Personal Data in your CV/application documentation will be understood by us as your express consent to process this information going forward. Please also remember to not mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

Rugby School and Aldar are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the relevant authorities.