



ABINGDON



COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR

ABINGDON

SPORTS &
LEISURE

Competitive Salary
Generous Benefits

Closing Date: 14 October 2025 (midday):

First Round Interview (remote): w/c 20 October 2025

Second Round Interview (in person): w/c 10 November 2025

Job Pack AS06



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ABINGDON

SPORTS &
LEISURE

Message from the Director of Finance & Operations, Justin Hodges

Thank you for your interest in the Abingdon Foundation. I am delighted that you are considering working for us.

Please take some time to look at our website, abingdon.org.uk, as this will tell you a lot about us and give you a taste of the atmosphere here at Abingdon.

Abingdon School Enterprises, through Abingdon Sports and Leisure, manages Abingdon Foundation's sport and leisure facilities (including the Sports Centre, Tilsley Park, the Amey Theatre and Amey Events Centre) and various commercial activities which are an important part of Abingdon Foundation's work.

As well as Abingdon School Enterprises, the Abingdon Foundation is responsible for two schools: Abingdon Prep and Senior Schools which is a community of some 1300 students from the ages of 4 -18. We employ around 400 teachers and support staff across the Foundation. A Board of Governors oversees the whole Abingdon Foundation.



Our Schools occupy large and beautiful campuses. The facilities are excellent with recent significant developments including newly renovated and extended boarding accommodation and a state of the art dining pavilion which is available for booking for conferences and events. We have also recently added to our extensive sport facilities - both at Tilsley Park and on the school campus - these offer some of the best sport resources in the area. The Foundation benefits from a continuous refurbishment and development plan, adding further impressive facilities to a very well-resourced organisation that also prioritises sustainable development. In May 2024, the Abingdon Foundation announced its decision to move to co-education. Girls have already joined our Prep School and from September 2026, our Senior School will welcome girls to our First Year (11+) and Sixth Form (16+) entry points; and to our Third Year (13+) from September 2028.

The School may be over 760 years old but we are a forward-looking, dynamic organisation. There is pride and commitment amongst those who work here and we always look for enthusiastic and committed professionals to join us. I hope that you might see yourself joining our happy and purposeful community of staff.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin Hodges".

Justin Hodges
Director of Finance & Operations

The Role

Abingdon is looking to appoint an **ambitious, driven and commercially successful** individual to be its Commercial Director.

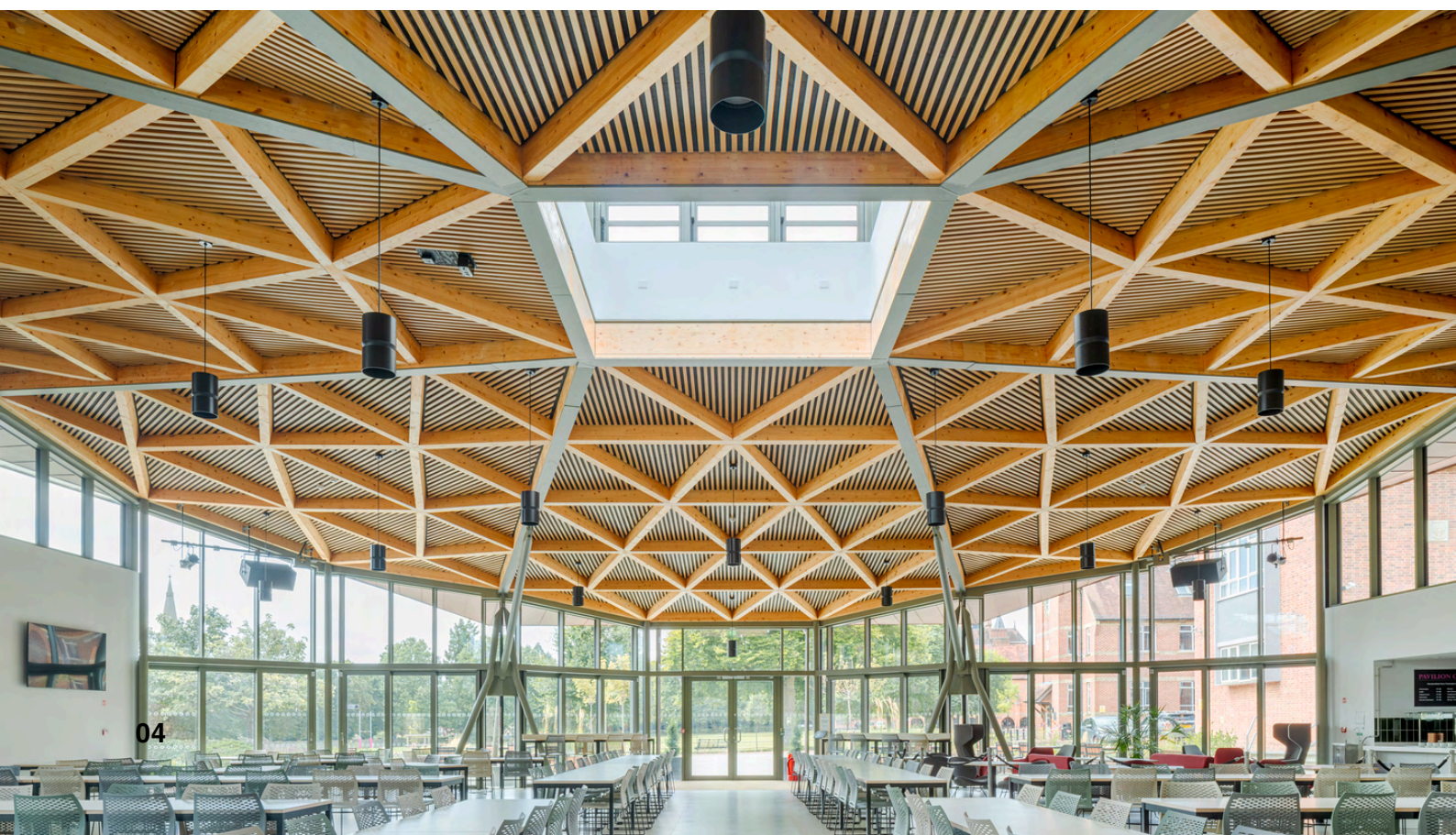
The post holder will take on the leadership of Abingdon's commercial division at a point when we are actively challenging ourselves to think creatively about how to further develop profitable commercial income streams. Having reimagined the scope and ambition of ASE we now believe that the current arrangement (where the role is combined on a part time basis with another part time role) needs to evolve into a full time role for an experienced Commercial Director.

We are therefore looking for someone who wants the opportunity to innovate and shape the agenda, and has the commercial initiative and strategic experience to build on our already successful operations. In many ways the 'low and medium hanging fruit' opportunities have been taken but we now want to go further, and with more ambition, to maximise current activities and also reach for 'higher hanging fruit'.

Doing this in a school environment brings particular challenges and so the successful candidate will need a good understanding of operating commercially within an educational setting. The school environment, however, also brings opportunities and we are keen for our commercial activities to be increasingly integrated and supportive of our educational goals such as our Sports strategy, Brand development, Partnerships work, as well as our Marketing aims including our move to co-education.

The postholder will also be a seasoned and experienced leader of people and operational teams. They will lead a team of people working directly for ASE but will also need to collaborate effectively in a matrix management style with support services teams such as Marketing, Finance, Operations and HR.

This is a senior role, reporting to the Director of Finance and Operations (Bursar), and the postholder will be a Board Director of ASE alongside other members of the board including Governors and the Head. They will need to build effective working relationships with key stakeholders such as the Director of Sport, Head of Boarding and Head of Operations as well as members of the Senior Leadership Team.



Abingdon School Enterprises

Abingdon School Enterprises Limited (trading as Abingdon Sports and Leisure “ASE”) plays a pivotal role in supporting the school both operationally and commercially through the management of the Foundation’s sport and leisure facilities including the Sports Centre, Tilsley Park, and Amey Theatre.

The Sports Centre offers high quality facilities which includes an 8-lane 25m swimming pool, sports hall, studio, two squash courts, two gyms (strength & conditioning and health & wellbeing), spin bike room and climbing wall. Membership packages are available and there is an extensive activity programme which includes exercise classes, swim school, and junior courses. The centre has effective partnerships with Abingdon Vale Swimming Club, Oxfordshire Cricket and SuperCamps.

Tilsley Park is an outdoor facility that offers excellent sports pitches, including a full sized 3G pitch (suitable for football, rugby and American Football), 7v7 3G pitch, three 5v5 3G pitches, two full sized hockey pitches and an athletics track and throws area. It also offers a bar and meeting room.

The Amey Theatre’s commercial bookings operate under ASE and offer a 450 seat theatre with 8x5m screen for live screenings, along with a wide range of meeting spaces. The Pavilion is a new addition to the facility and provides a high quality multi purpose space for hospitality, conferences and events, and is branded and marketed with the Amey Theatre as the Amey Events Centre.

Financially, ASE has grown to be a substantial contributor to the Foundation with a Foundation Contribution in the order of £400k based on external income of £1.3m.



Job Description

Location: Abingdon School

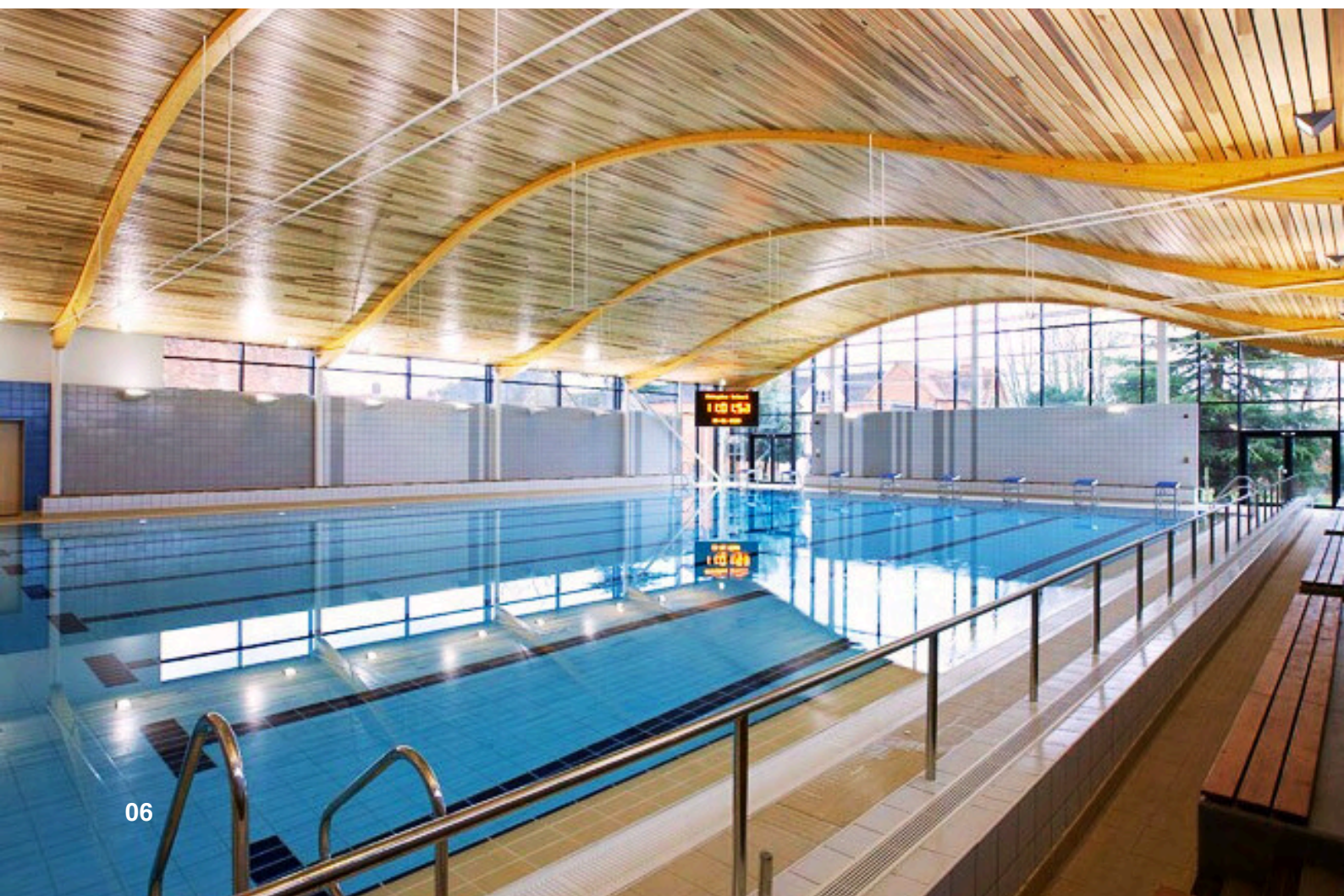
Department: Abingdon School Enterprises (ASE)

Reports to: Director of Finance and Operations

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. Duties will include, but not be limited to:

Strategy and Leadership

- Develop an ambitious and forward-thinking commercial strategy and annual business plan to significantly grow sustainable commercial profits for the Foundation
- Lead and motivate the commercial team to deliver ASE's financial and operational goals within a positive team culture
- Support the integration of the Foundation's commercial activities into School life to help deliver the educational goals of the Foundation
- Prepare and present regular ASE Board reports
- Be ASE's Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Be an active member of the wider Support Heads of Department team



Business Development and Financial Delivery

- Identify and capitalise on new profitable revenue opportunities, partnerships and business models to diversify income streams
- Develop commercial relationships with potential new users, clients and organisations
- Ensure the effective sales and marketing of all commercial activities, including existing activities such as our Sports and Leisure Club and new business areas
- Develop, with the support of the Financial Controller, comprehensive business cases for approval
- Analyse the Foundation's assets and optimise usage and return on investment
- Ensure appropriate pricing and manage costs carefully including effective negotiation with suppliers, service providers and partners to optimise profitability
- Deliver the agreed business plan including financial budgets and operational KPIs with a focus on return on investment and cashflow

Operational Management

- Oversee the delivery of all commercial activities, ensuring outstanding customer experience and that any trade-offs with Abingdon's educational goals are managed effectively
- Ensure that all operational aspects of new business development sales are comprehensively delivered
- Ensure the facilities at the Sports Centre and Tilsley Park are run effectively and efficiently and are well maintained, clean and safe for third party customers as well as the School as the 'internal' client
- Deliver excellent and professional service levels to regularly reported KPIs
- Ensure the successful running of courses, events and holiday camps either internally or with selected third parties
- Work with the Head of Operations and Director of Estates to ensure that all services provided commercially are of a high standard
- Manage and develop ASE staff, including recruitment, retention and training
- Ensure all relevant risk assessments are suitable and observed and that an appropriate risk register for ASE is maintained and regularly reviewed
- Ensure ASE is compliant with all relevant regulatory requirements and Foundation policies



Stakeholder Engagement

- Cultivate and deepen relationships with key customers through structured key account management, negotiating contracts and closing high value agreements
 - Develop community partnerships from a commercial perspective, including local clubs, schools and residents' associations
 - Work closely with the sports department on the day-to-day running of the Sports Centre and Tilsley Park
 - Develop a culture throughout the Foundation to identify opportunities for revenue generation and value creation
 - Collaborate extensively with support services teams across the Foundation such as Marketing, Finance, Operations and HR to promote commercial success
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Health and Safety at Work

All staff working within Abingdon share responsibility for achieving safe working conditions. The postholder must take care of their own health and safety and that of others, observe applicable safety rules and follow instructions for the safe use of equipment. All appointees are required to confirm that they have read and understood the Foundation's Health and Safety Policy. As a manager, the Commercial Director will have additional responsibilities for Health and Safety, including for risk assessments and fire safety.



Person Specification

Essential Qualities

Essential:

- Qualified to degree level or demonstrably equivalent experience
- Relevant commercial experience in a senior role, ideally within education, leisure, sports or hospitality sectors but industry/commerce sector experience likely to be very relevant too
- Entrepreneurial and strategic thinker with the ability to align commercial initiatives with broader organisational goals
- Revenue growth experience and sales capabilities: excellent record in managing diverse income streams and delivering profitable and sustainable financial growth
- Effective, inspiring leadership and team management skills, with the ability to motivate others toward shared goals
- Excellent financial acumen with extensive experience of budgeting, forecasting, cost management and business case development
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, able to engage and influence a broad range of stakeholders
- Highly organised with project management skills and the ability to manage multiple priorities effectively
- A natural collaborator and team player
- A positive, flexible, adaptable and 'can-do' attitude
- Friendly and professional with consistently excellent customer service skills
- Good general IT and administrative skills, including attention to detail and a good standard of written English
- Willingness to attend training as required and an eagerness to learn and improve
- Willing and able to apply for a Personal Licence (alcohol/APLH)
- Displays commitment to the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Displays commitment to the protection and safeguarding of children and young people
- Values and respects the views and needs of children and young people
- Willing to enter the spirit of the Foundation and contribute to its wider life and work

Desirable:

- Relevant professional or post graduate qualifications
- Full driving licence
- Existing knowledge of safeguarding and child protection issues

Further Information

Salary

Competitive according to experience and qualifications.

Hours and weeks of work

This is a full-time role working 40 hours per week. As commercial activities also occur during evenings and weekends, the postholder's hours will inevitably be worked flexibly. The postholder may occasionally be required to work at various Abingdon School locations including the Sports Centre or Tilsley Park.

Weeks of work: All year round, with school holidays likely to be busy

Hours of work: 40 hours per week

Work pattern: Varied but typically 08.30 - 17.00 Monday to Friday. Hours will vary depending on when commercial activities take place (evenings and weekends). Includes a 30 minute unpaid lunch break

Annual Leave allowance of 25 days per year (not including bank holidays). Annual leave is expected to be taken mainly in the term time, as the holiday periods will be busy with commercial activities.

Notes

- After successful completion of a six-month probationary period, the notice period for this role is three months.
- For an informal discussion about the role, please contact Justin Hodges, Director of Finance & Operations. Initial contact should be made via email at recruitment@abingdon.org.uk. Please note this is not part of the selection process.
- First round (remote) interviews will be held week commencing 20 October with final round interviews to be held in person in the week of 10 November.
- For safeguarding reasons, we cannot accept applications by CV. All applicants must complete the standard **Abingdon application form**, attaching a covering letter addressed to Justin Hodges, Director of Finance and Operations setting out your motivation for this role.



Benefits of working at Abingdon

Annual Leave:

You'll get 25 days off paid time off each year, plus bank holidays (pro rata if part time). Depending on your role, we usually expect you to take your holidays during school breaks, but there can be some flexibility if needed.



91% of our staff say the facilities and resources for staff are good (2025 staff survey)



Working from Home (WFH):

We may be able to offer flexible working from home options, depending on the nature of your role. If this applies, during term time, you may be able to work remotely for up to 20% of your hours (usually about one day a week). Outside of term time, this increases to 40% (around two days a week). Unfortunately, not all roles can be carried out from home.



Time Off & Flexibility



Christmas Closure:

Our all year round staff can enjoy extra time off over the festive period. We offer up to four closure days around Christmas/New Year, dates depend on where the bank holidays fall.

Death in Service Benefit:

For your peace of mind, all support staff aged 18-70 are covered by a scheme that pays out three times your annual salary to your loved ones in the event of your death whilst employed.



Private Healthcare:

Permaent employees can benefit from free private health insurance, giving access to excellent medical care (this is a taxable benefit).

School Counsellors and Physios:

Staff can also access the services provided by the School Counsellors and the Physios (terms and conditions apply).



Employee Assistance Programme (EAP):

Life can be tricky, so we provide an Employee Assistance Programme. This offers confidential support and resources for anything from mental health to financial advice, plus a Health Risk Assessment tool to help you stay on top of your well-being.

Sports Centre Membership and Theatre discounts:

Stay active and healthy with free access to the gym and swimming pool at agreed times. You'll also get a discounted membership to the Abingdon Sports and Leisure Club, allowing you to attend exercise classes for free. Staff can also benefit from access to discounted or complementary tickets to a wide range of events at the Amey Theatre.



Health & Wellbeing



Cycle to Work Scheme:

Save money and get fit! We offer a Cycle to Work scheme for eligible staff, helping you buy a bike. Contact us for more information.



Social:

There are regular staff social events and opportunities to join other staff in a range of activities from singing in the choir to playing cricket or football, running in the road relay or even joining in with the staff rock band or the staff panto.

Other Health and Wellbeing Benefits:

Include access to an occupational health provider, free staff 'flu jabs, eye test reimbursement, menopause support and mental health first aiders.



Free Lunch:

Most staff can enjoy a delicious free lunch and refreshments during term time.



Everyday Perks

Free Parking:

We offer free on-site parking and bike storage for all staff (on a first-come, first-served basis).



Staff Development

We offer a range of online and in-person courses to staff for free including first aid, mental health first aid and health and safety courses. Staff completing higher level professional qualifications or CPD may have their courses fully or partly funded.

“ 99% of our staff say they have good working relationships with their immediate colleagues (2025 staff survey) ”

How to Apply

APPLY NOW



To apply, please go to our **Recruitment Portal**.

Please attach a **covering letter** to your application outlining your motivation and suitability for the role. Please do not upload CVs, testimonials or examples of work.

References:

We require at least two satisfactory references, including one from your current/most recent employer. If you've previously worked in a school or with children, one reference must be from the most recent relevant employer where you last worked. If you've been employed by a school, the reference must be from the school's Head. References cannot be from a relative or someone known to you solely as a friend.

For safeguarding reasons, references will be taken up before interview unless you have specifically asked us not to.

Online Checks:

We conduct online searches for all shortlisted candidates to assess their suitability to work with children. Any public information found may be discussed with you at your interview.

Interviews:

Longlisted candidates will have an online video interview before shortlisting.

If shortlisted, you'll be invited to attend an in-person interview/selection day which will include one or more interviews and will also include one or more tasks (e.g a presentation or a written exercise) and a tour of the School. If you are invited for interview, further information will be sent to you with your invitation.

These stages will also assess your suitability for working with children. Your employment history, including any gaps in employment, will be explored at interview.

Pre-Employment Checks:

If you're invited for an interview, you'll undergo essential checks with HR, including:

- DBS enhanced criminal records check and checks of relevant prohibitions and barring;
- Verification of identity, address, right to work in the UK, and
- Qualifications check.

If you've lived or worked overseas for 3+ months in the last 10 years, please bring original copies of any overseas police checks

Conditional Offer & Safeguarding

Any job offer is conditional on successful completion of all required pre-appointment checks, including ID check, DBS check, any required overseas checks, barred list checks, prohibitions from teaching and/or management checks (if applicable), satisfactory references, medical fitness, EYFS declaration (if applicable) and verification of qualifications and right to work in the UK. Staff are also required to read and sign to say they have understood key policies including safeguarding and health and safety.

Warning!

It is an offence to apply for the role if you are barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children. Providing false information is also an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal (if appointed), and possible referral to the police and/or DBS, and/or the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA).

Questions?

Contact our HR Department at 01235 849136 or recruitment@abingdon.org.uk.

We recognise the value of a diverse and inclusive workplace and are committed to equality of opportunity for all staff and job applicants. We aim to ensure that our staffing at all levels and in all roles is diverse and we welcome applications from all backgrounds and all sections of the community.



ABINGDON

Independent day and boarding school
for pupils aged 11 to 18 years

Co-ed from 2026

abingdon.org.uk

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