



*Where young
people are*
**known,
valued &
treasured**



Head of Physics

Application Pack

Co-educational Independent Catholic Day School for ages 4-18 in St Albans



Welcome to St Columba's College

St Columba's College is located 25 miles from Central London in the cathedral city of St Albans in Hertfordshire. The College is a thriving 4-18 independent co-educational day school, comprising a Prep School of approximately 200 pupils and a Senior School of 600 students, of whom 160 are in the Sixth Form.

St Columba's is an academic and aspirational school devoted to academic excellence and the holistic development of each individual child. It was established in 1955 by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart and is a Roman Catholic foundation based on the educational philosophy developed by its founder, Father André Coindre: to ensure a provision of education rooted in religious values, structured through friendly discipline, nurtured by personal attention, and committed to academic excellence. We are an integral part of a dynamic group of 12 schools located primarily across the United States.

Head of Physics

We are seeking a dynamic, energetic, personable, conscientious, and committed colleague. The successful candidate must have an academic profile of high standing with a Physics degree as a minimum requirement. We shall appoint a leader who has vision, passion, and energy; a leader who is not afraid of change and is always looking for ways in which the school can improve. The successful applicant will need to be an outstanding teacher.

Department Overview

The vision of the science department at St. Columba's College is to develop students' understanding and love of science, while supporting the College mission. We strive to help students achieve their very best through dynamic teaching and a positive learning environment. As a result, we are a leading department within the College, and the sciences are a popular choice for students at A-level. Our results have consistently improved over recent years; in 2025 the percentage of grade 9 - 7 achieved in Combined Science was well above the national average at 50.7%. In both GCSE Biology and Chemistry, we achieved 88.2% of grades 9-7, while Physics was 76.5%. For all three Sciences, 100% of our students achieved grades 9-4. In 2025 we also achieved 66.7% A*-A grades in A-Level Biology, and 50% A*-A grades in both A-Level Physics and A-level Chemistry.



Department Organisation

The Science department is a thriving, innovative and successful team led by the Head of Science, who is assisted by the Heads of Biology, Chemistry and Physics, six further subject specialist teachers and a skilled team of five technicians. The department is highly motivated and is a driving force in implementing initiatives across the College. There is a wealth of experience from curriculum development, pastoral support, exam board examiners and mentoring of trainee teachers and ECTs. Members of the department share their expertise with local schools, with which there are strong contacts and a supportive network.

Advanced Level Sciences

At Advanced level students choose from Biology, Chemistry and Physics courses. All three departments follow the OCR A course. In Year 12 there are two sets for Biology and Physics and one set in Chemistry. There is one set for Year 13 in all three sciences. The composition of sets is determined by choices of subjects, not by ability, and the teaching of each set is shared by two teachers. The sixth form has a varied programme of extra-curricular activities, and we have a very successful track record of students going on to university to read various science and engineering degrees, as well as medicine, dentistry and veterinary science.

Curriculum Overview

All students have access to 1:1 devices- specifically a Microsoft SurfacePro provided by the school - to underpin teaching and learning.

Year 7 & 8 (Forms 1 & 2)

The schemes of work follow the AQA KS3 course, with a strong emphasis on practical skills and investigations. Students are taught in 3 x 50-minute lessons per week in mixed ability groups with one teacher (3 lessons per week in total).

Year 9, 10 & 11 (Forms 3, 4 & 5)

The sciences are taught as separate subjects by subject specialists in 6 x 50 minute lessons, 2 per week for each science subject. All students in Years 9 and 10 follow the AQA combined sciences (Trilogy) pathway. In Year 11, some students switch to the AQA separate science route. Results in GCSE sciences are among the best in the College.

There is a stimulating programme of learning outside the classroom. The Physics department has successfully entered students for the Arkwright scholarship over many years and run enjoyable excursions to the Bayfordbury planetarium, the Royal Observatory and provided an after-school club in Astronomy. Students are also encouraged to take part in competitions and achievements of gold and silver medals in Olympiads/Challenges is common every year.



Facilities & Accommodation

There are state of the art facilities in six laboratories, all of which are bright and engaging spaces, a prep room from which laboratory technicians expertly support the staff in delivery of lessons. Each laboratory is well resourced with a range of general science equipment and access to more specialised equipment is provided by the technician team. There are wonderful art works and displays in the main corridors.

A science staff room provides for individual working areas but also a place where ideas and strategies can be discussed and shared on a daily basis. A separate office exists for the Head of Science. Refreshment needs are catered for in a suitably equipped kitchen area, where staff can make tea and coffee, along with a small fridge to store milk and soft drinks. The College provides free tea and coffee, as well as milk, sugar, biscuits and fruit. A photocopier (shared with the DT department) is available for staff use.

All preparation for practical work is carried out by highly qualified, knowledgeable and efficient, highly motivated team technicians who operate from a fully resourced large facility central to the laboratories.



Job Title: Head of Physics

Responsible to:

The Headmaster and Senior Leadership Team through the Head of Science.

Responsible for:

Members of staff assigned to the Physics Department.

Frequent contact with:

Head of Science, Heads of Department for Biology and Chemistry, the Science Subject Lead in the Prep School and laboratory technicians.

Aims of the post:

- To provide leadership of the department staff and curriculum to secure high- quality teaching and improved standards of learning and achievement of all students.
- To contribute by example to the spiritual and moral growth of the whole college community.

Key Accountabilities:

- Leading the Physics Department and overseeing the delivery of GCSE and A Level courses.
- Raising standards of student attainment and achievement within the whole curriculum area by monitoring and supporting student progress.
- Developing a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum which provides students with the requisite knowledge and skills and promotes Independent Learning.
- Ensuring that appropriate schemes of work, including related assessment processes, are in place and regularly reviewed in line with school policy.
- Promoting a collegiate approach so that staff work as an effective team, developing leadership within the department and sharing good practice
- Monitoring teachers' classroom practice and students' work, to ensure that schemes of work are being followed and appropriate homework setting, marking and assessment for learning is taking place and fed back to students.
- Managing and deploying available resources (teachers, support staff, capitation, departmental rooms, technology etc.).
- Ensuring that appropriate professional development takes place in the department.
- Ensuring organisational & administrative tasks, both within the department and in support of SCC policy, are completed promptly and efficiently.
- Refine and further develop links between the Prep and Senior school.
- To ensure the effective use of the department's equipment, proper maintenance of materials and fabric of the department and the observance of health and safety regulations in accordance with the school's policy on Health & Safety.
- To maintain efficient and effective control of the department's budget



Specific Responsibilities

- To ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the department.
- To keep up to date with national developments in the subject area, and teaching practice and methodology.
- To lead in the department's development and competencies related to the use of devices to ensure effective and appropriate use as a resource for teaching and learning outcomes.
- To make provision for extension activities, such as for the Stretch and Challenge Programme
- To provide appropriate support for SEND pupils.
- To provide academic support outside lessons, such as revision classes.
- To ensure that students are entered for appropriate external examinations.
- To be responsible for the setting of internal examinations and the moderation & standardisation of results
- To be responsible for the organisation, marking, moderation and administration of any internal elements of the KS4 and KS5 courses, as required by the appropriate exam boards.
- To lead performance review for the whole department.
- To ensure that an environment conducive to effective learning & teaching is established in the department classrooms; this includes appropriate & up to date display.
- To establish practices that support colleagues in classroom and behaviour management and to act as a role model in their implementation.
- To check that appropriate work has been set for classes when teachers are absent.
- To trial, evaluate and action new practical activities as suited to curriculum development.
- To work with the Head, SLT and line manager in the recruitment of staff to the department.
- To contribute to an annual departmental improvement plan (DIP), reflecting the CIP.
- To ensure that appropriate Monitoring & Tracking, in line with SCC policy, takes place within the department and that it is kept up to date.
- To monitor student data and to ensure that appropriate intervention strategies that raise overall standards are implemented; and that due recognition and reward of student achievement is celebrated.
- To report annually to SLT on department exam performance.
- When invited, to report to the Governors' Strategy and Policy Committee.
- To incorporate the ISC self-evaluation questions into the annual department self-review process.
- To manage departmental meetings to develop the skills and teamwork of the department, producing minutes for the Headmaster, Academic Deputy Head & own line manager.
- To attend Head of Department meetings and act on decisions made.
- To undertake routine admin tasks as requested by the Director of Studies or the Assistant Head for Teaching & Learning.
- To attend subject meetings of the Haileybury Group (HMC); to include taking responsibility to organise when it is SCC's turn to host.
- To communicate promptly with parents and meet them where necessary.
- To create and update the departmental resources, both physical and online, as appropriate.



- To support and promote literacy development across the Senior School.
- To support and promote digital literacy development across the Senior School.
- To be the College's radiation protection advisor and ensure that all training is completed; day-to-day arrangements regarding the security, safe storage, use and monitoring of radioactive sources in the school are upheld, ensuring that staff understand the Standard Operating Procedures and model risk assessments and organising and liaising with the Radiation Protection Advisory from HfL.

Generic Responsibilities:

- Responsibilities carried by all teachers in the College comply with the teachers' contract of employment and Teachers' Standards.
- Take responsibility for your own professional development.
- Keep subject knowledge up to date.
- Undertake duties to supervise the pupils as part of the school rotas.
- Expectations regarding the role and expectations for all form tutors are contained within the school handbook.
- Play a full part in the life of the college community to support its distinctive mission and ethos and to encourage staff and pupils to follow this example.

Essential Criteria:

1. Knowledge and Experience

- A Physics degree (essential)
- Proven knowledge and understanding of Physics and the teaching practices and methodology of the subject across all Key Stages.
- Evidence of an active contribution to the development of the subject across all age groups (sharing good practice, supporting the team).
- Evidence of commitment to personal CPD.

2. Skills and abilities

The ability and commitment to:

- Be an effective practitioner within the subject area.
- Inspire, challenge and support students within teaching groups.
- Model the values and expectations of the College.
- Understand and demonstrate the principles and practices of effective learning and teaching.
- Review and plan your own CPD.
- Work as a reflective practitioner.
- Instil a love of learning in their students.
- Develop a secure and empathetic environment in which each student can learn and make progress.
- Have a sense of humour and the ability to remain calm under pressure.

Safeguarding Children

The appointee's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young persons for whom s/he comes into contact will be to adhere to and ensure compliance with the School's Child Protection Policy at all times and to attend relevant safeguarding update training including off job and on-line courses. If in the course of carrying out the duties of the post the appointee becomes aware of any actual or potential risk to the safety or welfare of children in the School s/he must report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and record on CPOMS.

It should be noted that a job description is not an exhaustive list of activities, and employees may be asked to carry out other duties commensurate with the responsibility and seniority of the post. The job description may also be amended to take account of a change of circumstances, and employees will be consulted if this is necessary.

Remuneration and Benefits

- St Columba's College operates its own salary scales.
- The College offers a fee remission for children of permanent members of staff educated at SCC (pro rata for part-time staff).
- Membership of APTIS a Defined Contribution Pension Scheme.
- 17 weeks of annual leave to include an October two week break.
- Complimentary lunch / tea / coffee / fruit / biscuits.
- Eye care vouchers.
- Free annual flu vaccination.
- Cycle to Work and Tech Schemes.
- Access to use of a confidential 24-hour counselling help line
- Use of the College Fitness Suite.
- Free car parking on site.
- Support with Continuing Professional Development.
- All staff have use of a Microsoft Surface Pro for school use.

Work with us

St Columba's is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Applicants will be required to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including reference checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

If you wish to discuss this vacancy further, please contact Jackie Metcalfe, Head of HR, at metcalfe.j@stcolumbascollege.org or on 01727 892095. To apply for this position, visit our website stcolumbascollege.org

Application Process

Closing date: 10am on Wednesday, 25th February 2026.

Interviews will be conducted on 4th/5th March. Early applications are encouraged as we reserve the right to call suitable candidates to interview and to appoint prior to the closing date.



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St Columba's College is a Catholic Foundation of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart (US Province)