



Assistant Head (Pastoral, Safeguarding, and Pupil Wellbeing)

CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK

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Website: www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/vacancies



Dear Applicants,

Thank you for your interest in St Mary's School.

Founded in 1908 by the Bilson sisters, St Mary's has been educating girls from Colchester and the surrounding area for well over a century. As we approach our 120th anniversary in 2028, we are proud of our heritage and ambitious for the next phase of the school's development.

From its earliest days, St Mary's has been shaped by a bold conviction: that girls deserve an education rooted in scholarship, confidence and character. That founding vision remains central to who we are today. Our task now is to honour that inheritance while sharpening our distinctiveness as an academically ambitious school, where curiosity, high expectations and a love of learning matter deeply.

Since joining St Mary's, I have been struck by the strength of the community: the professionalism of staff, the quality of relationships and the genuine care shown to every girl. These are powerful foundations on which to build. Our aspiration is straightforward but demanding: to be a school known equally for warmth and scholarship; a place where pastoral care and academic ambition are not competing ideas, but mutually reinforcing strengths.

We are ambitious for our pupils and for our staff. At St Mary's, we are committed to providing a rigorous and engaging education, alongside strong pastoral care and a breadth of opportunity that enables every girl to thrive. We believe girls flourish when academic challenge is ambitious, joyful and unapologetically serious. Central to this is our belief that excellent teaching, rich challenge and strong relationships transform outcomes. We want pupils to think deeply, grow in confidence and character, and leave us not only with strong outcomes, but with curiosity, courage and a lifelong love of learning.

For colleagues, this creates a rare professional opportunity. We are looking for people who care deeply about scholarship and the craft of teaching; colleagues who share our ambition, are committed to their own professional growth, and want to contribute to a collaborative culture shaped by innovation, collegiality and high standards. This is an important and exciting moment to join the school. We are entering a significant phase of development and, for the right candidate, this is not simply an opportunity to take up a post, but to help shape an important chapter in the life of a distinctive girls' school.

There is much here to value, and much to build. If that sense of purpose resonates with you, I hope you will consider joining us.

With best wishes,

Lee Daniel Faith
Principal

The school

St Mary's is an Independent day school in Colchester, Essex for girls age 3-16 and boys age 3-4.

Our vision is to empower girls to thrive at school and beyond.

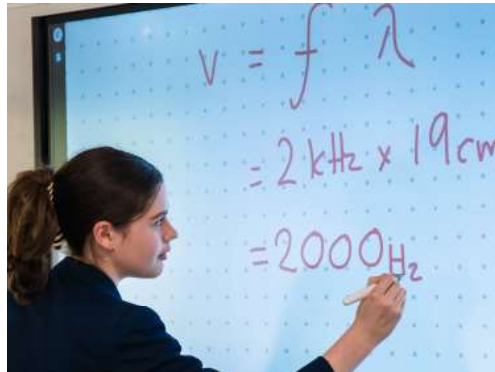
The Lower School was ranked 12th highest performing Preparatory Schools in England by the Sunday Times last year. Many girls achieve scholarships to senior school and we have an impressive 11+ pass rate for those who choose to sit the exam. At the Senior School, excellent GCSE results are achieved each year. We're able to achieve such success by tailoring the education to suit the needs of each individual in our small classes and by giving the girls the encouragement and support they need to aim high.

We are strong believers that success in life comes from more than just impressive exam results. At St Mary's we offer a brilliantly balanced education in order to develop exceptionally well-rounded individuals. With a huge variety of clubs, enrichment activities, music and drama productions, visits and international travel experiences on offer, there's ample opportunity to learn new skills and develop talents. There are numerous positions of responsibility available to the girls which help develop their leadership skills, and we foster team spirit through initiatives such as the School Council and School Houses.

For young people to thrive we firmly believe they must feel confident, relaxed and secure. Every child is known and understood and the girls feel comfortable challenging themselves and asking questions.

We believe in instilling the values of respect and courtesy, and through our charity and outreach work the students develop a strong sense of community. We are a leading Eco School and the students get a strong sense of caring for the environment as a result. As a global member of the Round Square Organisation, those who attend St Mary's benefit from our international links, which helps to broaden their horizons.

In this positive environment our young people develop the strength of character and the self-belief they need to make the very most of the life that lies ahead.



Why Pastoral, Safeguarding and Wellbeing at St Mary's

Pastoral care at St Mary's is a defining strength of the school. It is evident in the quality of relationships, the sense of belonging experienced by pupils, and the genuine care shown by staff to every individual.

As we enter the next phase of the school's development, we are clear that these strengths must be both protected and strengthened through greater consistency, clarity and follow-through. Strong culture must be underpinned by strong systems, and excellent pastoral care must be deliberately led, not left to variation.

This role represents an opportunity to:

- ensure safeguarding is not only compliant, but deeply embedded and consistently enacted in daily practice
- bring greater coherence and consistency to pastoral systems across the school
- strengthen the alignment between safeguarding, pastoral provision and SEND support
- develop systems that enable earlier identification, sharper intervention and more rigorous oversight
- ensure pupil voice meaningfully informs pastoral development and contributes to school improvement

At its best, pastoral leadership at St Mary's is visible, disciplined and relational. It combines warmth with clarity, and ensures that expectations are understood, upheld and consistently applied.

This role is therefore not simply about sustaining what exists, but about **sharpening and strengthening it**, ensuring that every pupil experiences a consistently high standard of care, support and expectation.

This is a significant leadership role at an important moment in the development of St Mary's.

The successful candidate will play a central role in shaping the culture of the school, strengthening safeguarding practice and ensuring that pastoral provision is consistent, coherent and impactful.



Job description

Job title:	Assistant Head of Senior School (Pastoral, Safeguarding and Pupil Wellbeing)
Reporting to:	Principal / Vice Principal
Hours:	Full-Time
Salary:	Main professional scale/Upper pay scale + additional allowance

About the Role

The Assistant Head of Senior School (Pastoral, Safeguarding and Pupil Wellbeing) is a member of the Wider Leadership Team with strategic and operational responsibility for pastoral provision, safeguarding and pupil wellbeing across the school. The postholder will act as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are robust, compliant with statutory guidance and fully embedded in the culture and daily practice of the school.

Alongside this, the role leads the development and implementation of high-quality pastoral systems, ensuring that:

- behaviour, attendance and wellbeing are coherently led
- safeguarding is timely, rigorous and consistently applied
- staff are supported in managing pastoral and behavioural matters with clarity and confidence
- pupils are supported to thrive both academically and personally

This is a role that requires strong professional judgement, emotional intelligence and resilience, alongside the ability to lead others with clarity and authority. The successful candidate will maintain a visible presence across the school, working closely with colleagues, pupils, families and external agencies.

The role combines strategic leadership with operational oversight, ensuring that systems are not only well designed, but consistently enacted and evaluated.

We are looking for a leader who combines professional rigour with relational warmth; someone who understands that strong systems and strong relationships go hand in hand, and who is committed to ensuring that every pupil is supported to flourish.

At St Mary's, we believe that pastoral care is not separate from academic success, but fundamental to it. This role offers the opportunity to lead that work with clarity, integrity and impact.

Role Purpose

The Assistant Head (Pastoral, Safeguarding and Pupil Wellbeing) is a member of the Wider Leadership Team with strategic and operational responsibility for pastoral provision, safeguarding, and pupil wellbeing, across the school.

The postholder will act as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are robust, compliant with statutory guidance, and fully embedded in the culture and daily practice of the school. The postholder will also lead the strategic development and implementation of high-quality pastoral systems that support all pupils to thrive both academically and personally.

The role combines strategic leadership with operational oversight and requires close collaboration with senior leaders, Phase Leads, staff, pupils, parents, and external agencies.

Reporting Line and Key Relationships

The postholder reports to the Principal or a Vice Principal, as determined by the needs of the school.

The postholder will work closely with:

- The Principal and Vice Principal/s
- The Head of Finance & Operations (as appropriate)
- Phase Leads (whom the postholder line manages)
- The SENDCo
- Members of the safeguarding team, including Deputy DSLs (DDSLs)
- The Assistant Head (Academic) in the Senior School
- The Assistant Head (Pastoral) in the Lower School
- Teaching and support staff across the school
- The Safeguarding Governor and wider governing body
- External agencies and professionals

Safeguarding Leadership (Designated Safeguarding Lead)

The postholder will act as the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with current statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education, and will ensure that all safeguarding responsibilities are discharged effectively.

Strategic and Operational Leadership

- Provide strategic leadership for safeguarding across the school, ensuring a strong safeguarding culture is embedded
- Ensure safeguarding arrangements meet all requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education and other relevant statutory guidance, and that safeguarding remains the school's highest priority
- Lead and manage the safeguarding team, including DDSLs
- Ensure safeguarding systems, policies, and procedures are robust, regularly reviewed, and effectively implemented
- Work in conjunction with relevant senior operational and HR colleagues to maintain joint oversight of the Single Central Register (SCR), ensuring its accuracy, completeness and ongoing compliance through routine monitoring and review, and providing appropriate assurance to the Safeguarding Governor.

Safeguarding Practice and Case Management

- Maintain oversight of all safeguarding concerns, ensuring timely, appropriate and well-recorded responses
- Ensure that safeguarding records are accurate, complete, and regularly reviewed
- Monitor the quality of safeguarding practice and decision-making across the school
- Monitor and respond to contextual safeguarding trends, ensuring that appropriate communication and guidance is shared with parents where relevant

DDSL Deployment and Coverage

- Ensure that appropriately trained DDSLs are in place and deployed effectively
- Ensure that a trained safeguarding leader (DSL or DDSL) is available at all times during the school day

Handover and Continuity (in light of absence)

- Establish and maintain robust and clearly defined safeguarding cover arrangements to ensure continuity of leadership at all times, including when the DSL is not on site
- Ensure that a trained and appropriately briefed Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) is formally designated to assume operational responsibility in the absence of the DSL
- Implement systematic and timely handover processes between the DSL and DDSL(s), including the sharing of all active safeguarding concerns, actions, risk assessments and priorities
- Ensure that safeguarding records are up to date, accessible and sufficiently detailed to support continuity of decision-making
- Retain overall strategic oversight and accountability for safeguarding provision, including during periods of delegated operational responsibility
- Regularly review the effectiveness of safeguarding cover arrangements and make adjustments where necessary to ensure consistency, clarity and compliance
- Ensure that all staff understand safeguarding escalation routes and that these remain clear and operational at all times

Training and Staff Development

- Lead safeguarding training for all staff and ensure compliance with statutory training requirements
- Ensure all new staff receive timely and effective safeguarding induction
- Keep staff updated on changes to safeguarding guidance and best practice

External Liaison

- Liaise with external agencies, including social care, police, and other professionals
- Ensure appropriate referrals are made and followed up effectively

Governance and Reporting

- Produce regular safeguarding reports for the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body
- Work closely with the Safeguarding Governor, including facilitating monitoring visits
- Ensure the school is fully prepared for inspection in relation to safeguarding

Supervision

- Participate in and promote appropriate safeguarding supervision arrangements
- Contribute to a culture of reflective and accountable safeguarding practice

Attendance

- Work with staff, pupils and families to promote high levels of attendance and punctuality
- Ensure attendance processes are effective, consistent and aligned with school policy

Leadership and Line Management

- Line management of Phase Leads, ensuring clarity of expectations, accountability and support
- Ensure consistency of pastoral systems and expectations across phases
- Oversee the effectiveness of the tutor/form programme through the line management of Phase Leads, ensuring consistency in delivery, expectations and pupil experience
- Ensure there is an effective PSHE programme in place which meets the needs of pupils and is regulatory compliant
- Lead performance management and professional development
- Chair relevant meetings
- Ensure consistent implementation of school policies
- Support staff in managing complex pastoral and behavioural issues and take a proactive approach, when and if appropriate
- Ensure the pastoral care and discipline in the Senior School is of the highest standard and to lead and manage those staff with delegated responsibility
- Lead an annual pastoral support review, including implementation of any changes to ensure that the pastoral care within the Senior School is of the highest standard
- Assist the Principal and Head of Finance and Operations to develop the Senior School budget
- To be responsible for the monitoring of Pastoral budgets, including those led by your team
- Promote a culture of high expectations and continuous improvement

Lead for Pupil Voice and Leadership (Senior School)

- Lead the strategic development of pupil voice and pupil leadership across the Senior School, ensuring alignment with whole-school priorities and effective translation into annual operational planning.
- Design, implement and evaluate an inclusive pupil leadership development programme for all Senior School year groups.
- Establish and oversee a coherent system for the collection, collation, analysis and use of pupil voice, ensuring it informs action planning and contributes meaningfully to school improvement.
- Lead the preparation of high-quality documentation relating to pupil voice and pupil leadership, ensuring clarity, consistency and impact.
- Maintain an informed understanding of national developments in pupil voice and leadership, using research and best practice to strengthen provision.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues across the Senior School to embed pupil voice, monitor its impact, and ensure it meaningfully reflects and influences the pupil experience.

Whole School Contribution

- Contribute to the School Development Plan
- Monitor and evaluate, alongside the Assistant Heads, the effectiveness of all areas of the Senior Schools provision
- Manage the day-to-day operations of the Senior School alongside the other Assistant Heads
- To assist the Vice Principal to ensure that the school is compliant for ISI inspections
- Attend and contribute to strategic and operational SLT meetings, presenting and preparing documentation as and when required
- Ensure that connectivity is developed between the Lower and Senior School at every opportunity
- Work collaboratively with senior leaders across all phases

- Manage the collation, determination and review of pupil awards and prizes alongside the Assistant Head (Academic)
- Maintain a visible presence around the school
- Deliver and lead on sections of the school's INSET programme where appropriate
- Lead assemblies and ensure there is an effective and engaging assembly programme
- Contribute to wider school life
- Support school events
- To ensure that you are contactable outside of school hours, where necessary or appropriate

Teaching

The postholder will not normally have a teaching commitment but may be required to undertake teaching duties where necessary to support the needs of the school.

Marketing of the School

- Work with the Head of Marketing and Communications for determining the Senior School content on the website, on social media, in school publications and marketing materials
- Work with the Head of Marketing and Communications to design taster events for feeder schools and activities for high profile events such as Open Day
- Take a lead role and present, if required, during Senior School Open Days and other 'showcase' events (including feeder school activities); working with the marketing department to ensure these events are successful
- Work with all senior colleagues, ensure timely communications of meetings, events, schedules to Parents/Carers
- Be responsible, in collaboration with other senior colleagues and relevant school office staff, for the production and updating of the school calendar, which includes meeting schedules and events
- Be responsible for producing rotas for Senior School teaching staff for day to day and for events
- Be responsible for routine monitoring of staff communication to parents, in respect to specific domain, to ensure it is effective and appropriate
- With the Principal, where appropriate, conduct exit meetings with Parents who are moving their children from St Mary's

Professional Responsibilities

- Uphold the school's values, policies and professional standards
- Act as a role model
- Engage in professional development
- Maintain high standards of communication and organisation
- Demonstrate resilience, discretion and sound judgement
- Uphold the Nolan Principles of Public Life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership) in all aspects of professional practice

Flexibility Clause

The responsibilities of this role will evolve as required in line with statutory guidance, the needs of the school, and the ongoing development of the school's leadership structure.

Other Specific Duties

- To attend INSET training, staff meetings and briefings as directed.
 - To participate in wider school initiatives, such as Challenge Weeks and residential/day trips.
 - To carry out scheduled staff supervisory duties such as at break and lunch times.
- To play a full part in the life of the school community, to support its mission and ethos and to encourage and ensure staff and students follow this example.
- To comply with whole school policies and procedures.
 - To maintain a visible, professional, and high profile within the school.

Whilst every effort has been made to explain the main duties and responsibilities of the post, each individual task may not have been identified; therefore, employees will be expected to comply with any reasonable request from the Principal including ad hoc projects and to undertake work of a similar level that is not specified in the job description.

The job description is current, but in consultation with you, may be changed by the Principal to reflect or anticipate changes in the job, commensurate with the grade and job title.

St Mary's is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All candidates must be willing to undergo child protection screening, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Person specification

The successful candidate will demonstrate many, if not all, of the following qualities, skills and experiences. Essential criteria are those required for appointment; desirable criteria indicate areas of additional strength.

(E) = Essential
(D) = Desirable

Qualifications and Training

- Education to degree level or equivalent
- QTS, PGCE or equivalent
- Evidence of continued professional development
- Level 3 safeguarding training (DSL), or willingness to undertake immediately/refresh
- SENDCO qualification or equivalent experience in leading SEND provision
- Further postgraduate qualification
- Training in mental health, wellbeing or safeguarding leadership

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Expertise

- Significant leadership experience in a school setting
- Extensive safeguarding and pastoral leadership experience
- Experience as DSL or DDSL
- Experience of leading attendance strategy
- Experience of leading and managing staff
- Experience of multi-agency safeguarding work
- Experience of inspection preparation
- Experience of leading whole-school safeguarding strategy
- Experience across multiple phases
- Experience using safeguarding / pastoral data systems



Knowledge and Skills

- Excellent knowledge of safeguarding legislation (KCSIE)
- Strong understanding of pastoral systems and pupil wellbeing
- Ability to make sound judgements in complex situations
- Excellent organisational and administrative skills
- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Ability to lead and develop teams effectively
- Knowledge of ISI / independent school standards
- Understanding of SEND and inclusive practice
- Experience delivering staff training

Personal Qualities

- Strong moral compass and professional integrity
- Warmth, visibility and approachability
- Resilience and ability to manage a demanding workload
- Strong interpersonal and relational skills
- Ability to build effective relationships with pupils, staff, parents and governors
- Commitment to safeguarding and pupil welfare
- Collaborative leadership with clarity and authority
- Reflective, adaptable and committed to improvement
- Intellectual curiosity and commitment to continuous improvement

Why colleagues choose St Mary's

Employee Assistance Programme

Confidential 24-hour helpline
Counselling sessions
Wellness app

Meals and Refreshments

Lunch available during term-time
Tea and coffee facilities provided

Physical Health

Occupational health support
Bike2Work scheme

Financial

Staff discount for School fees (subject to qualifying criteria)
Financial coaching through the EAP
Regular benchmarking of salaries
Access to BlueLight Card and other discounts

Professional Development

Life and leadership coaching through the EAP
INSET training

Additional Benefits

Pleasant working grounds and location
Free parking on site

St Mary's offers colleagues the opportunity to work in a warm, purposeful and ambitious school community where pupils are known well and relationships matter. Small classes, committed pupils and a strong pastoral culture create the conditions for excellent teaching and meaningful professional impact.

As we approach our 120th anniversary in 2028, this is also an exciting moment to join the school. Colleagues appointed now will have the opportunity to contribute to an important phase of development, helping to shape an academically ambitious, intellectually rigorous and distinctive education for girls.

We value professional voice, collaboration and continuing development, and we are looking for colleagues who want to bring intellectual energy, scholarship and care to the life of the school.



Application process

Closing date for applications: Monday 18th May 2026

Date of interviews: On a rolling basis

Candidates should complete their application form on MyNewTerm: <https://mynewterm.com/school/St-Mary's-School-for-Girls/115394>

If you have any questions about the application process, please contact Mrs M Terry, HR & Compliance Officer at:

Email: careers@stmaryscolchester.org.uk

Post: St Mary's School, 91 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3RB

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Safeguarding

St Mary's is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All candidates must be willing to undergo child protection screening.

Please visit www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/vacancies/ to read our Application & Recruitment process explanatory notes.

Privacy Notice

Please read our Privacy Notice for Job Candidates, which can be found at www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/vacancies/

We respect your privacy and are committed to protecting your personal data. Our Privacy Notice will inform you as to how we look after personal data held by us and tell you about your privacy rights and how the law protects you. It is important that you read this Privacy Notice together with any other privacy notice or fair processing notice we may provide on specific occasions when we are collecting or processing personal data so that you are fully aware of how and why we are using personal data. This Privacy Notice supplements the other notices and is not intended to override them.



St Mary's
Colchester

