Windlesham House School

– Est. 1837 –

CHARTERHOUSE FAMILY OF SCHOOLS



Candidate information for

HEAD OF GROUNDS

Windlesham House is part of the Charterhouse family of schools

The school

Windlesham House is a distinctive day and boarding school for girls and boys aged 4 - 13 where tradition meets innovation, providing opportunities for the children to be creative, courageous and successful.

As the oldest prep school in the country (est 1837) and the first prep school to become co-educational (1967), we have always led the way in embracing the new. We are progressive and innovative in our ethos and approach while embracing our traditions and rich history. Focusing on the wellbeing of every child, each benefits from a first class and distinctive education full of exciting opportunities and experiences in the glorious South Downs.

Purpose of the role

The head of grounds is responsible for the day to day management, maintenance and presentation of the school's grounds, gardens, sports pitches, golf course, woodland and wider external estate.

This is a practical management role, requiring an individual who can lead and support the grounds team whilst remaining actively involved in the work required to maintain the grounds of Windlesham house school to an excellent standard.

The successful candidate will take pride in the appearance of the school grounds ensuring that all external areas are safe, well maintained and presented to the highest possible standard for pupils, staff, parents and visitors.

The role requires effective planning, strong organisational skills and the ability to balance routine maintenance with the changing demands of a busy school environment. Working closely with the head of estates and business manager, as well as other departments, the head of grounds will ensure that the grounds and sporting facilities continue to meet the operational needs of the school whilst identifying opportunities for improvement and development.

Hours of work

- Monday to Friday 8.30am – 5.00pm
- 52 weeks of the year

Key areas of responsibility

1. Leadership and management

- Take responsibility for the daily management and supervision of the grounds team, ensuring all duties are carried out efficiently, safely and to the required standard
- Lead by example, working alongside the team and taking an active role in practical grounds maintenance
- Plan, organise and allocate daily, weekly and seasonal workloads, ensuring resources are used effectively and priorities are clearly communicated
- Develop and maintain planned maintenance programs covering the school's grounds, sports pitches, gardens, woodland and external areas
- Monitor the quality of work undertaken, providing guidance, support and training where required
- Identify training and development requirements, ensuring team members are suitably qualified and competent to undertake their duties
- Encourage a positive working environment, promoting teamwork, accountability and pride in the appearance of Windlesham House
- Attend departmental meetings and work closely with the business manager to review priorities, ongoing works and future improvements
- Maintain good communication with colleagues across the school, particularly the sports and estates departments

2. Sports pitches and playing surfaces

- Take responsibility for the preparation, maintenance and presentation of all natural and artificial playing surfaces, ensuring they remain safe, fit for purpose and maintained to an excellent standard
- Oversee the maintenance and preparation of rugby, football, cricket, athletics and other sports pitches and training areas, including the golf course as required by the school's sporting program
- Undertake and supervise all aspects of sports turf maintenance, including mowing, aeration,


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scarification, rolling, fertilising, top dressing, overseeding, irrigation and seasonal renovation

- Ensure pitches are correctly marked and prepared in advance of fixtures, tournaments, sports days and other sporting activities
- Maintain cricket squares, wickets and outfields to the required playing standards
- Monitor the condition of playing surfaces, identifying issues relating to drainage, compaction, wear, disease and general turf health, taking appropriate action where necessary
- Work closely with the sports department to understand fixture requirements and ensure facilities are prepared and available when needed
- Assess ground and weather conditions, advising on the suitability and safety of pitches where necessary
- Maintain hard courts and associated sporting areas, ensuring surfaces and surrounding areas remain safe, clean and presentable
- Ensure the safe installation, inspection, movement and storage of goalposts, nets and other outdoor sporting equipment

3. General grounds and estate maintenance

- Ensure all external areas of Windlesham House are maintained to a consistently high standard, creating a welcoming and professional environment
- Oversee the maintenance of lawns, formal gardens, flower beds, borders, hedges, shrubs, verges and other planted areas
- Undertake and supervise planting, pruning, hedge cutting, strimming, weed control, leaf clearance and general horticultural duties
- Maintain entrances, roads, pathways, steps, car parks and other external areas, ensuring they remain clean, tidy and free from hazards
- Ensure estate boundaries, fencing, gates and external structures are regularly inspected and maintained
- Identify and arrange minor repairs to fencing, gates, sheds and other external facilities where appropriate
- Maintain drainage channels, ditches and watercourses, ensuring they remain clear and operational
- Take responsibility for the general appearance of the school grounds, paying particular attention to entrances, prominent buildings and areas regularly used by pupils, parents and visitors

4. Golf course maintenance

- Oversee the maintenance and presentation of Windlesham House's nine hole golf course, ensuring it remains safe, playable and maintained to the appropriate standard
- Plan and undertake routine grass cutting, turf maintenance, weed control and seasonal renovation as required
- Monitor the condition of playing areas and identify improvements to drainage, turf quality and general presentation
- Ensure the golf course and its surrounding areas are maintained in accordance with the school's requirements and sporting activities

5. Woodland, trees and environmental management

- As part of the South Downs National Park, it is essential you take an active role in the maintenance and management of the school's woodland, trees and surrounding natural areas
- Ensure woodland paths, access routes and boundaries are maintained and remain safe for use by children, staff and visitors
- Undertake appropriate vegetation management, clearance of fallen branches, removal of debris and general woodland maintenance
- Regularly inspect trees and wooded areas, identifying potential hazards and reporting concerns to the business manager
- Coordinate specialist tree surveys, arboricultural works and forestry contractors, where required
- Support the development of longer term woodland and tree management programs

- Encourage responsible environmental management, including biodiversity improvements, habitat protection, sustainable planting and appropriate waste management
- Balance the conservation and environmental value of the grounds with the practical needs and safety requirements of the school

6. Machinery, equipment and workshop management

- Ensure the safe and effective operation of all ground's machinery, vehicles and specialist equipment
- Be competent in the use of tractors, ride on mowers, pedestrian mowers, sports turf machinery, strimmers, brush cutters and other relevant equipment
- Ensure machinery and equipment are regularly cleaned, inspected, serviced and correctly stored
- Undertake routine maintenance and minor repairs where appropriately trained and competent
- Maintain accurate records of servicing, inspections, repairs and equipment maintenance
- Identify defective or unsafe equipment, ensuring it is removed from use and reported promptly
- Maintain the grounds workshop and storage sheds in a clean, safe and organised condition
- Monitor the condition and suitability of existing machinery, making recommendations for repair, replacement or future investment
- Ensure fuels, oils, chemicals and other materials are stored and handled safely and in accordance with COSHH regulations

7. Health, safety and compliance

- Ensure all grounds maintenance activities are carried out safely and in accordance with current legislation, school policies and recognised best practice
- Take responsibility for implementing and maintaining safe working practices within the grounds department
- Prepare, review and follow relevant risk assessments, method statements and safe systems of work
- Ensure appropriate personal protective equipment is available, maintained and correctly used
- Maintain compliance with COSHH requirements, particularly in relation to the storage, handling and application of chemicals, pesticides and fertilisers
- Ensure spraying and chemical treatments are undertaken only by appropriately trained and qualified staff
- Maintain accurate records of chemical applications, stock levels and relevant safety documentation
- Ensure staff receive appropriate training in the safe use of machinery and equipment and that accurate records are kept
- Identify and report hazards, defects, accidents and near misses promptly, taking immediate action where necessary to prevent injury or damage
- Remain aware of fire safety requirements, ensuring external fire exits, access routes and emergency vehicle routes remain clear and accessible
- Maintain a safe working environment for pupils, staff, contractors and visitors, particularly when operating machinery or undertaking maintenance in areas used by the school

8. Planning, budgets and contractors

- Work closely with the Business Manager to plan and manage the annual grounds department budget
- Monitor departmental expenditure, ensuring resources are used responsibly and value for money is achieved

- Assist with the preparation of annual budget requirements, including machinery, materials, maintenance and future improvement projects
- Identify and recommend improvements to the school's grounds, sports facilities and external infrastructure
- Obtain quotations and assist with the selection and appointment of external contractors where required
- Coordinate and supervise specialist contractors, ensuring work is completed safely, efficiently and to the agreed standard
- Monitor the use and purchasing of materials, including fuel, seed, fertiliser, chemicals and other grounds maintenance supplies
- Maintain appropriate records of planned works, completed maintenance and departmental expenditure.
- Contribute to the longer term planning and development of the school's grounds and external estate.

9. School events and operational support

- Work closely with the sports and estates departments and other colleagues to ensure the grounds and outdoor facilities are prepared for the school's activities and events
- Support the preparation and presentation of external areas for sports fixtures, sports days, open days, Speech Day, Bonfire Night, as well as other parents' events and school functions
- Assist with the movement and setup of outdoor equipment, furniture and materials where required
- Coordinate appropriate grounds support during periods of adverse weather, including snow and ice clearance, gritting, storm damage and flooding
- Ensure suitable arrangements are in place to maintain safe access around the school during periods of poor weather
- Demonstrate flexibility and a willingness to support the wider School community when operational needs require it

10. Safeguarding and professional conduct

- Promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young people in accordance with Windlesham House's safeguarding and child protection policies
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries and conduct when working in a school environment
- Report any safeguarding concerns promptly through the school's established procedures
- Maintain a professional, approachable and helpful manner when dealing with pupils, staff, parents, visitors and contractors
- Ensure the grounds team represents the school positively through high standards of behaviour, appearance and professionalism


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Personal specification

Essential qualifications and experience

- Significant practical experience in grounds maintenance, sports turf management, horticulture or estate management
- Previous experience supervising or managing a grounds maintenance team
- NVQ Level 3 qualification in a relevant discipline, or equivalent recognised qualification and experience
- Strong practical knowledge of sports pitch preparation, maintenance and seasonal renovation.
- Experience maintaining large grassed areas, gardens, woodland and external estate facilities.
- Competence in operating tractors, mowers and specialist grounds maintenance machinery.
- Good understanding of machinery maintenance, servicing and safe operation
- Sound knowledge of health and safety requirements, risk assessments, COSHH and safe working practices
- Experience planning and prioritising maintenance programs and managing competing operational demands
- Good organisational, communication and problem solving skills
- Full UK driving license
- Ability to undertake physically demanding outdoor work in varying weather conditions

Desirable qualifications and experience

- Relevant qualifications in Sports Turf, Horticulture, Amenity Horticulture, Arboriculture or a related discipline
- NPTC PA1, PA2 and PA6 pesticide application certificates, or recognised equivalents
- Appropriate LANTRA or NPTC qualifications for the operation of chainsaws, tractors, woodchippers and other specialist machinery

Personal qualities

- The successful candidate will be expected to demonstrate the following qualities:
- A practical and approachable leader who leads by example and is willing to work alongside the team
- A strong work ethic with genuine pride in maintaining the school's grounds to an excellent standard
- A proactive and organised approach, with the ability to plan ahead rather than simply respond to problems as they arise
- Good attention to detail and a commitment to delivering consistently high standards
- The ability to motivate, support and develop colleagues whilst maintaining clear expectations and accountability
- A positive, flexible and cooperative attitude, with a willingness to assist others when required
- The confidence to work independently, use initiative and make sensible decisions
- The ability to remain calm and organised when managing changing priorities or unexpected challenges
- A friendly and professional manner, with good communication skills and a strong sense of customer care
- A commitment to maintaining a safe, well presented and welcoming environment for the whole school community
- Reliability, punctuality, honesty and a willingness to contribute positively to the ongoing development of the school

General responsibilities

- The head of grounds will be expected to undertake any other reasonable duties that fall within the scope and responsibilities of the position, as directed by the business manager.
- This job description outlines the principal duties and responsibilities of the role and is not intended to be exhaustive. It may be reviewed and amended from time to time to reflect the changing needs and priorities of the school
- Support and promote the school's values, ethos and objectives
- Maintain confidentiality at all times
- Comply with safeguarding responsibilities and promote the welfare of children and young people
- Work in accordance with all school policies and procedures, as laid out in the staff handbook

Application

Applications should be made in accordance with the school's application and recruitment procedures (available on the website).

Interview and selection process

If you are invited to interview this will be conducted in person and the areas which it will explore will include suitability to work with children.

Interview outline

- At least one interview with line manager and member of HR team
- Tour of the school with the estates manager / business manager

We are creating an inclusive culture where all forms of diversity are seen and valued – for our pupils, for our staff. A culture that supports the enduring Windlesham House education provided to pupils in our global and multi-cultural environment. Join us now to be a part of it.

Completed applications should be emailed to hr@windlesham.com at latest by midday on Wednesday 25 November. We reserve the right to close this vacancy early if we receive sufficient applications for the role. Therefore, if you are interested, please submit your application as early as possible. To apply, please complete the application form which is available on our website

Important instructions for applicants

- Your application should include a covering letter no more than two A4 pages summarising your suitability for the role with close reference to the role you are applying for
- The application form should be used to detail all relevant qualifications and provide a full, dated career history with explanations of any gaps in employment
- If you have spent three months or more living or working outside the UK, you should tell us the country/ies and the dates of your stay
- Space is provided in the application form to include a supporting statement. You should use this statement to set out clearly why you consider you are suitable and how you meet the criteria listed in the person specification for the post
- The application form asks you to declare all criminal offences, including those that are spent, and any relationship you have to other employees at Windlesham House

Note that any misrepresentation of or failure to declare information that is material to the appointment may invalidate an application, or lead to summary dismissal if the applicant has started in post.

Benefits of employment

- Contributory occupational pension scheme
- Cash health plan currently provided by +Medicash
- Access to an employee assistance programme
- Membership of the school's nine hole golf course at a reduced subscription
- Participation in a 'Cycle to Work' scheme (subject to eligibility)
- Invitation to school productions and concerts throughout the year
- Support for professional development and training
- Free on-site parking (at the owners own risk)

Safeguarding statement

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Applicants must be willing to undergo appropriate child protection screening, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure & Barring Service.



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