

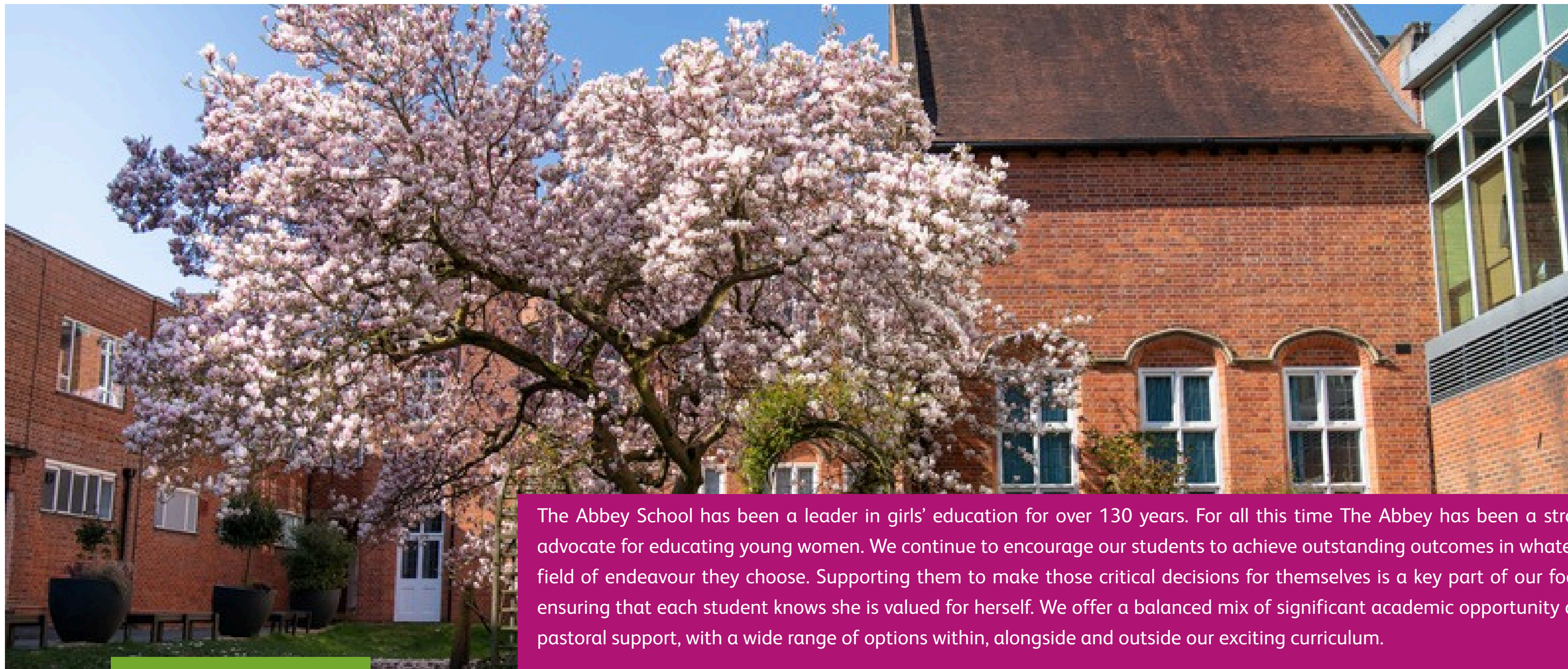


The Abbey



Head of HR





Introduction

The Abbey School has been a leader in girls' education for over 130 years. For all this time The Abbey has been a strong advocate for educating young women. We continue to encourage our students to achieve outstanding outcomes in whatever field of endeavour they choose. Supporting them to make those critical decisions for themselves is a key part of our focus, ensuring that each student knows she is valued for herself. We offer a balanced mix of significant academic opportunity and pastoral support, with a wide range of options within, alongside and outside our exciting curriculum.

The Head of Human Resources is responsible for leading the strategic and operational delivery of Human Resources across The Abbey School. The postholder will develop and implement an HR strategy that supports the School's vision, values and strategic priorities, ensuring that The Abbey attracts, develops and retains outstanding staff. We are looking for a Head of HR to join our wonderful Abbey community in September 2026.





Welcome from the Head

The Abbey is a remarkable all-girls community of learning and brilliant experiences. It is a place of curiosity, adventurous spirits, and the excitement of discovery. We focus on individual care and attention in a warmly supportive atmosphere, full of fun and laughter. Our students have the assurance to take risks, explore interests and passions, and engage generously with the world and with each other.

Our results are outstanding, but what matters to us is how students achieve them. Our goal is to equip girls to achieve academic excellence with confidence, purpose and joy. This means providing exceptional opportunities across the widest spectrum of learning and activities. We offer more student-led learning and choice in our curriculum than almost any other school, so that students take charge of their own futures and mature into the people they mean to be.

What's special about The Abbey is the atmosphere. We're a diverse, down-to-earth community full of enthusiasm, spark and energy. We have played a leading role in all-girls education for over 130 years. During that we've adapted and innovated and that is true now more than ever. In today's world, all-girls education matters: it helps our students face the future on their own terms, ready to make the world a better place for themselves and the communities around them.

I look forward to receiving your application to join The Abbey as a valued member of our community.

Dr Sarah Tullis





Who we are

The Abbey School is one of the country's leading independent girls' schools from 3-18. We provide an outstanding real-world education for girls that equips them to live with confidence, purpose and joy.

The Abbey's vision is to remain academically selective, committed to girls' education and to excellence in pastoral support. We strongly believe that every girl matters. Our values are courage, honesty and kindness. We champion them and are guided by them every day.

What we do

Academic excellence

Our innovative and imaginative curriculum encourages academic excellence, grades that open doors, and positive attitudes that change lives. We create a learning environment that encourages curiosity, full of excitement and fun. Our curriculum from Early Years to Sixth Form has been developed to ensure our students learn with purpose, lead with confidence and live with joy.

Our unique curriculum has been heavily influenced by our experience as a world-leading IB Centre. At the Junior School we have adapted the approach of the Primary Years Programme alongside an expanded offer - Human Intelligence - that emphasises academic achievement, preparing our girls for a range of future choices. Our Little Knellies' experience is all about joy, ensuring that our youngest students love discovery, build confidence in learning and are ready to cope easily with their entry to the Reception class.

At the Senior school we offer a full, rich curriculum across all stages. We provide as much choice as possible into the Lower School, with a wide range of languages available including Latin, Greek and Mandarin, expertly taught exposure to three sciences, mathematics, and all the humanities. We are in the process of developing a Sixth Form curriculum that provides the maximum range of subjects and experience to the most able of our students, whilst ensuring that each one is supported to gain whatever advanced qualifications they need for their destination of choice. We place great importance on understanding each student as an individual and supporting her to make great decisions about her own future.





We are proud of our outstanding examination results at GCSE and A Level. The breadth of the education experience and the excellent results open up wonderful opportunities and destinations for our students. Abbey leavers gain places at many of the most prestigious courses and universities in the UK (including several to Oxbridge each year) and overseas. Apprenticeships in leading companies are popular with Abbey leavers and many choose to broaden their experiences by taking a gap year.

Putting girls first

There are so many advantages to an all-girls education, some of them more important than ever. The Abbey supports girls to live life on their own terms. Our students across all ages know that their voices matter and will be heard. They articulate their thoughts, their understanding and their ideas with confidence and clarity. They challenge others, including one another, to resist easy answers and lazy thinking. We know that girls choose their own paths more freely and are more likely to take risks and innovate in all-girls settings. At The Abbey girls choose whatever they want, and are supported to fulfil their potential. There's just more room to breathe and to live with freedom. With this freedom comes success with enthusiasm, authenticity and active participation.

Real-world learning

We are proud of our diverse and down-to-earth students, who are full of city spirit and energy, who engage with the communities around them and who are ready to take on the world.

Our community partnership ARCH provides the framework for an enormous range of activities and events, all of which are designed to engage our own students alongside students from other schools, independent and maintained, girls, boys and co-ed. The subject areas explored have been challenging and inspiring, including the criminal justice system, engineering and entrepreneurship.





Every individual valued

The relationships we build with our families is vital to our students' success. These relationships help us to ensure that we know, and appreciate, each one of our students, their strengths, their interests and their potential. Working with families to ensure that every student is known and appreciated for who they are. We know that our students participate and succeed in life beyond the Abbey and the school day, we acknowledge and celebrate all these achievements. Form teachers, tutors, indeed all staff, whatever their role, play their part in getting to know every student as the wonderful individual they are. We aim continually for the highest standards in pastoral care so that every young person feels cherished, supported and empowered to look after themselves and each other.

At the Abbey there is an amazing team standing behind every single student. Support starts with the form teacher at the Junior School and the form Tutor at the Senior School, they see their student every day in small groups and help them navigate everyday successes and challenges. The wider team of staff trained in offering support, from the Listening Ear service at Junior School to first aid and medical support, from the nursing and wellbeing team at Senior School to the heads of year, directors, assistant and deputy heads with specific responsibilities for student wellbeing and progress all work together to ensure no young person slips below the radar, and every student can feel confident and valued as an important person in our Abbey community. This value and appreciation is supported by the house system, which offers the opportunity for students to get to know students across and beyond year groups in whole new ways as they collaborate in projects and take part in activities. From House Music and Drama to Charity Fundraising, a variety of skills, passions and entrepreneurial flair are encouraged and celebrated. Much of our co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, from sport to public speaking, to cookery, to poetry, to chess, take place in the context of our House system.

Passion, opportunity and joy

We talk a lot about passion at The Abbey; passion for ideas, passion for new approaches, passion for issues. To that end we offer an array of experiences allowing students to surprise themselves, develop leadership and discover what they love.

Our music provision is excellent, with friendly and dedicated staff offering academic music for all as well as a lively programme of weekly performances and recitals. Our peripatetic staff are fully engaged in the musical life of the school, and we offer individual tuition in over 15 instruments, from harp to rock guitar. Our newly commissioned music tech suite has enabled innovations in recording and presentations, from podcasts to short films.



Location, estates and facilities

The Abbey's town centre location places us at the heart of a thriving, busy and diverse community, whilst our extensive coach network helps us provide accessibility from locations across Oxfordshire and Berkshire for both Junior and Senior girls.

As one of the most vibrant towns in the UK, with a focus on technology and innovation industries, Reading offers wonderful opportunities, from the glories of the Chilterns and the Thames, and beautiful parks, to outstanding shopping and a constantly evolving cultural and restaurant scene.



Whilst we embrace the benefits of being a town centre school, with a solid urban vibe, we have excellent sporting facilities, with astros, tennis courts, netball courts, a large gymnasium, and an impressive fitness suite. These facilities are supplemented by partnerships with Reading University, Reading Rowing club at the Redgrave Pinsent rowing lake, and other excellent local facilities. We were delighted to host the national GSA event of Girls go Gold in September 2023. Governors have made a substantial investment in the estate over the past few years.

Our Junior School has been extended and remodelled, with imaginative new spaces to enable girls to go way beyond a conventional curriculum, the recent refurbishment of Knell House provides a welcoming and age-appropriate setting for Little Knellies nursery. The buildings sit in the Christchurch Conservation area, five minutes up the hill from the Senior School. Our heated indoor pool, complete with diving boards, is in the heart of our Senior School building and all girls, including the very youngest, have timetabled swimming and other water activities.

All our classrooms are well equipped to support effective teaching and learning, including IT resources to support the school's one to one digital device policy.





We opened a new Sixth Form Centre in September 2023, providing dedicated spaces for eating, relaxing, and intensive individual and small group work. Our current Sixth Form of around 200 girls love the opportunities it provides for collaborative working alongside concentrated quiet study and learning. The Sixth Form Centre development is part of an exciting strategic estate masterplan.



Role description

The Head of Human Resources is responsible for leading the strategic and operational delivery of Human Resources across The Abbey School. The postholder will develop and implement an HR strategy that supports the School's vision, values and strategic priorities, ensuring that The Abbey attracts, develops and retains outstanding staff.

Reporting to the Head of Finance & Resources, the Head of Human Resources provides expert advice and guidance to the Head, Governors and senior leaders on all aspects of employment, organisational development and workforce planning. The postholder will ensure that HR policies, procedures and practices are legally compliant, reflect best practice and meet the requirements of the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) and other relevant regulatory bodies.

The Head of Human Resources is a member of the Whole School Leadership Committee and leads the Human Resources Department, providing professional leadership to the HR team while fostering a positive, inclusive and high-performing staff culture.

Whilst the Head has overall responsibility for all employees of the School, day-to-day management is delegated through Heads of Department and line managers. The Head of Human Resources supports leaders across the School in fulfilling their people management responsibilities effectively and consistently.

As a member of Senior Leadership the postholder will also contribute to wider aspects of the promotion of The Abbey School, including participation and support of Marketing and Admissions activities.

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Key Responsibilities

- Develop and deliver the School's People Strategy, aligning workforce planning with the School's strategic objectives.
- Contribute as a member of the Whole School Leadership Team, providing strategic HR advice and promoting a culture that reflects the School's values.
- Lead organisational development and change programmes, ensuring effective communication, consultation and implementation.
- Oversee the full employee lifecycle, including recruitment, onboarding, performance management, employee relations and retention.
- Ensure recruitment and employment practices comply with safeguarding requirements, Safer Recruitment guidance, employment legislation, ISI regulations, DBS requirements and the maintenance of the Single Central Register.
- Lead on complex employee relations matters, providing expert advice and managing investigations where required. Such matters include: disciplinary procedures, grievances, performance and capability, sickness absence, restructures and redundancies, mediation and conflict resolution.
- Develop and maintain HR policies, procedures and systems, ensuring legal compliance and sector best practice.
- Promote employee engagement, wellbeing, equality, diversity and inclusion, fostering a positive and high-performing culture.
- Lead, develop and manage the Human Resources team, ensuring a professional, responsive and customer-focused service.
- Manage the HR budget.
- Use technology and data to improve operational efficiency, reporting and service delivery.



Person Specification

Qualifications and Experience

Essential

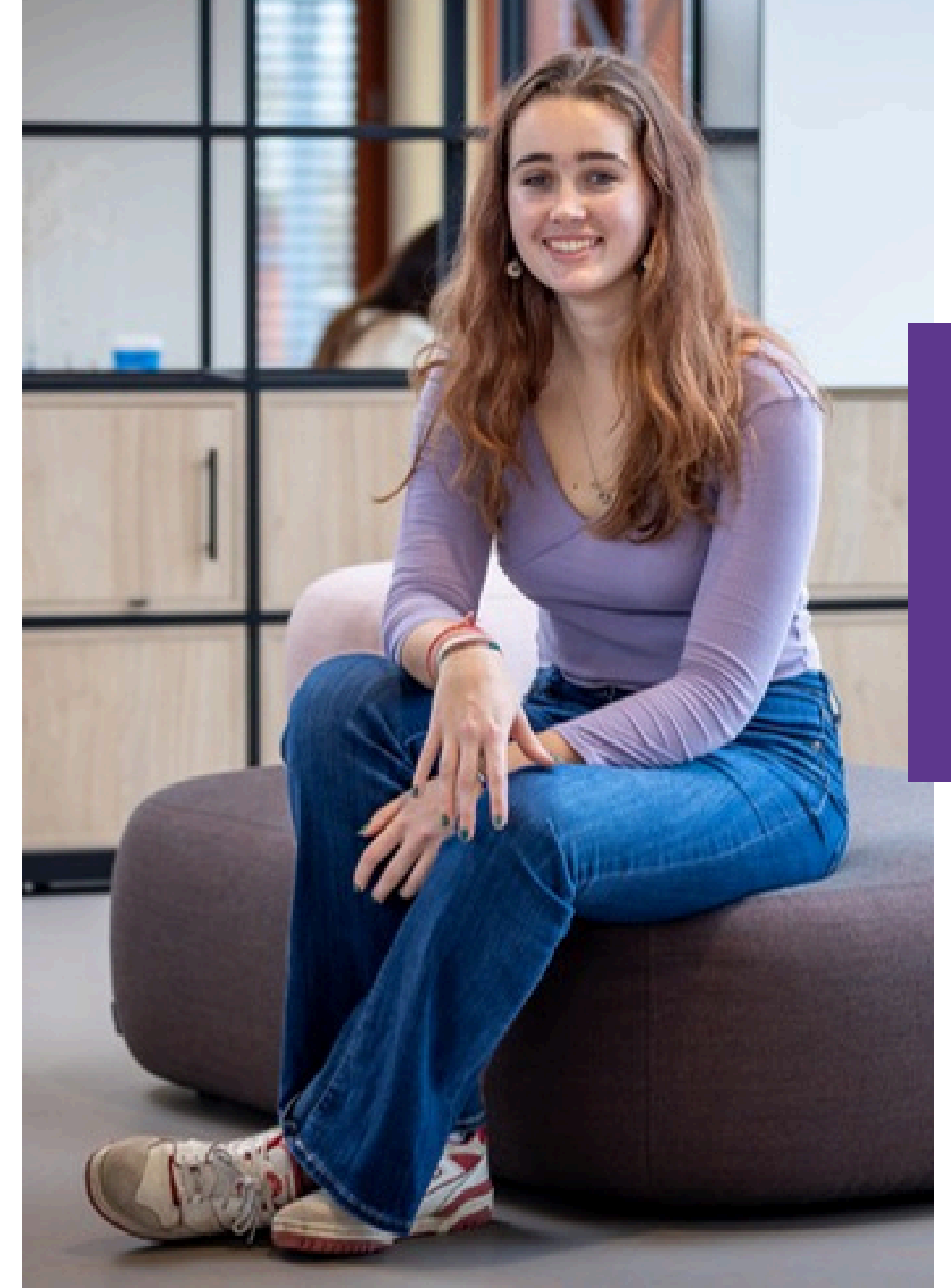
- Degree or equivalent professional qualification.
- Chartered Member or Chartered Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) (or working towards).
- Significant senior HR leadership experience.
- Experience of advising senior leaders on complex employee relations matters.
- Experience of developing HR strategy and leading organisational change.
- Experience of managing recruitment, workforce planning and performance management.
- Experience of interpreting and applying employment legislation.
- Experience of leading and developing HR teams.

Desirable

- Postgraduate qualification in Human Resources, Employment Law or a related discipline.
- Experience within the education sector or another regulated environment.
- Experience of independent schools.

Personal Specifications

- Outstanding interpersonal, influencing and communication skills.
- High levels of integrity, discretion and professionalism with the ability to build trusted relationships at all levels.
- Excellent organisational and project management skills.
- Strong analytical and problem-solving ability.
- Excellent attention to detail.
- Confident decision-maker with sound judgement.
- Strong digital literacy and commitment to using technology to improve services.
- Resilient, adaptable and able to manage competing priorities.
- A genuine commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- A collaborative and approachable leadership style.
- Professional credibility and emotional intelligence.
- A commitment to The Abbey's values of Kindness, Courage and Honesty, and to its mission of equipping every student to live with confidence, purpose and joy.



Terms of appointment

An excellent remuneration package commensurate with the importance of the role and the experience of the successful candidate will be offered.

This role is permanent, full time position starting at The Abbey in September 2026.

All eligible, non-teaching employees will be automatically enrolled into the non-contributory Group Pension Scheme, run by ReAssure after 3 months employment with the school. The School contributes 8.35% of the monthly salary into the pension scheme.

Appointment process and how to apply

Applicants should complete [The Abbey's Application Form](#) which fully addresses the competencies as described in the job description and person specification and outlines their interest in The Abbey.

The Abbey is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The successful candidate must be willing to undergo an enhanced disclosure through the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Protecting your personal data is of the utmost importance to The Abbey and we take this responsibility very seriously. The information that you provide on this form will be used to process your application for employment. The personal information that you provide will be stored and used in a confidential manner to assist our recruitment process. More details as to how we will process your data is set out in the Recruitment Privacy Notice and Data Protection policy.

If you succeed in your application and take up employment with The Abbey, the information will be used in the administration of your employment.

We may check the information provided by you on this form with third parties.



Abbey Life & Benefits



The Abbey



3 Course Meal
Dining



Electric Vehicle
Leasing Scheme



Free Parking



Cycle to Work
Scheme



Sports Facilities



Employee Assistant
Programme (EAP)



Pension



Income Protection



Family Friendly
Policies



Concessions &
Discounts



Private
Healthcare
Scheme



Interest Free
Ticket Loan



Professional
Development



Staff Accommodation
(subject to availability)



IT equipment &
Resources



Key dates

