

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	In-House Counsel
Department	Bursary
Function	Legal
Reports to (Job Title)	Chief Operating Officer
Location	Flexible (minimum 1 day per week in Rugby. Some UK travel may be required)

JOB PURPOSE

The In-House Counsel is a senior professional role focused on providing pragmatic, proportionate and commercially sound legal support across the Rugby School Group.

Reporting to the Group Chief Operating Officer, the postholder will act as the Group's primary internal legal adviser, responding to legal queries across the UK Group and coordinating with external legal advisers where specialist input is required. The role is not intended to replace external counsel, but to ensure that when required, the Group's solicitors are well-briefed, and that advice is appropriately scoped, cost-effective and aligned with the Group's strategic and educational objectives.

The postholder will provide oversight of key legal and compliance areas including parent terms and conditions, contracts (noting that external advice will often be required on commercial contracts and agreements), data protection, and corporate governance, while supporting schools and central functions in managing legal risk in a practical and solutions-focused way. If they do not already have it, the postholder would grow an expertise in education related matters such as compliance with the Equality Act.

Success in the role will be reflected in clear, timely and proportionate legal guidance; well-managed compliance frameworks; more efficient use of external advisers; and senior leaders and Governors who feel supported in navigating legal and regulatory issues with confidence.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES/ACCOUNTABILITIES:

1. Legal Advisory Support

- Respond to legal queries from across the Group, drawing on external legal advisers where necessary. Areas of enquiry may include, but are not limited to, employment, property, education, regulatory and commercial law. (*Note, while the post-holder will support Rugby School Global, they would not be expected to give advice on international law and/or to partner schools*).
- Provide clear, pragmatic and risk-aware advice to senior leaders across the Group, recognising when matters require escalation or specialist external input.
- Maintain effective relationships with the Group's external solicitors, ensuring instructions are well-structured and that advice received is translated into practical guidance for schools and central teams.
- Provide legal guidance where required in relation to safeguarding, pupil welfare and regulatory matters, working closely with the Director of Safeguarding, Designated Safeguarding Leads and external advisers where appropriate.

- Support schools and central teams in managing complex or sensitive investigations, including staff disciplinary matters, serious complaints, accidents or other incidents where legal risk may arise. This may include advising on process, evidential issues and documentation, and liaising with external advisers where appropriate.
- Support Governors and senior leaders in understanding legal risks, implications and options, including preparing papers and briefings where required.
- Proactively horizon-scan for legislative and regulatory changes likely to impact the Group and advise on appropriate mitigation or implementation steps.
- Provide briefing, training and/or internal workshops on legal and compliance issues for staff, senior leaders and Governors as appropriate.

2. Data Protection and Regulatory Compliance

- Act as the Group's GDPR compliance lead, working in partnership with external advisers where required.
- Maintain oversight of data protection policies, procedures, training and compliance monitoring across the Group.
- Advise on data breaches, subject access requests and data sharing arrangements, ensuring proportionate and timely responses.
- Oversee compliance with Modern Slavery legislation, including policy development, annual statements and supply chain awareness.
- Support broader regulatory compliance across the Group.

3. Contracts and Commercial Matters

- Draft and periodically review parent contracts for all schools within the UK Group, ensuring consistency, clarity and legal robustness. Ensure that appropriate colleagues are aware of any changes to the parent contract.
- Support the COO on negotiation and drafting of terms on any further UK mergers, and support due diligence process of any such mergers.
- Support Rugby School Global with contract negotiation and review, drawing appropriately on specialist external legal expertise and ensuring compliance with agreed contractual terms.
- Advise on commercial contracts across the Group, including supplier agreements, partnership arrangements and property-related documentation.
- Ensure that the Group's trademarks and associated intellectual property are appropriately registered, monitored and protected internationally, working with specialist advisers as required.

4. Complaints, Disputes and Risk Management

- Oversee the Stage 3 complaint processes across the UK schools, ensuring procedural compliance, fairness and appropriate documentation.
- Support schools in managing complex or sensitive disputes, including pre-litigation matters, liaising with external advisers where required.
- Coordinate the Group's response to litigation or formal legal proceedings where they arise, managing external advisers and ensuring appropriate reporting to senior leadership and Governors.
- Provide guidance on risk management and mitigation strategies in relation to contentious matters.

- Support the Finance Department with legal aspects of credit control, including enforcement action where appropriate (for example, securing charges over property in respect of fee arrears).

5. Corporate Governance and Statutory Compliance

- Support the COO / Clerk to Governors in maintaining effective governance frameworks across the Group, including charity law compliance, conflicts of interest, governance documentation and subsidiary company structures.

6. Policy Development and Organisational Support

- Draft and review policies for schools across the Group as agreed from time to time with the COO, ensuring legal compliance while maintaining clarity and usability.
- Support the COO on ad hoc projects requiring legal input, including structural, commercial or governance initiatives.
- Contribute to maintaining a proportionate, risk-aware culture that balances compliance with the Group's educational mission.

7. General Responsibilities

- Attend senior leadership meetings and, where appropriate, Governing Body meetings to provide legal insight and advice.
- Maintain appropriate professional standards and continuing competence in relevant areas of law.
- Undertake other duties appropriate to the seniority of the role, as reasonably requested by the COO.

SAFEGUARDING

- All staff, contractors, volunteers have a responsibility and duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. Staff must be aware of the systems within the School which support safeguarding and must act in accordance with the School's Safeguarding & Child Protection policy and Code of Conduct. Staff will receive appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated.

RELATIONSHIPS

Internal	Chief Operating Officer, Senior Leadership Team, Governors, Director of Safeguarding,
External	Legal Advisors, Relevant Compliance bodies

ORGANISATIONAL CHART



PERSON SPECIFICATION

	Essential	Desirable	Method of assessment
Qualifications	<p>Qualified solicitor in England registered with the SRA.</p> <p>Educated to degree level</p>	<p>5 years + post-qualified experience.</p>	<p>Production of the Applicant's certificates.</p> <p>Discussion at interview.</p> <p>Independent verification of qualifications.</p>
Experience	<p>Experience in recognised law firm or in-house legal team</p> <p>Broad exposure to a relevant area of law; and willingness to develop knowledge of areas where expertise is less strong.</p> <p>Experience of advising senior stakeholders.</p>	<p>Experience of advising school, university or charity clients</p> <p>Experience of advising on matters relating to education (such as SEND and reasonable adjustments).</p> <p>Understanding of GDPR.</p>	<p>Contents of the application form.</p> <p>Interview.</p> <p>Professional references.</p>
Skills	<p>Ability to provide clear, pragmatic and proportionate legal advice.</p> <p>Strong drafting skills, including contract and policy documentation.</p> <p>Sound judgement and ability to balance legal risk with operational realities.</p> <p>Excellent communication skills, both written and oral.</p> <p>Confident to work in an environment where they</p>		<p>Contents of the application form.</p> <p>Interview.</p> <p>Professional references.</p>

	will be the recognised “in house expert”.		
Personal competencies and qualities	<p>High levels of integrity, discretion and professional judgement.</p> <p>Ability to recognise when external support will be required.</p> <p>Calm and measured approach to sensitive or contentious matters.</p> <p>Ability to work independently while maintaining strong collaborative relationships.</p> <p>Excellent interpersonal skills, with the credibility and emotional intelligence to challenge constructively and build trust</p> <p>Strong judgement, resilience and discretion, with the confidence to operate in ambiguity.</p>		<p>Contents of the application form.</p> <p>Interview.</p> <p>Professional references.</p>