

Finance Manager Recruitment Pack



SOMERHILL
We grow amazing people



Welcome to Somerhill

We have a very special school here with a unique offering: the 'best of both worlds', the 'ideal mix' and the 'place I always dreamt of finding' are the comments we often hear from our parents or visitors. With co-educational learning until age 7, Somerhill offers single-sex classroom lessons until children leave us for senior schools, allowing uninhibited learning and bespoke strategies for the older girls and boys with all the benefits of a co-educational setting.

Our philosophy for the children at Somerhill is straightforward: happy children want to learn. Children are happy if they can play, participate widely and start to master skills of whatever kind, and our stunning setting and outstanding facilities offer endless opportunities for the children to find something that makes them smile.

We believe this offers you the perfect glimpse into our school life. However, to fully appreciate the extraordinary education that we offer and see our vision of confident, curious, and resilient children realised, we invite you to visit us at Somerhill. You will see that this really is an exceptional learning environment where we grow amazing people!



Our unique school

Somerhill is set in a stunning 400-year-old Jacobean mansion surrounded in 150 acres of beautiful parkland. You will be hard-pressed to find a more glorious setting for a school! We have excellent facilities including a multi-purpose sports hall, astroturf, indoor swimming pool complex and purpose-built music suite to name just a few.

Ours is a mixed ability school. Teachers really invest in the children and know them well, with lessons carefully planned to cater to all abilities.

We have very bright and capable pupils and send more pupils to grammar schools each year than any other local school. Destinations include Tonbridge Grammar School, The Judd, and Skinners. Some pupils are awarded scholarships at independent schools such as Tonbridge, Sevenoaks, Walthamstow Hall and Sutton Valence at 11+/13+.

We also cater to children who find aspects of their learning more challenging and currently approximately 40 pupils receive additional support.

Located just to the south of Tonbridge, we are readily accessed by a slip road off the A21.



Between the ages of 2 and 7 years, girls and boys are together in the classroom. This environment promotes uninhibited development at an age when playing and learning are often synonymous. From 7 to 13 years, children benefit from a single-sex classroom environment, where girls and boys learn in different and bespoke ways. The moment classes finish, everyone is together - at break and lunch as well as for sports, music, clubs and activities. This really is the best of both worlds for our children.



'Positive mental health is given high priority' and 'the welfare of pupils is given prime importance.'
ISI – February 2024

Taking a holistic approach to education, we nurture academic, personal, spiritual, social and moral growth, enabling our pupils to become confident, curious and resilient individuals going out into the world.

We encourage our pupils to work hard and take pride in their achievements, to think independently, to face up to challenges, to accept responsibility, to develop a broad range of skills and interests and to show concern for others and the environment. To put it simply: we grow amazing people.



Finance Manager: Job description

The Finance Manager reports to the Bursar and is responsible for the day-to-day management and running of the school's finance function. Specific responsibilities include financial planning and budgets, termly reporting on actual results vs budget, forecast updates, supporting strategic and commercial decisions with financial analysis, fee billing, advising on bursary and scholarship awards, credit control, salaries and pensions, purchasing, banking and cash flow. The preparation of management accounts and liaison with the school's auditors in producing the annual statutory accounts are other significant responsibilities. Direct reports are two Finance Officers.

We are looking for a dynamic and proactive candidate to lead this busy finance department and a team of two staff members. The ideal candidate will be a qualified finance professional who has strong technical and commercial capabilities as well as soft skills including excellent communication and willingness to manage stakeholders across all functions of the school. This role is a permanent contract, starting ideally in November 2025 for a handover. This is an all-year round role.

Main responsibilities

Finance Strategy and Reporting:

- Advising on general financial policy within the school.
- Oversee the preparation of the Somerhill Charitable Trust Ltd's annual accounts in accordance with company and charity law (SORP).
- As part of the strategic plan, preparing the projected 3-5-year financial plan and associated sensitivities.

- Preparing the annual budget including department budgets (including supporting schedules and all elements of income and expenditure, including salaries) in consultation with the Bursar, Head and the Governors.
- Regular financial forecasting and modelling, including sensitivity analysis, as an input to both the short-term and overall long-term financial strategy for the school as well as annual and long-term fee setting.
- Effective financial risk management, including understanding, managing and mitigating all facets of financial risk for the school and ensuring that the Bursar and Chair of Governors are appraised of financial risks to the school.
- Prepare termly management accounts, including variance analysis and full-year projections and other updates as agreed with the Bursar, Head and Governors.
- Maintain monthly finance dashboards.
- Monitor all financial transactions and ensure best value and practice.
- Identify and inform the Bursar and Head of the causes of any significant variance and recommend prompt corrective action.
- Manage the annual closedown and preparation of outturn figures.
- Manage the audit process and prepare necessary working papers and audit files.
- Review the draft statutory financial statements prepared by the external auditors prior to submission to the Governors, to ensure accuracy and compliance.
- Keep up to date with financial changes within the sector, attend network forums by agreement and advise the Bursar, Head, and Governors as appropriate.
- Review finance related school policies and the financial aspects of the School Risk Register as required and make recommendations for change where appropriate.
- Manage the Finance team daily and ensure they are completing their work within SLAs and to acceptable timescales.

- Review working practices and drive forward new technologies to streamline the functions of the department including financial access across the school.
- Ensure skills within the team are up to date, recommending/providing appropriate training where necessary.

Finance system:

- Maintain the accounting systems daily and ensure the accurate recording and reporting of transactions, including posting of relevant journals including prepayments and accruals.
- Oversee and cover for the general day-to-day tasks of the finance function including, but not limited to, banking cheques, processing payments, reconciling debtors and creditors, maintaining petty cash, reconciling and inputting any bank transactions daily, paying staff expenses, credit card reconciliation etc.
- Analyse and reconcile control accounts monthly,
- Produce termly management accounts for review by the Bursar and Head, and presentation to the Governors.

Payroll and pensions:

- Working with the HR Manager and a Finance Officer and the school's third-party payroll provider to ensure accurate processing of monthly payroll.
- Oversee the preparation and posting of the monthly payroll by a Finance Officer.
- Maintain all payroll information on the budget with regular liaison with the Bursar and HR Manager.
- Produce and collate annual salary letters to staff, working closely with the HR Manager.
- Oversee reconciliation and payment of monthly pension and PAYE/NI contributions to HMRC. Teachers' Pensions, and the Defined Contributions Pension provider by due dates.

- Lead on the school's pension provision and be the first point of contact for staff.
- Prepare the Teachers' Pensions annual return for audit by external auditors.
- Preparing the Teachers' Pensions service record by individual teacher for submission annually.

Income:

- Oversee and review the invoicing of fees, fee concessions, Early Years Funding claims and all disbursements.
- Complete a fee analysis schedule showing full breakdown of all fees and related fee concessions, agreeing to turnover figures.
- Manage and review debtors, pursue recovery of debts and liaise with the debtor agency.
- Oversee and review the invoicing of all external hire and lettings.
- Manage fee concessions and oversee the pupil bursary process, acting as the first point of contact for the external provider and reporting back to the Bursar and Head.
- Assist parents with payments through direct debit collections, liaising with KCC for Early Years Funding, with Childcare voucher providers and by completing relevant paperwork to outside bodies.
- Assist with the process of checking and recording any discounts offered, including assisted place applications.
- Work with Admissions on pupil numbers, pipeline, and registration fees.
- Work with the Bursar, Senior Leadership Team, and Estates Manager to increase the potential income received through the hire of school facilities, increasing the site in line with the lettings policy.

Expenditure:

- Oversee the purchase ordering system, ensuring that appropriate processes are followed and authorisations obtained.

- Ensure that the school is getting value for money and that spending is controlled.
- Oversee supplier management and ensure that payments are authorised and paid in a timely manner and any disputed items resolved.
- Monitor service contracts and utility costs monthly in conjunction with a Finance Officer.
- Report actual expenditure against educational budgets when appropriate and provide detail and support to budget holders on request.
- Advise budget holders on planning and spending to ensure legitimate, cost effective and appropriate use of funds.

Assets:

- Manage bank accounts with reference to maintaining an appropriate level of funds in the current account and transferring surplus funds to savings accounts, ensuring the school gets the best value return on its capital.
- Liaise with the Bursar and Head on the school's investment policy and make recommendations to Governors.
- Maintain a fixed asset register and a register of depreciating assets.
- Ensure necessary currency is available for educational trips abroad and the subsequent reconciliation with reference to the trip forms.

Other:

- Produce monthly pupil numbers and pipeline figures for the Head and Governors.
- Prepare cash flow forecasts as required.
- Manage any term deposits held with the bank to maximise interest received.
- Complete various surveys for the Office of National Statistics, Bains Cutler etc.
- Liaise with the insurers and assist with claims.

- Complete tax forms, including P11Ds and PAYE settlement.
- Manage statutory records, ensuring filing at both Companies House and the Charity Commission is up to date.
- Ensure finance policies are reviewed on a systematic basis and updated where required.
- Compliance with statutory and reporting obligations in relation to VAT, corporation tax, employment taxes, pensions, annual financial statements, Department for Education regulations, Companies House and Charitable Commission regulations and wider legal obligations.
- Assume responsibility, in consultation with the Bursar and HR Manager, for the recruitment and development of all finance staff.
- Manage the annual salary review process with the Bursar and HR Manager.
- Advise on calculations of staff salaries.
- Supporting commercial activity, such as pricing analysis and preparing strategic and financial evaluations of particular projects.
- Advise on taxation matters generally. Where appropriate, ensure compliance with regulations for VAT and preparation of the quarterly VAT return and partial exemption calculation.

Experience

The successful candidate must have a proven and successful background in finance. Experience of working in a school is desirable.

The ideal candidate will have the following characteristics:

- A dynamic, proactive individual able to work in a busy environment, satisfying conflicting requirements in an efficient way.

- Excellent organisational skills with the ability to understand and manage detailed information.
- Previous payroll experience.
- Track record of working successfully with a diverse range of stakeholders.
- Experience of working with regulations.
- Computer literate and a confident user of IT for communications, financial and management purposes. Experience in using iFinance and iSAMS is desirable.
- An understanding of the importance of 'health and safety' and willingness to embrace the positive health and safety ethos within the school.

Qualifications & Personal Attributes:

- CIMA/ ACCA/ACA qualified.
- Extensive experience in budgeting, forecasting and financial modelling and strategic financial oversight.
- A strong understanding of all financial and commercial matters.
- A practical, systematic, and pragmatic approach to work whilst being able to work calmly and efficiently under pressure.
- Committed team player with a collegiate and collaborative approach together with an ability and willingness to create a working environment in which staff are empowered to take decisions.
- A high degree of personal integrity: trustworthy and reliable, and able to deal with confidential information on a routine basis in a discreet manner.
- Good sense of humour and the ability to create a working environment in which people work hard and enjoy being part of the team.
- Personal strength of character through transparency, integrity, and fairness. Has a strong sense of personal accountability.

- Knowledge of the business, economic and political environment facing independent schools currently and the financial challenges that this presents.
- Experience working in a school environment would be preferable but not essential.
- Ability to lead a small team.
- Strong listening and communication skills, both written and oral.
- Personal energy and enthusiasm, with a positive outlook and a customer service mentality.
- A capacity for strategic thinking, but with a strong grasp of detail.

The package

- Salary will be competitive dependent on experience and qualification.
- The normal hours of work are 40 hours per week, all year round. At peak periods, it may be required to work additional hours.
- Membership of a contributory Defined Contribution Pension Scheme and 3 x life cover.
- Lunch is provided free of charge in the school's dining hall during term time.
- Access to our Employee Assistance Programme.
- Possibility of fee remission for eligible staff children.
- Free on-site parking.
- Cycle to work scheme.
- 25 days of annual leave plus bank holidays. In addition, at the discretion of the Head, there is usually a school closure over the Christmas period.

No job description can fully cover all aspects of the role and consequently the responsibilities are likely to evolve and change over time.

Application timeline

- Application deadline: 5 September 2025
- Shortlist and invite for interviews: 3 September 2025
- Interviews: w/c 15 September 2025
- Start date: ideally December 2025

All staff are responsible for safeguarding the welfare of children and always ensuring compliance with the school's Safeguarding Policy and processes. In accordance with Safer Recruitment requirements, the successful applicant will be offered the role subject to the satisfactory completion of background checks including an enhanced DBS check, verification of references, verification of qualifications and career history, an online check of publicly available information, and fitness to undertake the role.

Early applications are encouraged as suitably qualified candidates may be interviewed before the closing date. The School reserves the right to withdraw the vacancy if an early appointment is made.



Employee Benefits



Conditions

Format of applications

Formal applications will only be accepted via the official Somerhill Application Form which will be published alongside this pack. All completed applications should be sent to recruitment@somerhill.org. A tour will form part of the interview process but please visit our website which provides a lot of information about us.

Child protection

All staff have a responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children with whom they come into contact and are always required to adhere to and ensure compliance with the school's Safeguarding Policy Statement. If, in the course of carrying out their duties, a member of staff becomes aware of any actual or potential risks to the safety or welfare of children in the school, they must immediately report their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Offer conditions

Somerhill is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful applicant will be offered the role conditionally, subject to the satisfactory completion of a number of background checks including but not limited to: an enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred list check, the taking up and verification of references, the verification of career history and medical fitness to undertake the role. The complete list of required checks will be provided to the successful candidate.

Health and safety

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and subsequent legislation, the school is obliged to provide you with a workplace and working conditions which, so far as is reasonably practicable, are safe and without risk to health. You are required by health and safety legislation to take reasonable care for your own health and safety and for the health and safety and others.

Further information

We are an equal opportunities employer and we welcome applicants from all backgrounds. We celebrate the diverse backgrounds that make up our community and consider it important that people from a diverse range of backgrounds are represented in our setting.

This job description is not intended to be a comprehensive statement of procedures and responsibilities, but instead sets out the principal expectations of the school in relation to the post holder's professional responsibilities and duties. We are looking for an individual who is adaptable, flexible, and willing to carry out the wide range of duties that are likely to be required to make a success of this role. Please note we reserve the right to close prior to the application deadline or extend the deadline depending on the number of applications received. Early applications are encouraged.

If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Jess May, HR Manager, at recruitment@somerhill.org.





SOMERHILL

A leading independent prep school for girls and boys aged 2-13

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