



DR CHALLONER'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

**Student Support Officer
(Learning Mentor)**

Information Pack

Challenge with reward



DR CHALLONER'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Student Support Officer (Learning Mentor)

Full Time Equivalent Salary Scale	Range 2: £26,664 - £29,474 fte (plus generous pension scheme)
Actual Salary	£11.092 - £12.261 pa pro rata for 18 hrs
Hours per week	18 hours per week (working pattern to be mutually agreed)
Working weeks per year	39 weeks (term time)

Dr Challoner's Grammar School wishes to appoint a caring and diligent person to join our Student Support team as a Student Support Officer (Learning Mentor). This team has responsibility for the pastoral care of our students, to ensure they can all achieve their best academically and learn to flourish and thrive as adults. The successful candidate will be adept at supporting students to develop effective study and social skills, and have an empathy for the challenges of the early teenage years. We are keen to appoint someone who is a positive advocate for our school values of Aspiration, Kindness and Resilience, and who will foster those attributes through their work with students, individually and in groups.

We are seeking someone educated to A level or equivalent, who has experience of working with young people, with excellent communication skills and the ability to build effective working relationships with students and colleagues.

Dr Challoner's is an 11-18 grammar school for boys, with a co-educational Sixth Form. We have a long history of providing superb education to our students and in 2024 Ofsted confirmed their 2019 judgement of Outstanding. All our support staff play a key role in enabling that to happen, by contributing to the forward thinking and innovative culture of the school.

To informally discuss the role further please contact George Wallington-Smith, Assistant Headteacher, on gws@challoners.org

To apply for the post, please complete an application form via My New Term (<https://mynewterm.com/school/Dr-Challoner's-Grammar-School/136419>)

Closing date: Friday 25 September 2026, 12 noon

We reserve the right to interview suitably qualified/experienced candidates prior to the closing date.

At Dr Challoner's Grammar School we ensure breadth of opportunities for all and actively promote open and outward facing attitudes to diversity and inclusion. As such, we actively encourage suitably qualified people from all backgrounds to apply for roles at our school. If there are any issues which you feel could be barriers to your application, as part of this process, please let us know.

Dr Challoner's Grammar School is committed to safeguarding and successful candidates will be required to complete an enhanced DBS check.

A warm welcome...

From Mr David Atkinson, Headteacher Dr Challoner's Grammar School



Dear Applicant,

I hope that the information which follows will help inform your decision about whether to make a formal application for this post. Like most job applicants you will want to find out a bit more about us. These days there is a wealth of data about schools which you may wish to look at. Proud though we are of that data, such research never tells the whole story and you will only be sure that you want to work here when you get 'that feeling' within the first few minutes of walking through the door.

When you do your research you'll find that our Ofsted inspections, in 2019 and 2024, graded the school as outstanding in every respect. We believe this is an accurate reflection of the school as a genuinely special place. The reports echo what many visitors tell me - that we have a distinctive ethos of teamwork, loyalty and aspiration, with the well-being of staff and students at the heart of what we do. Our students are intensely proud of coming to school here, and our staff feel similarly about their place of work. The relationship between staff and students is a very special one, and we see ourselves as running the school with the students rather than for them.

Our motto - Excellence with Integrity - demonstrates the purpose behind this ethos. We also highlight three key values which we believe can underpin the effective education of all our students. These are Aspiration, Kindness and Resilience. Our staff demonstrate these characteristics in their own ways, and inculcate the same attitudes in our students. This is not an attempt to produce a 'standard Challoner' student, but a means of encouraging our young people to find their own ways of demonstrating those crucial characteristics to help them flourish in the future.

Despite its impressive academic record, Challoner's is not an examination hothouse, it's a place of genuine creativity, fun and comradeship. In staff we appoint, we look for that much undervalued quality of humanity, along with an acceptance that young people will always make a few mistakes - and that it's our job to ensure that they learn from them. Two of the most immediately noticeable qualities of the people who work here are their humour and their sense of proportion. Even on the dullest of days, laughter pervades the school and reflects a genuine warmth and professional respect amongst colleagues. Sharing a laugh and a joke with the students is the norm and serves to brighten our daily work no end. One of the reasons our staff are prepared to give up so much of their time to run educational visits (we do more than any school I know) and other extra-curricular activities is that spending time with our students is so rewarding and enjoyable.

We believe that the next generation of leaders will be drawn both from among our staff and our students and we take our responsibility for their development very seriously. We do our very best to promote good mental health at work through the way we organise things, and the way we relate to each other. This kindness for others, not just students, is one of the hallmarks of our ethos. Over the last decade we have developed an approach to looking after our people that has been informed by MIND's work, and by listening carefully to staff views on how we can make Challoner's as good a place to work as possible.

You'll find a lot more information about the school on our website www.challoners.com (which we hope encapsulates that intangible 'feel' of the school) and about the Astra Teaching School Hub and SCITT at www.astrahub.org. If you would like further clarification or just an informal chat with someone, please feel free to contact us by phone or email. I enclose some general information about the school, a Role Profile and a Person Specification. When I read your application, I will be trying to assess whether you would be a 'good fit' for our school, so I hope that some of the things I have said will be useful to you in writing your supporting statement.

I do hope that you will decide to make an application to join us and that we will have the chance to welcome you to our school.

With best wishes.

Mr D Atkinson,
Headteacher

Challoner's is the Teaching School Hub for Buckinghamshire, a function we fulfill through the Astra Teaching School Hub. As a result we offer a wide and diverse range of professional development opportunities for staff. Astra is also a School Centred Initial Teacher Training provider (SCITT) ensuring Challoner's is at the cutting edge of curricular and pedagogical developments in education. Now leading the delivery of the ECF and NPQ programmes across the county, colleagues at Challoner's are able to contribute to, and benefit from, our leadership of high quality teacher training and CPD across over 200 schools in the local area.



'The facilities are outstanding in many respects. The forward-thinking management and leadership ensure learner-led environments are possible'.

Why work for Dr Challoner's Grammar School?



- Outstanding modern facilities, including recently modernised sports, music, arts and science facilities
 - High staff retention
 - A friendly working environment with supportive and caring colleagues
 - Culture of teamwork, loyalty and aspiration
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- Engaging, able and well-motivated students
 - An innovative approach to learning
 - Outstanding facilities in every subject
 - Access to an Employee Assistance Programme including financial and legal advice, counselling and health programmes
 - Preferential admission for qualified children of staff (some restrictions apply)
 - Access to onsite cardio fitness and weights room
 - Free onsite parking
 - Access to Blue Light card benefits
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- Generous pay based on the London Fringe Allowance
 - Staff Buddies - all new staff are allocated a staff buddy
 - Hero of the Week! - recognition for staff who go above and beyond
 - Opportunities for flexible working, where possible
 - Access to join the Local Government Pension Scheme ("LGPS"). The LGPS is a Career Average Related Earnings ("CARE") Defined Benefit Pension Scheme
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- A successful and well recognised professional development scheme, which all colleagues have access to and are encouraged to make use of
 - Staff are issued with a Chromebook computer for use during their employment at Challoner's
 - An extensive induction programme for all staff joining the school, with components tailored to individual requirements, such as for those new to the teaching profession



Our commitment to Character Education

Character Education



As well as our enviable track record of academic performance, we are equally proud of our focus on character, and our development of young people who will go on and improve their lives and our society with their education. Our core vision, to deliver education of excellence with integrity, is underpinned by values of Aspiration, Kindness and Resilience. We want to support students so that they develop their own well informed aspirations for their futures. We help our students understand how to flourish as young adults, with the resilience to adapt and be flexible while also helping others. We emphasise the need to be kind by looking after yourself, and through positive and productive personal relationships with others.

We encourage our staff, whatever their job, to play a part in this. This may be through classroom teaching, but role modelling good habits in these areas is something we expect of all our colleagues. As a result we have a cohesive staff body with a shared belief in the school's purpose, to develop thoughtful young people who can make a noticeably positive impact on society as a result of their education at Challoner's.





Our commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

At Challoner's, we strive to create a safe environment where everyone feels they belong, and kindness, respect and equity inform everything we do. Our school is a rich and diverse community, so we must develop thinking and attitudes appropriate for the global society in which we live.

Our DEI charter is for current and prospective students and staff, as well as the wider community, to understand the commitments of our school in this vital area, and to outline the expectations of all members of the school community:

Our key commitments:

Maintain a positive ethos: We stand for an atmosphere of empathy, inclusion and respect that empowers all members of the community.

Commitment to curiosity: We will retain a curiosity about others in our diverse community; whilst also remaining tolerant of others who might make genuine mistakes along the way.

Accountability: We will accept responsibility for our actions and any negative impacts our comments and actions have upon those close to us and the wider community.

Stand strongly against discrimination: We will actively oppose any form of discrimination including the protected characteristics of: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. This will be treated with the same protocols and rigour as other harmful acts.

Our DEI pledge:

Educate: Address problematic stereotypes and prevalent prejudices by showing each other how such intolerance directly affects individuals and society as a whole.

Encourage dialogue: Offer a safe space in which everyone can openly discuss issues they feel are important, share their own experiences and ask questions.

Set clear expectations: Make clear in the school's code of conduct that any form of prejudice and discrimination is unacceptable and detail the consequences. Breaches of these rules will be followed with swift action.

Promote diversity and inclusion: Encourage the celebration of diversity and sharing culture through activities that can be enjoyed by all.

Promote & empower upstanders: Encourage students and our whole school community to challenge intolerance and teach them how to support those affected by intolerance effectively.

Involve parents: Ensure that families are aware of the positive work being undertaken by school. Involve them in what students are learning and encourage them to reinforce the same messages in a more direct and personalised way at home.

Student Support at Dr Challoner's Grammar School



Our Student Support team is a group of committed and enthusiastic individuals who bring together their specialisms to create a cohesive and successful team who provide excellent support for our students. The focus is on guiding them through their teenage years, bringing together an excellent academic education with the personal development of good character. We recognise that teenagers will make mistakes and will need support in many different ways, and know that if that is done well the young adults who leave us will be well equipped to flourish in our complex society. Equally, we want to celebrate and reward their progress and achievements during their school career.

Our school values of Aspiration, Kindness and Resilience underpin our work in this area. We want our young people to identify and pursue ambitious personal aspirations, to develop the resilience to treat life's variabilities calmly and responsibly, and show kindness to themselves, others and the environment.

The Student Support Team works with students in years 7-11, and is based in our newly refurbished and designed-for-purpose Student Support Centre. The team is led by one of our Assistant Headteachers, and each year group has a dedicated Year Leader. They are supported by a team of Student Support Officers who have various specific responsibilities for academic support, behaviour and wellbeing; and a Student Support Administrator. The team works very closely with the other pastoral teams, particularly the SEND and safeguarding teams.

The team is cohesive and friendly, with a collaborative atmosphere that helps generate a strong sense of purpose and consistency. This role plays an integral part in that, and is in a position to influence behaviour, learning and progress across the school.





Role Profile



Job Title

Student Support Officer (Learning Mentor)

Responsible to

Year Leader

Job purpose

To support students in their personal development and learning needs, primarily at Key Stage 3

Principal responsibility areas

A - Learning support
B - Other duties

A. Learning support

- To support the learning of individuals or small groups of students within the Student Support Centre or the classroom based on recommendations from Student Support and SEND staff, teachers, parents or self referral by the student
- To develop a clear understanding of the learning needs and challenges facing students in order to offer appropriate support to students, staff and parents
- To assist individual students with specific needs to access all aspects of the curriculum including academic and social development, so that they can participate fully in the wider aspects of school life both in and outside the classroom (interventions to include: Nurture group, help with speaking assessments, help with organisation/revision, help with anxiety, academic mentoring etc)
- To work closely with the SEND department, refer students if required and work in partnership to support relevant SEND students
- To support individual students who are becoming typists in setting up the process and organising their work
- To support students with more complex needs eg EBSNA, vulnerable students, students with poor mental health; including liaising with staff and parents to help with reintegration and inclusion
- To organise and oversee lunchtime catch-up activities for homework and coursework
- To run nurture groups in Year 7 and 8, and other support groups as required
- To contact parents about the support we are offering their child and meet with parents when appropriate
- To attend Parents' Evenings as required

B. Other duties

- To act as a role model in setting high expectations and standards of behaviour in line with the school's vision statement
- To contribute to a specific part of the PSHE curriculum, working with teaching staff on the planning and delivery
- To accompany students on school visits and cover registrations and lessons when required
- To undertake other reasonable duties as requested by the Year Leaders, Assistant Headteacher (Character and Behaviour), SENDCo and Headteacher

Person Specification



STUDENT SUPPORT OFFICER (LEARNING MENTOR)

At DCGS we want to employ people who share our desire to deliver the best experience and outcomes for our students. This person specification is designed to show the personal and professional characteristics that we would like to see in a successful applicant for this post.

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	EVIDENCE
Qualifications			
Educated up to A level or equivalent	Y		Application, Certificates
Additional qualifications relevant to the role		Y	Application, Certificates
Previous work experience			
Experience of working with young people	Y		Application, Interview, Reference
Experience of working within a school environment		Y	Application, Interview
Professional skills and knowledge			
Competent and confident in the use of IT, including Google and MS Office	Y		Application, Interview
Good communicator, with excellent written and oral communication skills	Y		Application, Interview, Reference
Good knowledge of safeguarding and child protection issues in schools, and willingness to undertake relevant training	Y		Application, Interview
Able to relate well to parents, students and staff, and build effective working relationships, even in challenging situations	Y		Application, Interview
Able to handle challenging/emotional issues calmly, sympathetically and professionally		Y	Application, Interview
Other Personal qualities			
Appropriate motivation for working with children (one which values each child and shows concern for their personal safety and wellbeing)	Y		Application, Interview
Able to maintain professional confidentiality, excellent boundaries and be able to deal with complex/sensitive	Y		Application, Interview

issues			
Empathy, patience and a genuine commitment to supporting student wellbeing	Y		Application, Interview
Personally well organised and proactive, with excellent time management skills	Y		Interview, Reference
Attention to detail and willingness to follow both difficult and routine tasks through to completion against deadlines	Y		Interview
Able to use initiative and work unsupervised when necessary, whilst also willing to ask for help where appropriate	Y		Application, Interview, Reference
Able to recognise when it is appropriate to ask for help	Y		Interview
Able to plan and monitor progress against plans		Y	Interview
Personal stamina and energy	Y		Application, Interview
Commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion	Y		Application, interview
Commitment to continued professional development	Y		Interview

Making an application



The purpose of the selection process is to assess your suitability for the post and give both the panel and yourself an opportunity to gain further information before making a successful appointment. It is also an opportunity to seek clarification on information which you have provided on the application form and accompanying information. The interview will also assess your suitability to work with children and will include questions relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

How to apply

To apply for this position, you will need to complete an application form, which can be found on the Vacancies page of our website, or via the My New Term website.

Please note that only fully completed application forms will be considered.
CVs will not be included in the short-listing process

Short-listing

Applications will be assessed based on the information provided on the application form; only those best fulfilling the criteria for the role and the person specification will be short-listed.

Subject to the number of applications, short-listing may take place before the deadline for applications has passed.

If you have not heard from us within three weeks of the closing date, you can assume that your application is not being progressed on this occasion.

Interview

Selected candidates will be formally interviewed by the Headteacher and other members of the school management team.

The interview may also include an administration or practical task for support staff.

(Support Staff) Administration Task

The interview process for support staff may include a skills test which is relevant to the role for which you are being interviewed. This will be completed using Google docs and/or Google sheets, which are very similar to Microsoft Word and Excel.

As part of our safer recruitment process please find links here to our Child Protection Policy, Safeguarding Statement and Recruitment of Ex-offenders Policy.

This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975 (2013 and 2020) provide that certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected', are not subject to disclosure and cannot be taken into account. Further information about filtering offences can be found at DBS filtering guide. It is an offence to for any applicant to apply for the role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe In Education (KCSIE) guidance, we will conduct online searches to research information on shortlisted candidates, to determine suitability to work with children and keep them safe. This is not part of the shortlisting process; if there are any findings of concern, you will be given the opportunity to address them at interview.

DR CHALLONER'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL



PURPOSE AND VALUES

We want our students to leave Dr Challoner's equipped for academic and career success, and ready to lead lives of integrity and service, contributing to a society that is fairer, kinder, and stronger for all.

This shared mission involves our whole community: staff, parents, governors, and students. By working together, we aim to shape a better future, one where our students make meaningful contributions as leaders in society, guided by their values and strengths.

All our staff are committed to preparing our students to flourish personally and professionally in adult life. To achieve this, we foster a rigorous school culture focused on two pillars: excellent learning & teaching and deep character development. Through this we ensure students gain the knowledge, understanding, and skills needed to succeed, while also helping them develop resilience, empathy, and a clear sense of purpose.



DCGS Learning and Teaching Purpose

The classroom culture at DCGS is consistently positive and inclusive, with staff upholding the highest expectations for every student, without exception. This is reflected in learners who actively engage, build expertise, and show strong motivation across all areas of their learning.

DCGS Character Development Purpose

DCGS students develop into young adults with a sense of belonging, purpose and contribution, and an understanding of themselves and others. They demonstrate this through aspirations to use their education wisely and kindly, whilst understanding how they can flourish and feel personally fulfilled.

Dr Challoner's Grammar School, Chesham Road, Amersham, Buckinghamshire HP6 5HA

Headteacher: Mr D Atkinson Email: admin@challoners.com

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