



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



Bursar & Clerk to the Governors – Application Pack

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



Welcome to St Columba's College

BURSAR & CLERK TO THE GOVERNORS
Start Date April 2026

THE OPPORTUNITY

St Columba's College is currently seeking a new Bursar and Clerk to the Governors for an April 2026 start date (or earlier).

St Columba's College is a thriving 4-18 independent co-educational day school of 825 students, of whom approximately 200 are in the Prep School and 160 in the Sixth Form. The College is located in the cathedral city of St Albans in Hertfordshire, 25 miles from Central London and close to the M1, M25, A1 and with excellent train services providing quick and easy access into London.

Established in 1955 by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart the College is a Roman Catholic foundation based on the educational philosophy developed by Father André Coindre. We are part of a vital and dynamic group of 12 schools located primarily across the United States and the United Kingdom. The College site covers an area of 13.9 acres adjacent to Verulamium Park.

The site comprises a range of buildings dating from 1875 to 2013, all of which sit above three recently refurbished sports pitches (one rubber crumb 4G all-weather pitch, one sand dressed MUGA and one traditional grass pitch). The College also owns a neighbouring residential property of significant size and grounds.

At St Columba's College we provide an outstanding education for students, and pride ourselves on knowing, valuing and treasuring each and every one of our young people. Honoured to be under the trusteeship of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, we recognise that a holistic education is one that develops academic excellence whilst recognising the value of a moral and spiritual education. Known for our strong community, we encourage partnership with parents to provide supportive care, guiding your child towards discovering themselves and the contribution they make to society.

THE ROLE

This broad, varied and rewarding Bursar and Clerk to the Governors role will enable the successful candidate to play a meaningful, impactful role in the lives of young people.

The role will suit an experienced, financially literate leader with robust commercial acumen, proven project management experience and excellent interpersonal skills to manage a diverse range of operational teams and people. Above all, the successful candidate will need to demonstrate a strong affinity with the values and goals of St Columba's as a thriving, happy, successful co-educational independent school where its young are known, valued and treasured.

The Bursar plays a crucial, strategic leadership role within the College, and will be pivotal to the ongoing future success of St Columba's. The Bursar leads and manages a wide range of business support services, including Finance, IT, Estates, Catering, Health & Safety, Compliance and Legal. The Bursar will work very closely with the Headmaster and the College Leadership Team, partnering on the strategy and commercial success of the school, leading and advocating for the operational and support teams to ensure that the school operates efficiently and effectively as a business, whilst supporting the Headmaster and the teaching colleagues to deliver the outstanding educational and pastoral provision of an St Columba's childhood.

The Bursar is line managed by the Headmaster on a day-to-day basis, but also reports as Clerk to the Chair of Governors and works closely with the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and other members of the Board and the College Leadership Team.

Each day will be different and will often present new challenges and opportunities. The role as Bursar requires an ability to think and plan strategically for the long term whilst also being agile and ready to deal with the unexpected. Success in this role requires an open, curious and collaborative mindset, a resilient disposition, and an ability to stay calm and positive at all times.

Key professional attributes required are commercial nous and financial literacy, strong interpersonal skills and the charm and presence to lead and inspire others.

There is no prescribed route into a career as a school Bursar, but it is one of the most stimulating, rewarding and fulfilling roles for a career-shifter keen to channel their acquired professional skills into a purposeful second (or third) career.

Candidates are welcome from any professional background. Prior schools' experience and/or formal professional qualifications may be beneficial but are not a requirement. Proven financial literacy and commercial leadership skills are.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: **Bursar and Clerk to the Governors**

Responsible to

The Headmaster as a key member of the College Leadership Team (CLT). The Bursar will be co-opted onto the Headmaster's Leadership Committee as required.

The Bursar has a dotted line to the Chair of Governors and the Board of Governors, as Company Secretary and Clerk to the Governors. He/she will work closely with the Chair of Governors and Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on aspects of the College's affairs to ensure that there is a prudent and effective financial management strategy.

Responsible for

- Finance
- Estates and Facilities Management including contract catering and cleaning services
- IT Services
- PA

Overall Purpose

To assist in leading the development of the College in accordance with the established Roman Catholic ethos of the whole school and in accordance with the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

The Bursar is responsible for the effective day to day management of all business aspects of the College and for making a leading contribution to the College's strategy for the future.

Responsibilities include all financial planning and management, the maintenance and improvement of the College's buildings, grounds and facilities and the delivery of all aspects of day-to-day domestic operations and commercial activities, including contracts for goods and services.

He/she should have a strong background in finance, information technology, health and safety, regulatory compliance and risk management, and data protection. He/she should have knowledge and experience of charities finance (SORP / SoFA) and a knowledge of human resource management. The Bursar would be expected to be the primary contact with the College's bankers, auditors, lawyers, architects and other professional advisers. He/she should have a good understanding of the educational priorities and operation of the College in its entirety and will need to be available throughout the working day and when required at evenings and weekends.



MAIN AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

1) Strategy & Long Term Planning

- Provide support for the Head and Governors on the future strategic direction and financial management of the College and proactively respond to the ever-changing demands of the Independent School market, including co-commercial initiatives that may form part of the strategy of the College.
- Maintain a regular dialogue with the Chair of Governors, the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, and other Governors to support their understanding and ensure that strategic and financial matters are dealt with in a timely fashion.
- Chair the weekly Bursar's Strategy Committee and provide regular feedback to the CLT and Head's Leadership Team.
- Advise the Governors on financial and business policy.
- Report formally and regularly on all matters relating to the financial and operational aspects of the College.
- Ensure the effectiveness of the day-to-day running of the College including Finance, Facilities, ICT, Catering, Coach Service and Cleaning.
- Discharge the regular duties normally carried out in schools by a Bursar and Clerk to the Board of Governors.

2) Clerk to the Governors

- Act as Clerk to the Governors and oversee the preparation for Governors' meetings.
- Produce reports, supporting papers and minutes for meetings of Governors and other committees (Education, Strategy & Policy, Finance & General Purposes, and Full Governing Body, attend all meetings and ensure prompt distribution of minutes.
- Ensure that confidential items are minuted appropriately, and that minutes reflect this.
- Circulate the reviewed draft to all Governors, the Headmaster within the timescales agreed with the Governing Body.
- Ensure the PA to the Bursar completes the administrative tasks such as taking and producing the minutes and board paperwork, ensuring it is uploaded to the Board Intelligence portal as required.
- As Company Secretary, ensure compliance with the requirements of the Companies Act, Charity Commission and all other relevant regulatory bodies.
- Keep Governors fully abreast of relevant changes in company and charity law as well as developments and best practice within the education and charity sectors.
- Ensure that Governors are made aware of training opportunities, that training activity is monitored and reported on, that Trustee meeting attendance is monitored and reported on.
- Ensure the timely and accurate completion of all Annual Returns and related matters.



3) Finance and Administration

Working closely with the Finance Manager: -

- Oversee the smooth operation of the Finance Department, in conjunction with the Finance Manager, including the maintenance of proper accounting records and written
- Financial procedures, an effective and functioning payroll service, efficient income collection and payment of suppliers, security of assets and financial propriety.
- Oversee an accurate and efficient process for preparing and chasing customer invoices for school fees to ensure prompt collection of all sums due in a timely manner, and meeting with parents in person to discuss non-payment of fees.
- In association with the Finance Manager, prepare annual budget for presentation to Finance & General Purposes Committee and the Full Governing Body within the agreed timescale. Ensure regular monitoring of actual results vs budget and report to the Headmaster and Board accordingly.
- Prepare longer term financial forecasts and financial monitoring information as required by Head or Governors
- When required, prepare recommendations on pay structures, levels of pay and remuneration.
- Prepare recommendations on fee structures, fee levels, and remissions.
- Prepare recommendations on levels of capital expenditure with reference to long-term capital and maintenance plans.
- Provide accurate and timely financial information to the Head and Governors.
- Provide advice on general financial policy within the College.
- Oversee the preparation of rolling financial forecasts over a three to five-year period
- Oversee the preparation of the annual financial statements, including the Governors' Report, within the required timetable
- Ensure that monthly and annual cash flow projections are maintained and updated as necessary.
- Oversee the preparation of monthly management accounts and other financial management information as required by the Head or Governors
- Advise on investments, in consultation with the Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- Prepare financial appraisals for projects as necessary.
- Advise on taxation matters where appropriate, and ensure compliance with all relevant taxation and VAT regulations including timely submission of returns to HMRC
- Monitor and advise on levels of scholarship and bursary funds and through the use of an external company, undertake means tested assessments of parents' income and assets prior to making bursary awards.
- As Secretary to the Joint Negotiating Body (JNB), liaise with the Trade Union representatives, arrange termly formal and informal meetings, set the agenda and produce Minutes for the formal meetings of the JNB.

4) Legal, Regulatory and School Inspection Compliance

- Ensure the College has appropriate risk assessment and risk management processes, including an up-to-date risk register, emergency evacuation procedures and a crisis management plan, in place at all times.
- Ensure compliance and statutory requirements affecting the College are met, including such compliance as is required by bodies such as HMRC, Companies House, the Charity Commission, ISI and the Health & Safety Executive.
- Ensure that all policies for which the Bursar is responsible are regularly reviewed and up to date.
- In association with the Head of Estates, manage all aspects of health and safety on the site and all school related health and safety matters for staff and students, providing regular and timely reports to the Head and Governors as necessary.



- Ensure the College has adequate insurance cover at all times.
- Liaise with external agencies on compliance issues including making official reports if required.
- Ensure the College has appropriate alcohol licensing provision.

5) Estate and Facilities Management

Working closely with the Head of Estates to facilitate the school's daily operation and programme of upkeep and development: -

- Ensure the estate and buildings are maintained in excellent order, overseeing arrangements for regular maintenance, and the provision of cleaning, caretaking and grounds services, in liaison with the Head of Estates.
- Maintain a ten-year rolling maintenance plan, in conjunction with the Head of Estates, and use it to inform decisions on capital and repairs and maintenance spend
- Maintain a rolling five to ten-year plan for the replacement of plant, machinery, vehicles, and other fixed assets and use it to inform the budgetary process
- Oversee external contract work including the tendering and contract process and the delivery of work on site.
- Provide and manage staff accommodation e.g. Head's tenancy.
- Ensure health and safety regimes and actions are in place to a high standard of operation and effectiveness.
- Ensure the delivery of first-class outsourced catering and front-of-house service for students, staff and for College events.

6) Administration and Support Staff

Working closely with the College Leadership Team:-

- Assist in the selection and appointment of Administration and Support staff who have non-student facing roles. Any selection and appointment shall be on such terms and remuneration as from time to time may be laid down by the Board of Governors.
- Oversee the supervision of arrangements for the performance review of non-student facing Support Staff.
- Oversee the procurement of advice and training appropriate to the needs of Support Staff in accordance with the policies of the College.
- Line manage support staff as determined by the Headmaster (see below).

7) IT & Data Protection

Working closely with the Head of IT Services: -

- Oversee the work of the Head of IT Services to ensure that the College's IT systems effectively and efficiently support students and staff in both learning and administration, and that appropriate training and guidance is provided.
- In association with the Head of IT Services, support the provision of an effective IT infrastructure which meets the evolving needs of the College.
- As Data Controller, ensure that the College is conversant with and meets all the requirements of data protection legislation including GDPR.
- Be aware of AI and the impact upon GDPR and school data. Work with IT Services to ensure compliance with external agencies and statutory requirements.
- Assess and respond to the impact of AI in education and wider school data.



8) Miscellaneous

- Assist with the creation of a Co-Commercial Department to maximise income from lettings, extended College services and any other alternative and appropriate income streams.
- Participate in arrangements for his/her own appraisal and in the identification of areas in which he/she would benefit from training, and shall undergo such training
- Keep abreast of development in the administration of schools, particularly in the Independent sector and whenever possible attend the ISBA annual conference, regional meetings and professional development courses arranged by the ISBA and/or other providers.

9) Line Management

Provide effective line management for direct reports, including all aspects of performance management, in relation to the following post holders: -

- Finance Manager – responsible for the day-to-day financial administration.
- Head of Estates – responsible for the management and upkeep of the College's buildings and grounds.
- Head of IT Services – responsible for ensuring that all the College's IT systems meet educational and administrative needs.
- Bursar's PA
- And other such administration/support groups as determined and agreed with the Headmaster.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

The appointee's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young persons for whom he/she 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 online 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 he/she must report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

Qualifications and Experience

- Recognised accountancy qualification (ideally ACA, CIMA, ACCA or equivalent) or considerable experience of financial management and a strategic focus
- Experience of administration management and people leadership are essential (ideally gained in the education sector) and facilities management experience would be ideal
- Digitally literate with strong ICT skills having worked with accounting software and other systems
- A working knowledge of GDPR is essential
- A working knowledge of relevant policies, codes of practice and legislation specific to the role and payroll experience would be highly desirable
- IOSH / NEBOSH training would be desirable

Strategy and Change Leadership

- Ability to think strategically taking an integrated view of the whole College business beyond the finance function
- A commercial mindset, able to identify short and long-term strategies, balancing risks and opportunities
- A positive agent for change, keen to share ideas and able to effectively manage change

Financial Management

- Understanding of Charity accounting (SORP/SoFA)
- Financial management skills to interpret financial information and to present it clearly to financial and non-financial audiences
- Ability to handle complex financial data accurately
- Significant exposure to preparing monthly management accounts to a timely deadline.

People Leadership and Management

- A good people manager, able to give clear direction and create a motivating environment to get the best out of individuals and teams
- Proven ability to delegate responsibility whilst maintaining accountability
- Able to manage performance, conduct appraisals and identify support and training needs

Communication and Stakeholder Engagement

- Excellent verbal and written communication skills, able to adapt approach to suit different audiences
- Ability to work effectively and collaboratively as part of a senior team and to work well with people at all levels
- Can listen effectively and knows when to consult others



Planning and Organising

- Excellent organisation and time management skills, able to juggle competing long and short-term priorities to meet deadlines
- Proven ability to develop effective procedures, systems and processes
- Ability to work with initiative, anticipate and identify issues and respond accordingly
- Can respond flexibly, resourcefully, and calmly to changing requirements and in moments of pressure

Personal Qualities

- Clear understanding of, and commitment to, the priorities and ethos of the College as a school in the Catholic tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart
- A commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our young people
- A commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion
- Collaborative working style with the ability to build strong relationships across the community
- A desire to get involved with wider areas of school life including attendance at evening and weekend events, and co-curricular activities

APPOINTMENT DETAILS

- Full time, 52 weeks a year role, so the incumbent will need to have a flexible approach to their working hours, including some time in the evenings and at weekends.
- Highly competitive remuneration package based on skills and experience.
- 25 days' annual holiday entitlement, 8 statutory public holidays and additional discretionary, non-contractual leave days between Christmas and New Year.
- Two term's notice period following successful completion of a probationary period.
- Generous fee remission for the children of staff educated at St Columba's College.
- Defined contribution pension scheme into which the College pays 12% of salary.
- Free lunches, beverages, biscuits and fruit.
- Free car parking on site.
- Use of the College fitness suite outside of school hours.
- Eye care voucher scheme.
- Cycle to Work and Tech Schemes.
- Access to use of a confidential 24-hour counselling help line.
- Support with funding for relevant continuing professional development.

HOW TO APPLY

Potentially interested applicants are encouraged to read the applicant information pack and then contact David Stephens of Join The Dots for an informal, confidential discussion about their interest and suitability for the role.

David Stephens can be contacted on 07739 457000 or at david@davidconsulting.co.uk

In order to be further considered for this vacancy, candidates are requested to complete the online application form at [Work with Us - St Columba's College](#)

The deadline for applications is 9am on Monday 10th November.

It is currently envisaged that selected candidates will be invited for a school tour and longlist interview on Tuesday 18th or Wednesday 19th November and then a second shortlist interview on Wednesday 26th or Thursday 27th November.

However, the school reserves the right to review applications as received and also to interview candidates and make an appointment at any stage, so early applications are strongly recommended.

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



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