



Downe House



CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK

HEAD GROUNDSPERSON





## Message from the Headmistress

Thank you for the interest you have shown in joining Downe House. I hope this information pack provides a clear overview of the position and of what it is like to work at our School. If you have any queries, please do get in touch - we are always happy to help. I would also recommend visiting our website, where you will find a wealth of information about us.

Downe House is a very special place, where we work together with a shared purpose: to support our pupils in reaching their full potential. There is a strong sense of community here, and every member of staff, whatever their role, plays an important part in our success.

We seek to recruit the very best staff at Downe House, and I could not be more proud of our dedicated team. Our expectations are high, but in return we offer a supportive and friendly working environment, generous benefits, extensive CPD opportunities, and the chance to make a real difference.

I hope you will feel encouraged to apply, and we look forward to hearing from you.

With all good wishes

EMMA MCKENDRICK

# About Downe House

Downe House is a leading UK independent day and boarding school for girls aged 11 – 18. Downe has long enjoyed a reputation for delivering a world-class education, focused on outstanding academic and extracurricular provision, and pastoral excellence.

Downe House was founded in 1907 by Olive Willis, who held a strong belief that a school should meet the needs of young women by prizing the individual and creating a strong community. With over 550 pupils, today's Downe House lives out the message that "each individual matters", alongside its Christian foundation and core values of kindness and respect for others. A Downe education sets out to inspire our pupils to succeed – and to prepare them to become inspiring role models as citizens of a global community.

Our immersive education gives girls both the freedom and support to develop their talents and interests. Inspirational teaching, enriching co-curricular opportunities and personalised curricula bring out the best in each girl, with holistic pastoral support. The lifelong friendships formed here create an unrivalled network of talented alumnae helping each other succeed beyond Downe House.

The School has an established reputation for academic excellence as well as outstanding pastoral care. We offer a flexible approach to suit the individual needs of our families, and girls have the choice of joining us as full boarders, flexi boarders or day pupils. Many of the girls are boarders, and they live in one of the ten on-site boarding houses. The emphasis is very much on creating a "home from home" environment, and each house is staffed by a committed and caring team – some of whom are residential. Our ethos is to put families at the heart of our education, from creating the right balance between family time, to working in partnership with parents to ensure every girl gets the most out of school life.

Our international focus reflects our commitment and ambition to share our education management expertise on a global scale and to provide opportunities for staff and young people all over the world. Academic staff have the opportunity to participate in a global teacher exchange programme with our partner school in Australia. Selected pupils can also participate in our Global Schools Exchange or Global Internships programmes. We are committed to creating a diverse and global community within our founding School in Berkshire, alongside our international Schools in Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



# Working for us

Downe House employs over 450 staff across a wide range of roles, including teachers, administrators, accountants, technicians, school nurses, housekeepers, matrons, and chefs. Working here means joining a welcoming, ambitious, and forward-thinking community where every member of staff is valued for the part they play in shaping the lives of our pupils. As a leading UK independent school with a proud heritage and a modern outlook, we strive to create an environment where students and staff alike can thrive. Colleagues describe Downe House as a place of genuine collaboration, where professional expertise is respected, and development is encouraged at every stage of your career.

Staff benefit from exceptional facilities, a beautiful campus, and strong investment in wellbeing and training. Whether your role is in teaching, pastoral care, administration, or support services, you will be supported by a highly professional team and offered many opportunities to get involved in all aspects of school life. Our culture is shaped by kindness, inclusivity, and a shared belief in the value of holistic education.

At Downe House, you will make a meaningful difference each day, enjoy a vibrant workplace, and contribute to an institution that strives for excellence while remaining grounded in community. We welcome talented, caring, and enthusiastic individuals who want to grow with us and help our pupils flourish.

## Inspiring people



# The position

## Head Groundsperson

**START DATE:** Immediate

**REPORTING TO:** Head of Maintenance and Facilities

**CONTRACT TYPE:** Permanent

**HOURS:** 40 hours per week

**SALARY:** £40,000 - £47,000,  
depending on experience

### JOB PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

We are looking to appoint a skilled Head Groundsperson to ensure that the school landscape and manicured areas look attractive, welcoming and well-kept at all times.

As Head Groundsperson you will guide the Grounds Team and interact with other line managers, working collaboratively with colleagues as part of a professional team. Duties include maintaining, conserving and enhancing the prestigious grounds and sports facilities as directed by the Head of Maintenance and Facilities.

You will demonstrate an understanding of health and safety and actively promote a positive culture towards it throughout your role.

This is a practical role which will involve outside work on the grounds, safe operation and adjustment to a wide range of equipment and use of machinery and equipment and delegating work to a small team or to contractors on occasions.

### DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

As a leading independent boarding school, we take pride in everything that we do. We are fortunate that our pupils can live and learn in modern, beautiful and natural

surroundings. The Estates Department play a vital role in maintaining our impressive site and ensuring that all the facilities are safe, compliant and in good working order.

Our Estates Team, comprise of 20 staff, including 2 residential and 2 afternoon / evening caretakers, maintenance operatives and groundskeepers. The team carry out the maintenance across our large estate and a range of facilities including classrooms, boarding houses, staff residential accommodation, sports facilities and indoor swimming pool.



## MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Supervise a team of Groundsmen under direction of the Head of Maintenance and Facilities. This may include involvement in occasional weekend events throughout the year.
- Assist in the development of seasonal and weather dependent schedules of work including snow clearance, salting paths and roads and provision of the sports surfaces as necessary including the erection and dismantling of sports equipment.
- Actively promote, implement and monitor the Department's health and safety systems and ensure the Department's activities are compliant in accordance with the School's Health and Safety Policy and assisting the Head of Maintenance and Facilities with Health and Safety documentation for the Department.
- Maintain the grounds maintenance, vehicles and equipment to a high standard.
- Estimating materials and supplies for the proper function of the Grounds Department and keeping stocks of supplies and materials.
- Be responsible for the Grounds Department buildings and premises as directed by the Head of Maintenance and Facilities.
- Ensure that the Grounds Department buildings and premises are kept in a safe and secure manner.
- Liaise with the Head of Maintenance and Facilities to ensure best use of the staff resources.
- Be able to work additional hours outside of your core working hours, particularly in the summer term, for the provision of the sports facilities and special events. These additional hours are included as part of your salary.
- Ensure that consistent standards of presentation and legal compliance are maintained wherever the Groundsmen are working.
- Ensure that the staff maintain high standards of discipline, time keeping and administration.
- Use tractors and attachments and a wide range of specialist horticultural tools including chainsaws and spraying of pesticides/fertilizers.
- Maintain plant such as fuel and pesticide storage so as to ensure both correct usage and Health and Safety compliance.
- Ensure the maintenance of all outdoor sports areas including hard courts and the all-weather surfaces.
- Ensure the maintenance and upkeep of fences, hedges and paths.
- Undertake regular surveys of the Schools trees and to implement and coordinate the required work through in-house and contracted tree surgeons.
- As and when required, deal with contractors on site.
- Support other Estate Teams in relevant tasks and carry out any other reasonable work as and when necessary.
- Coordinate works as directed by the Head of Maintenance and Facilities with other Departments within the School, particularly when preparing for functions and events.
- Assist in the training, development and motivation of staff to continuously develop their technical and practical skills.

## MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- Attend all relevant staff meetings and INSET days.
- Attend major School events as required.



# Person specification

- NVQ Level 3 Sports Turf Management qualified or equivalent.
- Pesticide spraying PA1 and PA6 and Chainsaw qualifications (desirable but not essential).
- Broad knowledge of horticulture, including plants and flowers.
- Professional approach and able to communicate with a wide range of people.
- Competent understanding of Health and Safety regulations.
- Machinery expertise, proficient in the operation and maintenance of grounds maintenance machinery.
- Capable of undertaking all aspects of Groundsmanship and the physical challenges of the post.
- Flexible approach to working hours as needed.
- Ability to motivate and encourage staff in a team environment.

- Organised/methodical and used to overseeing working schedules.
- Good communication and IT skills
- Have a commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and adhere to and comply with the School's Child Protection Policy statement at all times.

## EXPERIENCE

- An experienced grounds person with a reputation for excellence.
- Experience of managing others (desirable).
- Thorough knowledge in sports turf management.
- Up to date knowledge of Health and Safety.
- Full and relevant driving licence with trailer entitlement.



Downe House is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students and expects all staff to share this commitment and adhere to, and comply with, the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures at all times. Appointed candidates will be subject to an enhanced DBS check and an online social media check.

**We promote equality of opportunity and support an environment that values and promotes diversity and inclusion.**

# Employee benefits



## ANNUAL LEAVE

25 days + Christmas shutdown + Bank Holidays



## BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

practical, probate & emotional support



## COMMUNITY & SOCIAL

regular social events for staff & family



## CPD

weekly opportunities for learning & development



## EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

confidential advice & counselling service



## EYE TEST

free eye test & contribution towards glasses for regular VDU users



## FLU VACCINATIONS

annual on-site free vaccinations



## FREE MEALS

daily nutritious & delicious meals



## EMPLOYEE REFERRAL REWARD

£300 for successful referrals



## FEE REMISSION

generous discounted fees



## GROUP INCOME PROTECTION

75% salary



## GYM

free access to on-site gym & discounts at local gyms



## HEALTH & WELLBEING

a range of health benefits i.e. Virtual GP & Online Physiotherapy



## LIFE INSURANCE

3 x salary



## LINE MANAGER SUPPORT

in house workshops & Aspiring Middle Leaders programme



## LOCATION

well connected, within easy reach of A34 & M4



## PARKING

plenty of onsite parking



## PENSION

generous employer contributory schemes



## SWIMMING POOL

access to heated on-site swimming pool



## TECH

Microsoft showcase school using leading technologies




## WORKING ENVIRONMENT

beautiful semi-rural campus on 104 acre estate



## CYCLE TO WORK SCHEME

savings on purchasing a bicycle & accessories for commuting purposes

A woman with short grey hair, wearing a black top, is smiling and leaning over a table. She is surrounded by students who are writing in notebooks. The background is a wall covered in various colorful posters and artwork, including a large blue and white abstract piece, a red and white piece, and a blue and white piece. There are also some green plants on the table.

“I benefitted hugely from the coaching and mentoring that was available to me. Whilst Downe prides itself on seeking the best possible route for each student, this is true of their approach to their staff as well.”

“Downe House is a very busy, vibrant and exciting place to be a part of. The expectations within my role are high, but I have felt very supported since I started, and there is a tangible culture of collaboration and kindness at the school.”

“I’m enjoying being part of such a supportive team and a community that empowers young women to succeed. Downe House’s reputation and beautiful setting make it a truly inspiring place to work.”



# Inspiring girls

Downe House  
Cold Ash, Thatcham  
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[www.downehouse.net](http://www.downehouse.net)



Downe  
House

