



Finance Director

# Introduction

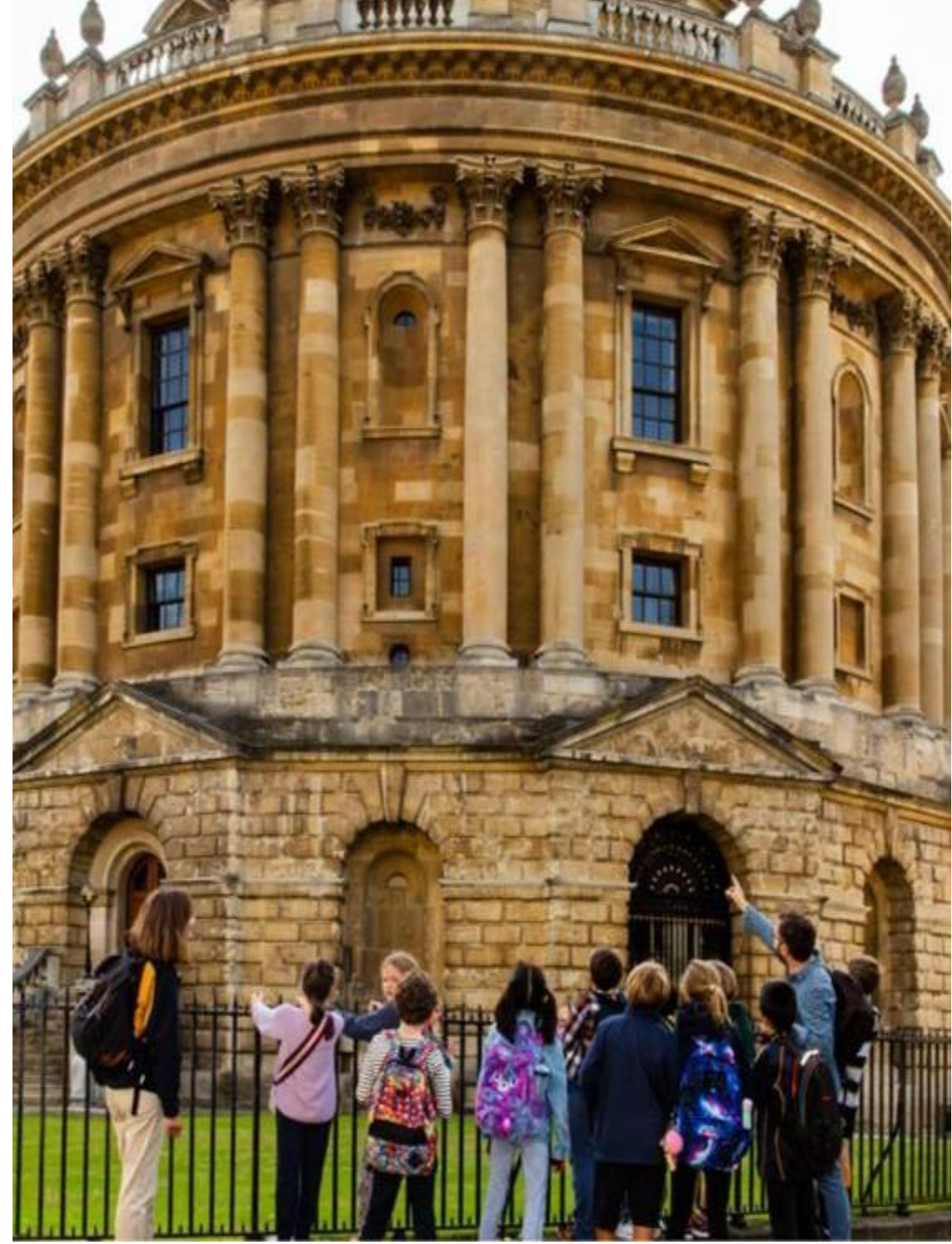
Dragon School is one of Britain's leading preparatory schools, offering a first-class day and boarding education for girls and boys aged 4-13 years. Located in the heart of the city of Oxford, the Dragon provides a distinctive educational experience that not only celebrates childhood and the joy of learning, but also prepares young people with the skills to thrive in a rapidly changing world and continue to 'Reach for the Sun' (Arduus ad Solem).

I believe this is an exciting time to be joining the Dragon, leading the School on the next phase of its development. We have a series of ambitious projects underway, from developing an endowment for bursaries, to the construction of a new music and performing arts centre. Our 150th Anniversary in 2027 is an important milestone for the School, providing a further opportunity to recognise the best of the Dragon and accelerate other academic initiatives.

Academic excellence for all sits at the heart of a Dragon education. As a School, we are constantly seeking to innovate, developing the curriculum both in and out of the classroom. Dragon *QUEST*, our Saturday enrichment programme, is a unique opportunity to stretch our pupils further, giving children the freedom to learn new and unfamiliar skills, from beekeeping to exploring anthropology; we are only limited by our imaginations. Equally, 'giving back' is integral to being a grounded Dragon.

We are pleased that you are considering applying for this role and we hope this brochure gives you all the information you need. We look forward to receiving your application.

**Emma Goldsmith**  
Head





The School



The School was founded in 1877 as the Oxford Preparatory School primarily to educate the sons of Oxford dons. The name was later changed to Dragon School and it was run for many years by the Lynam family. They were progressive educationalists who believed that children should both enjoy school and understand the world around them. This approach was unusual in the late 19th Century but it endured and, to this day, it lies at the core of the School's contemporary 21st Century approach.

Dragon School sits on two sites located in North Oxford: the Pre-Prep is in Summertown and the Prep School lies close by on the banks of the River Cherwell. The School combines traditional architecture with contemporary design providing first-class facilities that support its academic, co-curricular, cultural and sporting activities.

Today, the Dragon is the country's largest co-educational day and boarding preparatory school with some 800 pupils, including 212 at the Pre-Prep. Importantly, over a third of pupils at the Prep School are full or flexi boarders. Pupils attend from near and far and the School is committed to promoting active and sustainable travel to the School by walking and cycling whenever possible, with good on-site provision for cycle storage.

Following a highly successful recent ISI inspection in December 2022, where the School achieved the grading of 'excellent' across all categories, there is now a burgeoning ambition for further educational innovation and creativity shared throughout the school community.



# Admissions

The main points of entry are Reception and Year 3 at the Pre-Prep. While Year 4 is the usual entry point to the Prep School, we accommodate entry to all year groups wherever possible. Although the School is non-selective, there is an assessment process whereby all children are interviewed to evaluate their potential and suitability. For children over five years old, their ability in Maths and English is checked to their comfort with the curriculum. In addition, a report from the pupil's current school is always requested.

Boarding options range from full and weekly boarding, to regular or flexi nights for day pupils and, as a 'taster', prospective boarding pupils are warmly encouraged to spend a night in a boarding house.

Prospective parents and their children are encouraged to attend an Open Morning to see the School 'in action' and individual family tours are possible both on weekdays and Saturdays. There are virtual Open Mornings for parents and children unable to travel to Oxford and these include a Q&A session with the Head and senior staff. In addition, a one-to-one video call can be arranged with the Registrar or a senior member of staff.

The School is committed to offering a number of means-tested bursaries as well as fee discounts for children of families in the Armed Forces or Diplomatic service in receipt of Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA). Current capacity exists for the award of five full bursaries per year in the Prep School, with an aspiration to build an endowment to enable an expansion of provision.

# Ethos

Enduringly committed to the central aim that a child must enjoy school and be enabled to give of his or her best, the Dragon seeks to be both academically purposeful and also to provide a safe and inclusive environment, which leans towards relaxed engagement rather than over-strict or unnecessary rules. Understanding the meaning of community, developing an awareness of wider society and acquiring essential qualities of kindness, emotional intelligence, respect and responsibility are all central to the School's character. The approach to childhood learning and development continues to ensure that its pupils then go on to lead lives of consequence in the fullest sense. This strong personalised approach coupled with a spirit of inclusivity, openness and tolerance encourages day pupils and boarders to enrich each other's school experience.

# Safeguarding and Pastoral

The School's full and committed approach to the safeguarding and pastoral care of each and every pupil is seen as a collective responsibility that involves the Head and Senior Leadership Team, the Heads of Middle and Upper School, Heads of Year, House parents, Teachers, Tutors and the School Counsellor. Day pupils and boarders alike benefit from a strong commitment to their social and emotional well-being. Children are allocated to a tutor group and the tutor supports their academic and pastoral needs.

The School's pastoral aims are to support a learning community where each child can realise their talents and strengths; where children can grow up to be responsible, active members of their community and to thrive with each other and independently in a community where tolerance and understanding is encouraged and through equal opportunities.

Dragon School aims to deliver excellent pastoral care for all its boarding and day pupils. By seeking to nurture and support each individual child, the School encourages them to learn from their peers, make and learn from mistakes and develop lasting friendships.



# Academic

In line with the principles and ethos of the School set at its foundation, the curriculum is designed to ensure all pupils:

- enjoy a happy and secure learning environment where they are valued
- develop lively, enquiring minds where they question rather than merely accept
- acquire knowledge and understanding which will equip them for future challenges
- obtain skills that they can transfer to other subjects or situations

This starts with a creative and varied curriculum in the Pre-Prep and continues through the Prep School. In addition to the core subjects of English and Mathematics, the Dragon syllabus includes Modern and Classical Languages, Sciences, Humanities, Music, FPE (Faith, Philosophy and Ethics), ICT, Computer Programming, Art, Design & Technology, Drama and PE. The School also includes the principles and practice of philanthropy and social entrepreneurship; the annual Governors' challenge encourages pupils to invest and grow a small investment in either charitable work or creating products to sell at a school 'Market Day'.

Streaming and setting is widely used at the Prep and class sizes are small to maximise and personalise the process of teaching and learning around the needs of each pupil. The School believes that the pursuit of learning and emotional health are strongly linked and there is an emphasis on good PSHEE.

There is also strong learning enrichment with opportunities to go on overseas visits including a Japan exchange, a Classics trip to Rome, Pompeii and Herculaneum, overseas music tours and sports tours to countries such as South Africa and the Netherlands.

The Dragon has successfully launched an exciting, and optional, enrichment programme called Dragon *QUEST* which is taking the place of Saturday School. Children take part in a wide range of activities including film-making, first aid, debating, astronomy, farm visits, yoga, cultural visits – and even how to maintain your bicycle. Take up is very strong which is testament to the enthusiasm and imagination of teachers and the engagement and curiosity of our pupils.

Despite its non-selective approach, the girls and boys achieve high academic standards and go on to leading schools including Cheltenham Ladies College, St Mary's Ascot, Wycombe Abbey, Eton, Harrow, Abingdon, Oundle, St Edward's Oxford, Wellington, Winchester, Radley, Marlborough, Fettes, Headington, and Rugby, amongst others. In 2020, pupils were awarded a staggering 55 scholarships across academic, art, music, drama and sports and this is testament to the outstanding teaching and variety of opportunities available to pupils at the Dragon.

Preparation for entrance exams includes lessons in reasoning and interview practice.



## Beyond the Classroom

The School offers a broad co-curricular programme in music, drama, sport, and community outreach both to enrich the learning experience and to help children enjoy school life while also broadening their horizons and teaching them valuable life-skills.

**Music:** A love of music is encouraged in every child and the school benefits from a Music School with studios and dedicated practice rooms. More than 800 individual music lessons take place every week on a wide range of instruments and there are music groups ranging from choirs and orchestras to rock, pop and jazz bands. This substantial demand has driven an operational need for a high specification Music and Performing Arts Facility. Planning permission has been secured and the commencement of construction is imminent for this ambitious £10million project.

The School's 'Ensembles Programme' enables every child learning an instrument to play in at least one of more than 60 ensembles that range from Concert and Big Band to choirs and orchestras; piano trios to string quartets; pop and rock bands. There are regular opportunities to perform in school concerts and an annual School Piano Festival.

The pursuit and appreciation of music and drama is supported by travelling to concerts at St John's Smith Square in London; Birmingham Symphony Hall; Cadogan Hall, London and overseas trips to Belgium, Venice and Paris. The Dragon School Choir regularly performs Choral Evensong at Merton College, while the Big Band and Concert Band have performed on the main stage at Disneyland Paris.

**Drama and Performing Arts:** With a dedicated drama studio as well as access to two other large spaces, the Drama department stages 14 performances per year and holds two examination weeks for its ever-growing LAMDA programme. Major school performances are held in the Lynam Hall over two nights, and are well attended by parents and the entire boarding community. Every year a number of Year 8 Dragons are put forward for Drama Scholarships. The Rink centre provides pupils with a bright mirrored indoor studio space for Dance and Drama and there is an extensive costume department. Close links exist with the Music department which trains the musicians and singers who also perform or even write material. The Art department design stage sets and children can also learn stage management skills such as sound and lighting.

**Sport:** The sporting ethos of the Dragon is based on the dual principles of maximum participation and a pursuit of excellence. The School aims for every child to leave the Dragon having enjoyed their sporting experience and with a genuine desire to continue playing in the future at whatever level. The School has wonderful facilities, including extensive sports fields; an Olympic-sized astro and one and a half further astro pitches; a boathouse on the banks of the River Cherwell and with nearly 300 metres of the Cherwell passing through the School's grounds, sculling is a popular sport with regular competitive school regattas and competitions taking place.

Overall, participation in sport is exceptional: in excess of 30 teams compete in over 900 fixtures across a huge variety of sports. This demonstrates the School's commitment to "Sport for All" and there is a comprehensive sports programme available at the Dragon including: hockey, cricket, tennis, table tennis, athletics, cross country, rugby, swimming, riding, golf, sculling, squash, fencing, judo, skiing, badminton, lacrosse and polo.



## Boarding and Day Boarding

Boarding is at the heart of our thriving Dragon community and we offer a range of different boarding options to suit the needs of modern families – full, weekly, and flexi boarding are all available. The boarders live with a team of outstanding dedicated Houseparents in one of our 10 family-style boarding houses. There is a busy, varied and fun weekend programme for the boarders to participate in including activities such as laser tag, giant inflatables, silent disco and graffiti boards.

Boarding and day pupils work and play together, with day pupils encouraged to stay on after school to take part in a wide range of co-curricular activities alongside the boarders. The School's 'Day boarding' provision enables day pupils to stay overnight at school at least one night per week, helping integrate the School's community further.

## Old Dragons and Community

One of the unique characteristics of the Dragon is its sense of community. The affection held by former pupils, parents and staff remains long after their final days at the School and their continued engagement is facilitated by the Development Office.

The School has an impressive list of Old Dragons, (known as ODs), stretching back through its more than 140 years. Some notable ODs include: Poppy Adams; Author, Sir John Betjeman, Poet Laureate; Christopher Booker, Journalist; Leonard Cheshire VC, RAF Pilot and Activist; Dame Cressida Dick, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police; Sir John Kendrew, Nobel Prize Winner for Chemistry; Hugh Laurie CBE, Actor; Naomi Mitchison OBE, Author; Rory Stewart OBE, Former Secretary of State for International Development; and Emma Watson, Actress.

The School also has a vibrant social impact programme, which encourages pupils to think about environmental and social issues in society today, and actively engage in solutions to these issues on a local, national and global level. The School aims to develop responsible young people who will contribute meaningfully to their communities and the future well-being of wider society.

Locally, the School was, until recently, the lead sponsor of The Blackbird Academy Trust that comprises three local primary schools. Nationally and internationally, the Dragon seeks to continue to enhance its partnerships while international projects have enabled staff and pupils to visit and support vulnerable children in South Africa, India and Brazil.

The Development Office is successfully developing its fundraising programme to realise the ambitious fundraising aims the School has in place. This includes the building of a new Music and Performing Arts Centre and to further enhance the School's Transformative Bursary Programme.



# The Role



## Introduction

The Dragon School Finance Director is a senior role, responsible to the Chief Operating Officer (COO) for the operational management of the Trust's finances. The successful candidate will work with the Head, COO and senior leadership team (SLT) and will develop close relationships across the School to guide and oversee senior managers and budget holders in their budgetary responsibilities.

The Finance Director's primary responsibility is to prepare the annual budget and ensure that the School's finances are managed in accordance with the agreed budget and to meet all our statutory and contractual obligations. The Finance Director will be responsible for maintaining accurate financial records of the Trust and its subsidiary companies and funds to evidence that the responsibilities of the Governors, as Company Directors and Charity Trustees, are fully compliant with current legislation. The Finance Director will maintain the accounts to a standard such that they shall disclose, with reasonable accuracy, at any time the financial position of the Trust.

The Finance Director will also be required to support the COO in any strategic financial considerations, ad-hoc financial and statistical reporting, systems reviews and updates in the light of changing legislation, school policy or identified goals.

The Finance Director is responsible for:

- Providing leadership and management of all aspects of the School's finances.
- The preparation of all accounts required by, and in compliance with, statutory or regulatory legislation, or originating deeds of trust or similar, as applicable.
- Preparing termly management accounts, including income and expenditure account, balance sheet, cash flows, financial performance indicators and supporting notes, in such formats as may be required by the Governors from time to time, in good time for distribution to Governors prior to their meetings.
- The supervision, direction and training of the accounting staff, currently comprising a Finance Manager, and two assistant accountants.
- Preparing an annual budget in conjunction with the COO. Ensuring budgets allocated are recorded appropriately, and reporting these and actual expenditure against them from time to time to budget holders so that they may manage their expenditure within the limits set.
- The timely preparation and submission of all financial returns required by HMRC, pension agencies, Companies' House and the Charity Commissioners.
- Responsible for liaising with the School's external advisors, including lenders & auditors
- Maintaining the Trust's accounting systems and procedures to satisfy changing legislative, regulatory and tax requirements and to meet the Governors', Head's, COO's and budget holders' needs for timely financial and management accounting information.
- Implementing VAT procedures and making the associated VAT returns as required.
- The management of day-to-day financial functions including, but not limited to, the following:
  1. Management of cash resources and the monitoring of bank balances and deposit accounts, identifying appropriate cash utilisation. Assist the COO develop cash flow and treasury management strategies, including investments and loans, to meet future requirements.
  2. Maintenance of the purchase ledger which will show with reasonable accuracy the School's indebtedness to suppliers at any time.
  3. Maintenance of the parent fees ledger which will show with reasonable accuracy the amounts owed to the School by parents and other payers with respect to pupil charges at any time.
  4. The preparation of bills for parents, and the efficient collection of debts.

5. The prepaid fees scheme.

The duties and responsibilities highlighted in this Job Description are indicative and may vary over time. Post holders are expected to undertake other duties and responsibilities relevant to the nature, level and extent of the post and the School.

**At Dragon School, we know that diversity promotes creativity and innovation. We are committed to equity of opportunity and to being a fair and inclusive employer. We therefore particularly encourage applications from underrepresented groups.**

# Person Specification



Requirement	Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education, training and qualifications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must be fully qualified (ACA,ACCA,ACMA,CFPA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broader management or financial management training or qualifications e.g. MBA</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge and understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong technical financial and management accounting skills</li> <li>Strong IT skills with advanced Excel skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience in the operation of accounting systems, controls and processes</li> <li>Experience in the management of key financial functions</li> <li>Used to operating accurately to tight deadlines</li> <li>Experience of working with Financial Packages</li> <li>A thorough knowledge and experience of producing monthly management accounts to deadlines</li> <li>Proven experience in managing small teams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience in the Education Sector</li> <li>Experience of using PS Financials</li> <li>Experience working with and influencing senior leadership teams and governing bodies</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent leadership and management skills including the ability to motivate staff</li> <li>Strong commercial acumen with a good grasp of business principles</li> <li>Excellent problem-solving skills</li> <li>Ability to work both independently and as part of a team</li> <li>Excellent appreciation for details</li> <li>Excellent interpersonal and communications (written and oral) skills</li> </ul>	



# Terms of Appointment



**Closing Date:** Friday 23 February (midday)

**Salary:** £80,000 per annum.

**Start Date:** May 2024.

**Hours:** Full-time (37.5 hours Monday – Friday).

There will be requirements to work occasional evenings and weekends. Whilst the role is being advertised as full time we are open to candidates who would like flexibility, for example working a 4 day week or reduced hours in the School Holidays.

# Dragon School Benefits



**Pension** – All colleagues are automatically enrolled into the Dragon School Pension Scheme. This scheme is currently run through Royal London and is a Defined Contribution scheme. Teaching colleagues need to contribute a minimum employee contribution of 2% to receive a maximum employer contribution of 16.48%. Operational colleagues have a tiered structure with a minimum of 4% employee contribution up to a maximum of 12% employer contribution.

- **Salary Exchange** – Salary Exchange can be a tax efficient way to make your pension contributions. For further information please visit [Salary exchange - Royal London](#).
- **Pension Exchange** – Teaching colleagues have the option to take part of their employer pension contribution as salary. There is the option to reduce the employer contribution to 8% or 12% and the remainder can be taken as salary. The employee contribution would need to be a minimum of 2%.

**Income Protection** – All teaching colleagues automatically benefit from Income Protection. If you are absent from work for more than 28 weeks you will receive part of your salary for up to 3 years.

**Holiday** – Full time colleagues working all year round receive 30 days annual leave excluding statutory bank holidays. Subject to annual approval there are also additional closure days at Christmas.

**Death In Service**– All colleagues at Dragon automatically receive a Death in Service benefit of three x annual salary.

**Tusker Electric Car Scheme** – Tusker is a salary sacrifice car scheme. [Tusker](#). This benefit is available to those colleagues on a permanent contract who have completed their probationary period. There is a minimum salary requirement for this so please contact the HR department for more information if you are part time. To register through the Tusker website please use DRGN as the School code.

**Cycle to Work Scheme** – Dragon School operates a Cycle to Work scheme through [Cycle Scheme](#). Colleagues have the option to purchase a bike and equipment over a term of 12 or 18 months. Deductions will be taken each month through payroll. Please use the above link to start an application.

**Fee Remission** – Colleagues are automatically entitled to 75% fee remission at the Prep site only. Fee remission is available to colleagues on permanent contracts and is pro rata for part time colleagues. Fee remission is available for up to two children.

**Specsavers Vouchers** – The School provides vouchers for colleagues to redeem against eye tests with Specsavers. Colleagues can request one voucher per year. Please contact [human.resources@dragonschool.org](mailto:human.resources@dragonschool.org).

**School Meals** – Free School meals are provided to colleagues whilst on duty.

**Swimming** – Colleagues can access the swimming pool at designated times for colleague swimming.

**Employee Assistance Programme** – The School's EAP is provided by Health Assured and can be used to access confidential support with regards to your physical and mental wellbeing. In addition, confidential counselling sessions can be booked directly through them (six per issue, per year) Further details can be found using the below link:

<https://dragonschool.box.com/s/hrlteei56garma4mu74jvn8xvd484rt5>