



VACANCY INFORMATION PACK

ASSISTANT HOUSEMISTRESS/MASTER





STATEMENT OF BOARDING AIMS AND PRACTICE

Downe House, established in 1907, is a full boarding School, which aims to provide holistic education for boarders and day girls within a relaxed but structured House framework. The School aims to enable girls to develop academically, socially, spiritually and emotionally in a homely and friendly environment, where mutual trust and respect between pupils and staff are the fundamental guiding principles on which the community was established over one hundred years ago and on which it continues to flourish.

At Downe House the individual is highly valued within the House and the whole School community. All girls, irrespective of background, race, religion or culture, are encouraged to live in harmony with one another and, by making the most of a range of different opportunities available to them during their journey through the Lower School, the Upper School and the Sixth Form Houses, girls are encouraged to develop the necessary confidence to meet the demands of adulthood and a rapidly changing world. One Sixth Form leaver eloquently summed up the unique Downe House experience by saying, "I left Downe House with the feeling there was nothing I couldn't achieve".

LOWER SCHOOL

Girls joining Downe House at 11+ begin their school days in either 'Hermitage' or 'Hill' or 'Darwin' our cosy Lower School houses. Being in one house with just their own year group is a gentle and nurturing introduction to boarding at Downe House. This new 'home away from home' provides them with outstanding specialist pastoral care for the 11+ age group, allowing them to learn, develop and live in a safe and inspiring environment.

Each girl in the Lower School also becomes a member of one of our five mixed-age houses – 'Aisholt', 'Ancren Gate North', 'Ancren Gate South', 'Holcombe' or 'Tedworth' - and benefits from all the fun, competitions, challenges and activities that House membership brings.

At 12+ all Lower School girls spend one of the terms of this year in the beautiful Périgord Noir, at our smaller 'farmhouse' school in the rural commune of Veyrines-de-Domme in France. Designed to encourage each girl to feel part of a community, the term in Veyrines is not simply about improving spoken French in an idyllic setting; it is about persuading young minds to immerse themselves totally in a new culture.

Progressing into Upper School at 13+, girls move into their nominated mixed-age house, living there until they have completed their GCSEs and remain attached to these key 'Houses' through to the end of their time at Downe House.

UPPER SCHOOL

Girls joining at 13+ will move into one of the five mixed-age houses alongside the current pupils who have progressed through the Lower School. For all girls this is a new phase. In each of the Houses - 'Aisholt', 'Ancren Gate North', 'Ancren Gate South', 'Holcombe' or 'Tedworth' girls in the Upper Fourth (Year 9), Lower Fifth (Year 10) and Upper Fifth (Year 11) enjoy the wonderful warmth and care of the Upper School team. As they enter their GCSE years they begin the four year academic journey through to the Sixth Form years when they progress into 'York' or 'Willis' house.

SIXTH FORM

In the Sixth Form, the girls move into 'Willis' or 'York' - our Sixth Form houses. With excellent facilities for living and independent working, these houses have been expressly designed to better prepare each girl for life beyond Downe House. Enjoying much greater levels of freedom, girls in Sixth Form take more responsibility for their own learning, living and time-planning. Benefiting from a more 'adult' relationship with house staff, Sixth Form girls enjoy spacious common rooms, regular trips to the theatre, concerts and exhibitions, as well as the freedom to choose to be in or out of school on most weekends.

JOB DESCRIPTION



JOB TITLE

Assistant Housemistress/master

LINE MANAGER

Housemistress or Housemaster

JOB PURPOSE

- a) To be resident within the House at all times, except at specified off duty time, and to be responsible to the Housemistress / Housemaster for the general welfare and personal development of all the boarders in the House in accordance with the policy of the School and the detailed guidance in the Children Act.
- b) To build a strong personal relationship with each of the girls in his/her care, to sound out the needs of each and to support the Housemistress / Housemaster in working continuously towards meeting those needs.
- c) To keep closely in touch with parents and guardians as required by the Housemistress / Housemaster and to keep her/him informed of all matters concerning the welfare of the boarders.
- d) To work closely with the Housemistress / Housemaster, relevant Head of Section and Tutors in ensuring continuity of care for the girls in the House and the proper running of the House.
- e) To be a member of the team in The House and to make a positive contribution in all areas concerning the welfare of the boarders, and to deputise for the Housemistress / Housemaster and to carry out those of her/his duties and responsibilities as required by the Headmistress.
- f) To teach up to half a timetable alongside boarding responsibilities.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To the boarders:

- a) To liaise with the House team in ensuring for each boarder the provision of a comfortable living environment and to ensure that all her requirements are met.
- b) To work with the House team to maintain a healthy routine of life for each boarder, and to make sure that standards of cleanliness and personal hygiene are taught and carried out.
- c) To work with the House team to ensure that appropriate care is given to boarders of all ages, and that the special needs of each group are met.
- d) To be aware of, and respond to, the special needs of individual boarders, including those from different cultural backgrounds, and to be aware of the changing needs of all girls as they develop.

- e) To liaise with the Housemistress/Housemaster concerning the general health and lifestyle of the boarders, and to keep closely in touch with her/him and with the Medical Centre staff in case of individual illness if required.
- f) To deal with disciplinary problems in a firm but caring manner, and to consult the Housemistress/Housemaster in any matter of serious concern, and to keep her/him well informed.
- g) To welcome day pupils into the House, and to integrate them as far as possible in all aspects of the life of the school.
- h) To support the Housemistress/Housemaster in ensuring that the House is not left unattended and that boarders are always adequately supervised at all times outside the teaching day.
- i) To work with the relevant House team to ensure the smooth and happy transition of boarders to that House.
- j) To be prepared to work at any reasonable time to help care for the boarders in times of emergency.
- k) To support the Housemistress/Housemaster in ensuring all fire regulations are rigorously met and in carrying out the regular fire drills required by the Deputy Head.
- l) To assist the Housemistress/Housemaster, if required, in ensuring that the presence of boarders is checked individually and personally at the times required by the Headmistress.
- m) To report anyone missing immediately to the Housemistress/Housemaster or Assistant Housemistress/Assistant Housemaster, and in the absence of both, the Deputy Head, Senior Resident or Headmistress.
- n) To provide practical support to the Housemistress/Housemaster in ensuring that uniform is in a good state of repair.
- o) To assist with the planning of House activities and to participate in the programme as required.
- p) To prepare for any birthday celebrations within the House as required by the Housemistress/Housemaster.

To the parents:

- a) To work with the House team to welcome parents on the day of return.
- b) To work with the Housemistress/Housemaster at the end of every session (including half term) to ensure that the house is safe and secure and left in good order for effective cleaning to take place.

To the Housemistress / Housemaster:

- a) To participate in the programme of induction of new staff into the House as required by the Housemistress/Housemaster.
- b) To attend occasional House staff meetings as organised by the Housemistress / Housemaster at which minutes are taken and circulated to the Headmistress, Deputy Head and Assistant Headmistress as well as members of the House team.
- c) To support the Housemistress/Housemaster in every way, and to advise her/him of any matter of importance to the welfare of individual boarders or to the whole House.
- d) To support the Housemistress/Housemaster in ensuring that the House is kept tidy.
- e) To check on any damages and breakages that may have occurred in the House and report these to the Housemistress/Housemaster.

To the School:

- a) To maintain regular contact with and a flow of information to the Housemistress / Housemaster and other relevant colleagues on all matters concerning the welfare of individual boarders and the House in general.
- b) To participate positively in the preparation and implementation of the House Development Plan.
- c) To work with colleagues in maintaining high standards of behaviour by pupils in the House and in all areas of school life.
- d) To maintain high personal standards of prompt arrival for House responsibilities and events, and appropriate professional appearance.
- e) To participate in appropriate supervisory duties shared by all members of staff. To seek the Headmistress's authorisation for any absence from school when on duty and to give notice as early as possible in the case of unavoidable absence through sickness.
- f) To make recommendations to the Housemistress for the smooth running of the House in the event of the absence of any member of the House team.
- g) To attend all relevant staff meetings and INSET days, and any relevant external courses recommended by the Headmistress.
- h) To help the Housemistress/Housemaster to maintain accurate records of all personal information relevant to the care of individual pupils.
- i) To do any other duties as reasonable, requested by the Housemistress/Housemaster and/or the Headmistress.
- j) To participate in such meetings and working parties as are deemed appropriate.
- k) To undertake other reasonable tasks relevant to the needs of the School as the need arises.

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

Downe House is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment and adhere to, and comply with, the School's Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children policy and procedures at all times.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

All staff at Downe House are required to remain vigilant, observe all relevant Health and Safety policies and procedures, take reasonable care of their own and others' Health and Safety, report all accidents and incidents, raise concerns through their line managers, and address minor physical problems by reporting them as maintenance requests through the School's internal IT reporting system (MERLIN).

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Staff at Downe House are expected to promote equality of opportunity for all girls and staff, both current and prospective, and to support an environment that values diversity.

PROMOTING BRITISH VALUES

Downe House recognises the importance of placing emphasis on fundamental British values in the curriculum and all other aspects of School life. These values reflect the ethos of the school and all members of the community have a role to play in delivering

the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. All subject areas, and all non-teaching staff, are responsible for promoting these values when opportunities arise.

DATA PROTECTION

All staff at Downe House have a responsibility to ensure that data they are responsible for is accurate and appropriate to the needs of the School, and that they are responsible for ensuring any personal data processed for any purpose or purposes in connection with their role at the School, shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Note: This job description is not a comprehensive definition of the post. It will be reviewed as part of the cycle of appraisal, and it may be subject to modification or amendment at any time after consultation with the holder of the post. Further guidance on the duties and responsibilities of members of staff is found in the Staff Handbook and on Merlin.

PERSON SPECIFICATION



It is anticipated that in order to be successful in this role, you will be able to demonstrate the following:

ESSENTIAL

- a) Be efficient, with good organisational and administrative skills
- b) Have the ability to communicate effectively with pupils, parents and staff in an appropriate way
- c) Have enthusiasm and willingness to explore and develop the use of IT, both at a personal and departmental level
- d) Be a good team member
- e) Have a commitment to the provision of single-sex education for girls in a day and boarding environment
- f) Have a commitment to excellence
- g) Ideally be a qualified /experienced teacher or a graduate who is keen to develop a teaching career alongside boarding responsibilities and is able to teach up to half a timetable.
- h) An appropriate understanding of the whole school business;
- i) A strong commitment to the Downe House ethos, aims and aspirations;
- j) Appropriate expertise/knowledge;
- k) Highly professional approach;
- l) Integrity;
- m) Punctuality and the ability to prioritise and meet deadlines;
- n) The ability to work as a member of a team and accept direction;
- o) The ability to be flexible and adapt to change;
- p) The ability to be proactive and positive;
- q) Excellent communications and interpersonal skills;
- r) Good organisational skills;
- s) Good judgement;
- t) The ability to be self-critical;
- u) The ability to work on own initiative;
- v) The ability to relate well to adolescents and enjoy their company;
- w) A willingness to participate in the boarding life of the School and contribute to the extra-curricular activity programme;
- x) A commitment to ongoing training and learning;
- y) An analytical mind and pro-active approach to problem-solving;
- z) A sense of humour;
- aa) Have a commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and adhere to and comply with the School's Child Protection Policy
- bb) statement at all times.

TERMS, CONDITIONS AND BENEFITS



Thank you for your interest in joining Downe House. We offer a range of benefits and competitive terms and conditions and these are outlined below. The information in this document is non-contractual but is designed to give you an overview of the post.

Salary

You will be paid on the Downe House pay scale, and your salary point, dependent on your experience and any other positions that you are appointed to in the School, will be agreed on appointment by the Headmistress. For example, many of our pastoral boarding staff are also classroom teachers. Salaries are normally reviewed on an annual basis and any pay awards are implemented in September.

Salaries are paid by direct transfer into your bank account by the Bursary on the last Friday of the month.

Residential accommodation

The Assistant Housemistress/master is a residential post and you will be required to live in the flat provided. You will have access to this property throughout the year, including school holidays.

The property will be a small one or two bedroom self-contained flat that is suitable for a single person or couple. It is provided with basic furnishings and white goods. All services (apart from private telephone calls) are provided free of charge. A basic cleaning service is normally provided by the Housekeeping Team.

Depending on the specific flat and its location in the boarding house, pets are welcome, subject to written permission being sought from the Headmistress, prior to taking up residence. Your initial request should be made through the Director of Estates, Property and Services. Please note that some of our properties are unfortunately not suitable for pets and therefore permission will not be granted.

Meals and refreshments

We provide freshly prepared, nutritious meals in the Main Dining Hall and the Sixth Form Dining Hall in Willis. Refreshments are also available throughout the day. Meals and refreshments are free of charge. Residential family members are always welcome to join you at mealtimes in the Dining Hall.

Working Hours

Downe House is a full Boarding School and the Assistant Housemistress/master will be required to live and sleep in the accommodation provided. When on duty your working day is likely to start at around 7 am when you will be ensuring that the girls are up and

ready for breakfast. In the evening you will be on duty in the House until the girls are settled into bed, which is typically between 10 and 11pm depending on the year group.

Due to the nature of the work, it is difficult to be precise about working hours, as a very flexible approach is needed to meet the needs of the girls. During the daytime, when the girls are in classes, you will have another position in the School that will normally equate to about a 50% timetable. The opportunities for other roles are varied and include teaching and support positions. Options will be discussed with you at interview and will depend on your previous experience and qualifications.

In addition you will participate in a rota of cover and other duties during the normal School day, for example prep sessions.

Time off

During term time, in order to provide the best possible pastoral care for the girls, and to run the House efficiently and effectively, the Assistant Housemistress/master must expect to be on site the majority of the time. However, all resident members of staff are entitled to one and a half days off in the week, typically either from 07.00 on Tuesday morning until Wednesday at 14.00, or from 07.00 on Thursday morning until 14.00 on Friday afternoon. Your time off will be allocated to you once you start in post and will depend on the shift pattern in place.

During your time off, you may be away overnight from Tuesday into Wednesday or from Thursday into Friday. The rest of the week, you will be expected to be in residence. (Please note that during the first and last week of term this pattern is suspended and resident staff are expected to be on site at all times to settle the girls into the House at the beginning of term and to see them safely on their way at the end of term.)

In addition to this, you will be allocated another evening in the week when you are not timetabled to be on front line duty in the House. However, this does not have the status of the day and a half off, and if the House is short-staffed, then you may be required to forego this extra evening of non-contact time. In practice, these evenings of non-contact time tend to take place on a Monday evening for staff with Thursday/Friday time off and on Friday evening for staff off on Tuesday/Wednesday.

Once teaching timetables are published, your Housemistress/master will try also to identify a two hour slot during the day when you can have some non-contact time, which will be ring-fenced on your timetable, and you can leave the School site if you wish to do so.

At weekends the Housemistress/master and the Assistant Housemistress/master arrange things between them, so that each can have a four- hour slot off duty either on a Saturday afternoon or a Sunday morning or afternoon, if at all possible.

In addition to the fixed exeat in the Michaelmas and Lent terms, you will also be entitled to one floating exeat in the Summer Term. Floating exeat must be discussed in advance

with the Boarding Deputy, whose job it is to ensure that pastoral care across the school is not compromised. Floating exeat should be requested as far in advance as possible.

Additional weekend duties

Unlike full academic staff, as an Assistant Housemistress/master you will not be expected to participate in the rota for extra weekend duty sessions, as it is accepted that as part of your pastoral role you will already be fully supporting your House with weekend activities/ trips etc.

Tutor Responsibilities

As part of your role you will be a tutor to a small group of girls (approximately eight) and you will meet with them on an individual basis every week. This is a fulfilling and valuable role and further information about the responsibilities of being a tutor will be given to you when you join the School.

Probation Period

Your probation period will normally be for a period of three terms. During this time you will receive support and training to help you with your role. If you are a classroom teacher (in addition to your role of Assistant Housemistress/master), lesson observations will also be arranged. There will be regular probation review meetings with your line manager. During these meetings you will be given feedback on your progress, will discuss any further development needs and will also have the opportunity to raise any issues of concern.

Holidays

You will be entitled in each School academic year (1st September to 31st August) to the normal Downe House school holidays with pay. During the holidays you may need to work reasonable hours in preparation for the new term, or in order to fulfil your job responsibilities. Statutory holiday pay is included in the annual salary payments and you will not normally be able to take any holiday other than during the School holidays. Prior to the start of a new term and at the end of term you will be required to work some additional time to ensure that the Boarding House is ready, and also for staff meetings and training . All these dates are published on the School Information System (Merlin) and your Housemistress/master will also advise you of what will be required. It is important not to make any holiday arrangements (booking flights etc) before checking with your Housemistress/master.

Normally, you will not be required to work on public holidays, unless the public holiday falls during the School term (for example May bank holiday).

Notice

Your notice period varies depending on whether or not you are still working within your probation period or if you have successfully completed your probation period and have been confirmed in post. The various dates are shown below.

Employment to terminate	<u>During probation period</u> Notice to be given by:	<u>Following successful probation period</u> Notice to be given by:
End of the Michaelmas Term (31 December)	1st November	1st June
End of the Lent Term (30 April)	1st March	1st November
End of the Summer Term (31 August)	1st June	1st March

Pension

The Assistant Housemistress/master will be automatically enrolled into a pension scheme. If you are a teacher then you will be enrolled into the Teachers' Pension Scheme. Full information on this scheme is available on www.teacherspensions.co.uk. If you are not a teacher (i.e. your other role in the School is in a support capacity) then you will automatically be enrolled into the Aegon Pension Scheme after 3 months service. The Bursary will send you full details of this scheme.

Disclosure and Barring Service checks

Due to the nature of your role working in a boarding environment with young people, you will be required to undergo an Enhanced Level DBS check. During your employment it will also be important for you to keep us fully informed of any changes that take place that could affect your DBS status. Partners and family members over the age of sixteen who live with you on site or who visit you regularly will also be required to undertake a DBS (enhanced) check.

Sick Pay

After an initial period of service, you will be eligible for Downe House sick pay and this consists of a number of months of full pay and half pay during sickness absence for varying periods depending on your length of service. Further details of the scheme that applies to you, will be sent when you are offered the position.

Smoking

Smoking is not allowed in any of the School buildings including staff residential accommodation. A designated smoking area is situated on site next to the Estates Department and this is the only area in the School grounds where staff are allowed to smoke.

Facilities for use by staff

There are some excellent facilities on site that staff can use at set regular times. For example our tennis courts, swimming pool, and fitness room. Further details are available from the PE department.

Social events

At Downe House we enjoy a number of special social occasions through the year when staff can mix with colleagues and family members. There is normally a Christmas Dinner with dancing, a Summer Staff Party in the marquee, and a Lent Term Dinner. Pastoral staff are invited to attend with a partner/guest and no charge is made for these events.

Induction and Staff Training & Development

You will receive initial induction training when you first join us, and you will also be assigned a mentor for your induction period.

Following induction, you will be expected to demonstrate continuous professional development by attending appropriate internal and external training courses, seminars and conferences.

We look forward to receiving your application. If you require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact the HR Department on 01635 204712. Alternatively please email the HR Director, Kate Tuttle on tuttlek@downehouse.net