

Head of Grounds and Gardens

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!



beautifully unique

Our unique school

Somerhill is set in a stunning 400-year-old Jacobean mansion surrounded by 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 School, and The Skinners' School. Some pupils are awarded scholarships at independent schools such as Tonbridge School, Sevenoaks School, Walthamstow Hall and Sutton Valence School 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.

endless opportunities

'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.*

Our school values



pastorally focussed



Head of Grounds and Gardens

The package

Salary: £35,000-£38,000 (depending on experience)

Generous benefits package including:

- Annual leave of 25 days plus bank holidays
- Pension scheme
- Group Life Insurance
- Income Protection
- Use of swimming pool and facilities at dedicated times
- Lunch provided free of charge during term time

Employment status: Full time (starting at 7.30am in the morning with no set hours of work. In order to support the school's sports demands, there will be an element of weekend work including Saturdays (most Saturdays during the summer term as well as some Saturdays in the Michaelmas term).

Reporting to: Estates Manager

Required from: February/March 2026

Application closing date: 29th January 2026

Interview date: 4th February 2026

Applications should be submitted using the official [application form](#).

we grow amazing people

Job description: Head of Grounds and Gardens

We are seeking an experienced, motivated individual to lead our Grounds and Gardens Team. Reporting to the Estates Manager, you will be responsible for overseeing all aspects of maintaining and improving the external environments of our facilities.

The successful candidate will have experience in grounds maintenance and the ability to manage a team that conduct a variety of grounds activities that include, but are not limited to: chain sawing, chemical spraying, larger area mowing, formal lawn mowing, tree planting, fence building, car parking and waste management.

The Grounds and Gardens Team oversee the maintenance and preparation of all sports pitches across the school's 150-acre site, including artificial sports surfaces (astroturfs), the athletics track, multi-use sports pitches and tennis court surfaces. The candidate will have an appropriate qualification or experience in grounds maintenance, ideally with a broad knowledge of sports turf/ground management practices.

A warm, approachable and engaging manner, with the confidence to build relationships with colleagues, pupils and their families is essential.

Main duties

General:

- Support the Estates Manager in ensuring that legal and safety requirements with regard to the department are maintained.
- To be responsible, through the Head of Premises, for the day-to-day maintenance of the school's grounds and gardens.
- To be responsible for the line management of the Grounds and Gardens team and allocate tasks to all members of the department.

- To act as point of contact for grounds related preparations for events including on weekends
- To liaise with contractors and request estimates, as required.
- To manage works to support capital schemes, including grounds improvement works, resurfacing of artificial surfaces and ancillary projects.
- To be responsible for the procurement of departmental equipment and machinery, and ensuring that good value is obtained, as authorised by the Estates Manager.

Grounds and gardens:

- To liaise with the Director of Sport and Head of Girls Games to support the weekly programme of sport and fixtures.
- To care for and maintain sports pitches and surfaces through the effective management of the Grounds and Gardens Team.
- To advise on the operational and ecological management of the school's grounds.
- To liaise extensively with colleagues and Heads of Departments in the use of the grounds, including external organisations.
- To manage all the school grounds in a sustainable and ecologically sensitive manner.
- To support the team in daily car parking duties.

Health and safety:

- To manage Health and Safety, COSHH, risk assessments and 'Safe Systems of Work' for the department, in liaison with the Bursary Department.
- To attend and contribute to the school's Health and Safety committee, as requested by the Estates Manager.
- To develop a training and development plan for the team, including the motivation of all staff in the department.
- To maintain all equipment in a serviceable condition so that it is ready for use and when required.

General management:

- To motivate the team and ensure a cohesive team is built.
- To set an example by producing work of excellent standard and holding the team to the same standard.
- To conduct regular appraisals with the team and manage staff performance, supported by the Bursar and HR.
- To work with HR in managing staff attendance, absences and training requirements as well as staff recruitment.

Confidentiality:

- The successful candidate must maintain the confidentiality of information regarding the school, its staff and its business. Information must not be communicated to other persons either in or outside the school except in the recognised course of their duties.

Child protection:

- The post-holder's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young persons for who he or she is responsible, or with whom he or she comes into contact will be to adhere to and always ensure compliance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protections Policy. If in the course of carrying out the duties of the post the post-holder becomes aware of any actual or potential risks to the safety or welfare of children in the school he or she must report their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or to the Head.

Other professional requirements:

- To always operate within the stated policies and practices of the school.
- To establish effective working relationships and set a good example through their presentation and personal and professional conduct.
- To cooperate with other staff to ensure a sharing and effective usage of resources to the benefit of the school and pupils.

- To contribute to the corporate life of the school through effective participation in meetings and management systems necessary to coordinate the management of the school.
- To look for continuous improvement opportunities when it comes to process, systems and policies.
- To create productive working relationships at all levels.
- To show high levels of discretion and confidentiality and awareness of data protection requirements.
- To take responsibility for own professional development and duties in relation to school policies and practices.
- To liaise effectively with staff, parents and governors.
- To undertake any other duties and work hours as may be reasonably required by the Estates Manager or Bursar.

Skills and qualifications

Person specification	Essential	Desirable
GCSE passes in Maths and English		*
Level 1 Cricket Pitches Spring Preparation and Summer Maintenance		*
Level 1 Cricket Pitches Autumn Renovation and Winter Maintenance		*
Level 2 Cricket Pitches Applied Turf Culture		*
Level 3 Cricket Pitches Advanced Turf Culture		*

Person specification	Essential	Desirable
Spraying Licenses PA 1,2 and 6		✳
Work or training as a groundsman in a school or sports ground setting	✳	
Experience of working with a line marking machine		✳
Work as a gardener		✳
Full UK driving license	✳	
Practical and logical approach to tasks	✳	
Physically fit to meet the demands and nature of the manual work	✳	
Ability to work to verbal instruction and requirements, with care, accuracy and attention to detail.	✳	
Positive attitude, flexible	✳	
Able to work independently and as part of a team, willing to help others whenever necessary	✳	

Employee Benefits



Support

Professional support through regular appraisals and CPD opportunities



Pension

Generous defined pension contribution scheme



Salary

Competitive salary package, regularly benchmarked



Reward

Staff recognition and reward opportunities



Cover

Group life assurance



Well-being

A range of well-being activities including fitness classes, tennis and book club. Free access to all on-site sports facilities on dedicated days



Lunch

Free hot lunches, salad bar and refreshments during term time

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 for further information: www.somerhill.org.

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.

Safer recruitment and 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 the 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 of 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 at recruitment@somerhill.org for any general queries.





SOMERHILL

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

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