



VACANCY INFORMATION PACK

SENIOR SPORTS
TURF OPERATIVE
(FULL TIME)



READING BLUE COAT

INTRODUCTION

Reading Blue Coat School is a leading independent day school for students from ages 11 to 18. As at September 2024, the School has circa 800 students and is now into our second year of co-educational intake into Year 7 with the intention of being a fully co-educational independent day school from September 2027 onwards. The School will continue to be co-educational between the ages of 16 and 18.

The School was founded in 1646 by Richard Aldworth, a Master of The Skinners' Company, and a Governor of Christ's Hospital. The School was established near St Mary's Minster Church in Reading and was originally known by its historic name of Aldworth's Hospital. In 1947, Reading Blue Coat School moved to the magnificent estate of Holme Park in the Berkshire village of Sonning, where it remains today.

The ethos of the School derives from its Christian foundation and traditions, fostering care and concern within the community and enabling all students to develop their full potential. The School aims to provide a stimulating and friendly atmosphere in which each student can realise his or her full intellectual, physical, and creative potential. Students are encouraged to be self-reliant and adaptable, and the School intends that they will learn the basis of good citizenship, founded on honesty, fairness and understanding of the needs of others. The curriculum provides a balanced blend of academic and co-curricular activities that combine to meet these objectives.

The School employs more than 200 salaried staff, of whom about 50% are academic. Reflecting the character of our co-educational sixth form, nearly half of our academic staff are female.

FACILITIES

Reading Blue Coat is located four miles from the centre of Reading, in the Thames-side village of Sonning. It is also three miles from Twyford, which will be located on Crossrail, with fast train service across London. Set in 46 acres of land for students to enjoy, the facilities are very well maintained, and the School continues to invest in the site to add to an impressive infrastructure of buildings.

Planning permission has been obtained for a new Performing Arts Centre.



ACADEMIC LIFE

The academic curriculum at Reading Blue Coat is based on the principle that all students should experience a broad and balanced range of basic subjects and skills. From Year 9 onwards, this range is gradually modified, by elements of choice, enabling both the interests and aptitudes of individual students to be reflected. Most lessons are taught initially in classes of mixed ability, although setting occurs in Mathematics in Year 7, in Languages in Year 8, and Science in Year 9. Geology is also a thriving subject. In Year 11, all students take qualifications in English, Maths and Science (all IGCSE) and a Modern Foreign Language. They also take three GCSEs from a broad range of eleven subjects. All students take a GCSE in Religious Studies (full course) in Year 10.

In the Sixth Form students can choose from a range of 24 subjects, including subjects most will not have studied before, such as Economics, Politics and Psychology. Enrichment opportunities in the Sixth Form include the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), and a weekly schedule of visiting speakers. Reading Blue Coat always seeks to stretch and challenge students and the School's Learning Support Department ensures that students with specific learning needs are supported effectively. The School's Learning Research Group ensures a sustained focus on developing teachers and pedagogical enrichment.

2024 academic results were impressive; the results were amongst Blue Coat's best with 79% achieving A*- B at A level, and at GCSE 70% gaining Grades 9 to 7.

The majority of Year 13 leavers proceed to degree courses at universities of which approximately 78% go to the Russell Group Plus universities. Each year over 75% of our students attain places at their first choice university, whilst others are successful in securing future learning opportunities in their chosen career.

PASTORAL

Pastoral care, focused on the individual, is at the heart of the School. Reading Blue Coat's pastoral structure is based around the tutorial system, within the framework of the House system. In September 2021, we increased our houses from four to six: Aldworth, Hall, Malthus, Rich, Norwood and West.

All students are part of a tutor group that is overseen by a member of staff who is responsible for their well-being and for personally overseeing the development of their character and intellectual curiosity. At the heart of the School are the values of aspiration, courage, compassion, integrity and service and all activities seek to re-enforce these. The House system enables students to take part in activities that foster the development of these ideals through a variety of opportunities that include dance, drama, music, public speaking and sport.

DRAMA, MUSIC & THE ARTS

Reading Blue Coat has a reputation for drama and musical performances of the highest quality, with an extensive programme of performances throughout the year. Students' endeavours in the arts are highly successful and widely acclaimed, including internationally. Music is at the heart of the School, all students are auditioned for the choir and many learn a musical instrument. The School Musical or Play is one of the highlights of the cultural calendar and there are further opportunities to perform on stage throughout the academic year. The breadth and depth of musical and dramatic talent at the School is evident in the wide range of plays, concerts, and exhibitions that take place throughout the year.



Further information is available on the School's website at www.rbc.org.uk

SEE ALSO
**THE MUDDY
STILETTOS
SCHOOLS
REVIEW GUIDE**

<https://berkshire.muddystilettos.co.uk/kids/school-reviews/reading-blue-coat-sonning/>

SPORT

The School has a strong reputation for the high quality of its sporting teams. Sport plays a key role in developing every student's potential whilst embodying the principles of Respect, Belief, Commitment and Sportsmanship (team RBCS). Sports are coached to a very high level while providing for, and encouraging those, for whom participation rather than excellence is important.

The core sports are athletics, cricket, football, netball, hockey, rowing, and rugby. The School competes with great success at local, regional, and even national level. We have recent national competition winners in rowing and cross country running, and cricketers, netballers and rugby players who have been selected to international age group teams and gone on to play professionally. Other sports on offer include cross country, golf, tennis, swimming, and touch rugby.

ACTIVITIES

The activities programme is designed to enable students to develop practical and social skills such as communication, leadership, and teamwork. Reading Blue Coat offers a number of exciting options from which students can choose for their weekly activities session, including Adventure Education, Combined Cadet Force (Army, Navy, RAF), Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Model United Nations and Enterprise Champions.

COMMUNITY

Reading Blue Coat students are encouraged to be aware of their place in the wider world and to show consideration for all those with whom they come into contact. These principles are based on the ideas handed down by Richard Aldworth who founded the School in 1646.

In recent years the School has greatly enhanced its links with the wider community under what is now called the Aldworth Partnership. One example is the Primary Schools Placement programme which gives students the opportunity to assist with tuition in English, Maths and Modern Foreign Languages in local primary schools. We also have our own community garden which produces fresh produce for a local foodbank charity and our students have recently begun a project to convert a horse trailer into a community café.

Internationally the School has a strong relationship with the charity Brass for Africa and our students support their work amongst disadvantaged children and young people in Uganda through music. As the Aldworth Partnership continues to grow, the long-term aim is that all Blue Coat students have the opportunity to be involved in transformative service projects in the local and wider community at some point in their school career.

GROUNDS DEPARTMENT

The School estate covers 46 acres of rural Berkshire. It is located on the banks of the River Thames in Sonning-on-Thames.

The grounds consist of a large number of prestige sports pitches; formal lawns and gardens; and extensive woodland. The Grounds Department are a highly motivated team consisting of the following:

Grounds Manager

Deputy Grounds Manager

Senior Garden supervisor

Senior Sports turf operative

Apprentice Gardener

Assistant Groundsperson

Groundsperson (x1)

The School has a significant ongoing development programme with new facilities, buildings and playing areas, with substantial new landscaping planned

The Grounds Department is situated in a new purpose built Grounds and Maintenance building incorporating workshops, storage and staff rest area.

The department uses a variety of professional equipment, ranging from tractors of varying sizes; a fleet of specialised turf mowers; and a new maintenance fleet of handheld equipment.

This is a busy department responsible for the maintenance and improvements of the School estate and outstanding visual presentation of the School facilities. The team work together to produce well-presented grounds and gardens that receive frequent accolades and are enjoyed by parents, students and visitors.

The Senior sports turf operative will help support the Grounds Manager and Deputy Grounds manager in the day-to-day management, co-ordinating resources effectively to manage the school's vast estate and develop and maintain the sports surfaces to a safe and high standard. The senior sports turf operative will play a crucial role in the maintenance of our expanding sports facilities. This position offers an exciting opportunity for individuals with a passion for turf and commitment to excellence.



For an informal telephone conversation about the role, contact Matt Wharton, Grounds Manager, on **0118 933 5850** or email MXW@rbcs.org.uk



**LINE MANAGER:**

The Grounds Manager.

DEPARTMENT:

Grounds Department.

CONTRACT STATUS

This is a permanent, full time, all year-round role commencing as soon as possible.

SALARY

Salary will be in the range of £28,000 to £32,000 per annum depending on experience and qualifications. Annual salary is paid by bank transfer on the 25th of the month, or next working day thereafter, in 12 equal payments throughout the year.

SENIOR SPORTS TURF OPERATIVE

MAIN PURPOSE OF THE POST:

To undertake all necessary grounds and garden maintenance tasks with the duty of ensuring that all sports surfaces meet the high standards that are required. Contributing sports turf knowledge to the delivery of strategic plans and work programmes that are under the control of the Grounds Manager and Deputy Grounds manager.

To undertake such other duties, as detailed by your line manager, that may from time to time be required to ensure the smooth running of the school.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Sports Turf Maintenance Tasks

- Prepare and maintain outdoor sports areas including football pitches, rugby pitches, cricket squares, athletics tracks, hardcourts and all-weather surfaces to the high standards set out by the Grounds Manager and Deputy Grounds manager.
- Set up and dismantling of sports equipment.
- Undertake a wide range of turf operations, including mowing, aerating, scarifying, seeding and top dressing.
- Operation of powered hand tools including mowers, strimmers and hedge cutters.
- Contributing to weekly and monthly maintenance programmes to ensure the required standard of surface presentation.
- Setting & marking out sports pitches, cleaning equipment stores and associated washdown areas.
- Supervising and monitoring a small team.
- Ensure work areas are kept clean, tidy and secure at all times.
- Carry out gritting, salt spreading, snow cleaning, as necessary, including highway footpaths through the school.
- Ensure pathways and roads are maintained to a clean and tidy standard.
- Work closely with the Senior Garden supervisor, managing the day-to-day tasks set out by the Grounds manager & Deputy Grounds manager.

Health and safety

- Be aware of Health and Safety requirements noting that all duties must be carried out to comply with current Health & Safety at Work legislation.
- Ensure all equipment, machinery and buildings are secure.
- Be aware of and report any security risks posed within the school.
- Maintain and operate safely and professionally a range of vehicles and equipment required for grounds care operations, including tractors with PTO driven implements.
- Use technical and operational knowledge to ensure a safe environment and to promote, monitor and maintain health & safety.
- Follow all Health and Safety Policy guidelines and policies as stated within the school's Health and Safety Policy.

Machinery Maintenance

- Undertake the general maintenance of machinery on a day-to-day basis, reporting faults and updating the machinery maintenance records accordingly.

Working with other departments to support school events

- Work alongside other departments to facilitate school functions and events
- Undertake such other duties, as detailed by your line manager, that may from time to time be required to ensure the smooth running of the school.

General requirements - all school staff are expected to:

- Work towards and support the direction of the school and the current school objectives outlined in the School's Strategic Aims.
- Work within the School's Equal Opportunities Policy to promote equality of opportunity for all students and staff, both current and prospective.
- Maintain high professional standards of attendance, punctuality, appearance, conduct and positive, courteous relations with students, parents and colleagues.
- Engage actively in the appraisal process.
- Adhere to policies as set out in the School's Code of Conduct, Staff Handbook and website.
- Perform any other reasonable task required within the limits of capability.
- Promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils at the school.

Please note that this Job Description is not exhaustive and the employee may be expected to undertake additional duties if required.



For an informal telephone conversation about the role, contact Matt Wharton, Grounds Manager, on **0118 933 5850** or email MXW@rbc.org.uk

SENIOR SPORTS TURF OPERATIVE

The person specification focuses on the knowledge, skills, experience and qualifications required to undertake the role effectively. It is expected that the successful applicant will have and can demonstrate:

Knowledge And Experience	Essential	Desirable
• Experience in greenkeeping or sports turf management.	✓	
• Good working knowledge of all aspects of groundsmanship.	✓	
• Significant experience in groundsmanship.	✓	
• Understanding of the requirements of sports turf surface preparation.	✓	
• Clear understanding of relevant Health and safety legislation.	✓	
• Experience of driving machinery used to prepare and maintain sports turf.	✓	
• Willingness to work at height (using ladders and scaffold towers).	✓	
• Knowledge of pesticides and chemicals used in the preparation of sports surfaces and amenity lawns.		✓
• Knowledge of machinery maintenance.		✓
• Previous experience of supervising others		✓
• Some gardening experience.		✓

Skills and Personal Attributes	Essential	Desirable
• Accomplished in sports pitch preparation, setting out and turf management.	✓	
• Ability to prepare cricket wickets.	✓	
• Competent machine operator.	✓	
• Ability to work effectively with colleagues and others, as well as independently.	✓	
• Hard working with attention to quality and detail.	✓	
• Trustworthy, reliable and prepared to work in all weathers.	✓	
• Flexible approach to work and willing to work extra hours when required (including some Saturdays).	✓	
• A keen interest in sports (including cricket would be useful).	✓	
• Excellent timekeeping skills with a clear ability to prioritise work, solve problems and seek help when needed.	✓	
• Computer literacy skills.	✓	
• Demonstrable commitment to a career in sports turf management.		✓



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Qualifications	Essential	Desirable
• NVQ level 2 Sports Turf qualification.	✓	
• A full and valid driving licence.	✓	
• IOG/GMA National Practical Certificate or similar.		✓
• Ground based Chainsaw Qualification CS30.		✓
• Application and identification of weeds, pests and diseases with PA1/PA6, PA2.	✓	
• Sports Turf qualification level 3.		✓

Please note that this Job Description is not exhaustive and the employee may be expected to undertake additional duties if required.

Closing date for applications: 09:00 on Monday 4 August 2025.

Applications are reviewed and shortlisted on a rolling basis and we reserve the right to interview, appoint and close adverts early due to the volume of applications we receive.

We therefore encourage you to apply at the earliest opportunity to avoid disappointment as once we have closed a vacancy you will be unable to submit your application form.

Applications should be submitted using the School's Employment Application Form, which can be downloaded from our website "Vacancies" page www.rbcs.org.uk/vacancies/

This should be submitted with your letter of application, by email to: recruitment@rbcs.org.uk

Contact for questions about the application process should be addressed to Mrs Inga Gregory, Director of HR, Reading Blue Coat School, Holme Park, Sonning Lane, Sonning-on-Thames, RG4 6SU. Email: recruitment@rbcs.org.uk





PLACE OF WORK

Reading Blue Coat School,
Sonning on Thames, Berkshire.



MEALS

Lunch and refreshments are
provided free by the School.



SPORTS FACILITIES

Free membership of the
School Sports Centre with
access to fully equipped gym
and swimming pool.



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

Confidential independent support
service available to staff when you
most need it.



WORKING HOURS

A total of 40 hours per week. From 08:00
to 16:30, Monday to Friday, with 30-minute
unpaid meal break (with allowances for
summer and winter daylight when working
hours may be varied). In addition, some
Saturday working is required (usually on
a one weekend in three rota during the
summer term) for which overtime payment
or time off in lieu is provided



PARKING

Free Car parking is
available on site.



LEAVE ENTITLEMENT

27 days' paid annual leave plus 8
public holidays and some additional
discretionary days over the Christmas
closedown period. Holiday year runs
from 1 September to 31 August annually.



CYCLE SCHEME

Tax-free Cycle to Work Scheme
is offered by salary sacrifice.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Strong commitment to
support professional development
with a dedicated people
development budget.



PENSION

Membership of the RBCS Group
Personal Pension Scheme (employee
contribution of 5% of salary and
employer contribution is 8% of salary).



CAR SCHEME

Leased cars scheme offered
by salary sacrifice affording
large savings.



THE BLUE COAT BENEFIT HUB

Through the Blue Coat Benefit Hub
you can access discounts, rewards, and
perks on thousands of the brands that you
love to shop with including travel; motoring;
electronics; clothing; education; entertainment;
restaurants; health and wellness; beauty and
spa; insurance; sports and outdoors.

DISCOUNTS



Reduction in RBCS school fees for
employees' children school fees offered after
6 months service:



50% reduction for all full-time staff,
pro-rated for part time staff



Fees (from 1 September 2025)
are £8,279 (including VAT) per term.

MEET THE STAFF

All staff, both teaching and support, form part of a qualified and experienced team, which functions at its best in being mutually supportive in a common goal: to provide the best possible education for all Blue Coat pupils.

Relationships between staff and pupils at Blue Coat are often remarked upon by visitors and parents for being warm, relaxed and mutually respectful.

Click on the link to find out more about some of our staff. Can you see yourself as part of the Blue Coat team?

www.rbc.org.uk/the-school/meet-the-staff/



GETTING HERE

BY CAR

We are located in the village of Sonning-on-Thames, just off the A4, between Reading and Twyford.

We are about 15 minutes' drive from Junction 10 of the M4 motorway. From there, take the Reading / Bracknell turnoff at Junction 10 on to the A329M to Reading. At the roundabout by the flyover take the third exit (A4) towards Maidenhead. Follow the dual carriageway over the next roundabout and up the hill. Over the railway bridge, turn left into Sonning Lane. The School is about ½ mile on the left.

BY BUS

The School and village of Sonning is served by local bus services 128 and 129 (operated by Courtney) from Reading to Wokingham.

Also by service 850 (operated by Arriva Bus) from High Wycombe, Marlow, Henley, Twyford to Reading. Alight at the junction of Sonning Lane and Bath Road, from where it is a short walk.

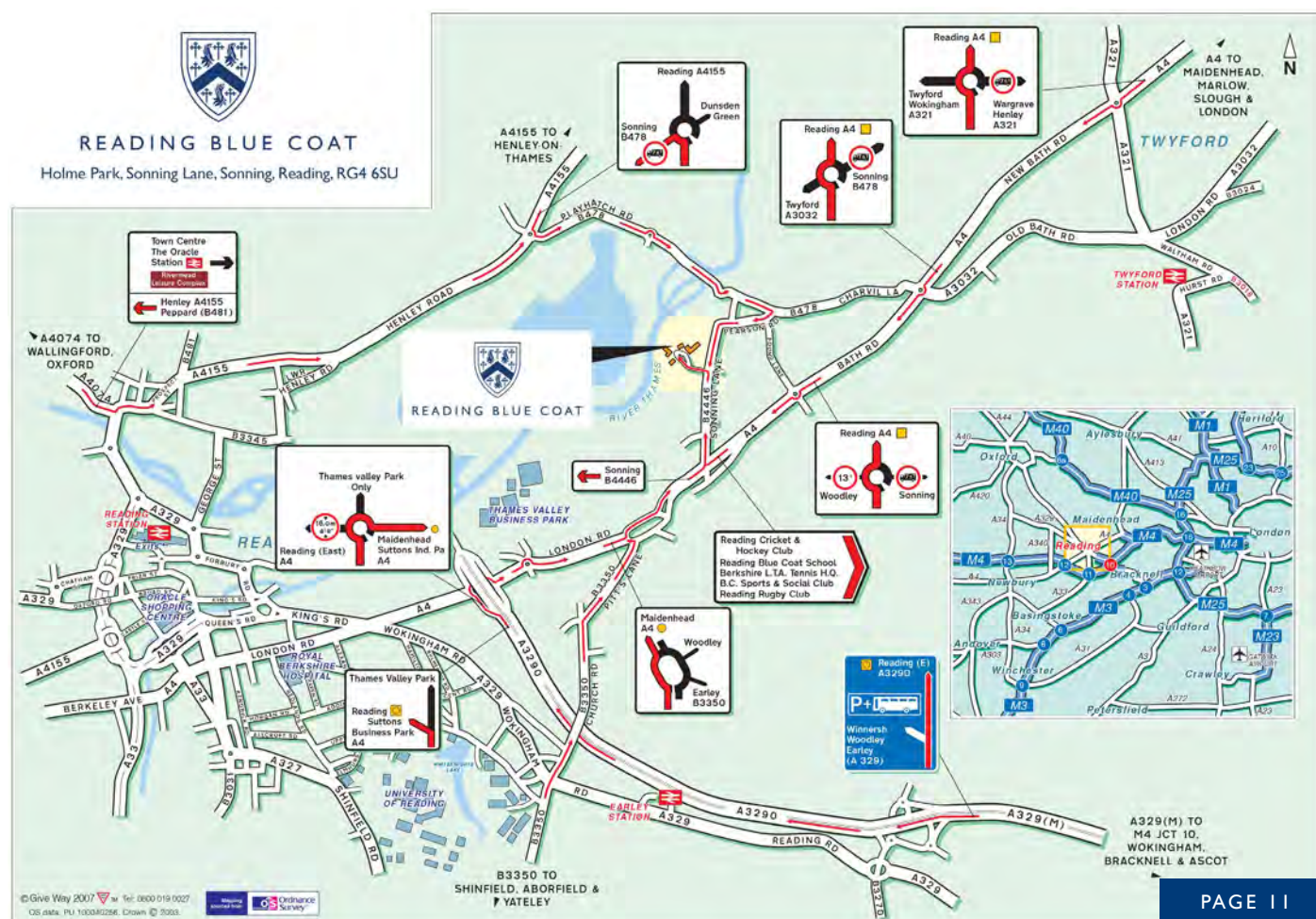
BY TRAIN

Our nearest rail links are at Reading central station (mainline to London, Wales and the West), which is about 5 miles from the School (about 15 minutes by taxi).

We are also served by local stations at Twyford, which is about 3 miles away (about 10 minutes by taxi), and at Earley, which is about 4 miles away (about 15 minutes by taxi).



For information, call Reception: **0118 944 1005**



ONE READING BLUE COAT

our community



Holme Park, Sonning Lane, Sonning-on-Thames, Berkshire RG4 6SU

Tel: 0118 944 1005 rbcs.org.uk