

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE	Interim Chief Accountant (9-Month Fixed Term Contract)
DEPARTMENT	Bursary
SECTION	Whole School
LINE MANAGER	Warden

SAFEGUARDING

Forest School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Safeguarding checks will be undertaken on all successful candidates in accordance with School policy. The safeguarding responsibilities of the post can be found in this job description and person specification.

NB The post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

The postholder will be required to;

- Complete an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Check (DBS).
- Complete Child Protection Training.
- Promote and safeguard the welfare of all children and young persons they are responsible for, or with whom they come into contact.

JOB SUMMARY:

We are seeking a highly capable and proactive Interim Chief Accountant to join our Finance Team on a 9-month fixed-term basis. This is a pivotal leadership role within our independent school, with responsibility for ensuring the integrity, accuracy and compliance of all financial operations across both the School and its subsidiary company.

The successful candidate will provide strategic and operational financial oversight, manage key statutory reporting requirements, and support senior leadership in delivering sound financial governance. This is an excellent opportunity for an experienced finance professional to make a meaningful impact in a values-driven educational environment, while contributing to ongoing financial system improvements and best practice initiatives.

This is a unique opportunity to play a central role in the financial leadership of a respected independent school. You will work closely with senior stakeholders, contribute to strategic decision-making, and help shape the financial processes that underpin educational excellence.

This role offers the chance to broaden your leadership experience, contribute to meaningful institutional development, and leave a lasting impact within a collaborative and supportive environment.

We welcome applications from experienced finance professionals ready to bring expertise, integrity and leadership to this important interim position.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

Leadership & Team Management

- Line management and development of the Assistant Accountant and Assistant Accounts Clerk.
- Support and strengthen the wider Finance Team in delivering high-quality financial services.
- Develop staff capability through coaching, training and performance oversight.

Financial Reporting & Control

- Full management of the Nominal Ledger, including overseeing and supporting monthly balance sheet reconciliations and termly income reconciliations.
- Preparation of year-end files, including detailed schedules and analysis for external auditors.
- Support the Senior Finance Manager in the production of management accounts and VAT returns.
- Support in implementing new financial system (iFinance).

Payroll & Benefits Administration

- Oversee and process payroll for all staff employed by the School and its subsidiary company.
- Preparation of end-of-year statutory payroll returns (P35, P14, P60 and P11D).
- Administration of pension schemes, including:
 - Monthly schedule of contributions for the School Staff Pension Scheme.
 - Teachers' Pension Scheme annual return and End of Year Certificate.
- Administration of the childcare voucher and payroll giving schemes.
- Preparation of staff schedules for the Group Life Assurance scheme.

Statutory & Regulatory Compliance

- Preparation and submission of the Charity Commission annual return.
- Respond to queries from statutory bodies including HM Revenue & Customs, The Pensions Regulator, and the Office for National Statistics.
- Ensure ongoing compliance with financial regulations, charity law and independent school reporting standards.

Fees, Bursaries & Financial Support

- Liaise with the Senior Finance Manager and Warden to determine scholarship and bursary awards.
- Means-test bursary applications and conduct annual reviews of existing awards.
- Supervise the collection of school fees in conjunction with the Senior Finance Manager.
- Where required, prepare witness statements with the School's solicitors and attend Court hearings relating to outstanding debts.

Policy & Process Development

- Work collaboratively with the Senior Finance Manager to update and enhance financial policies and procedures.
- Identify and implement improvements to financial systems and internal controls.
- Undertake ad hoc financial analysis and reporting as required.

Additional Duties

- Undertake any additional duties as reasonably required by the Senior Finance Manager.

GENERIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Below sets out the generic main duties and responsibilities of any non-teaching staff member at Forest School. Those holding positions of responsibility have specific job descriptions in addition to the duties described below. Above all, Forest School staff are professionals who carry out their duties responsibly and with regard for the best interests of the pupils and the school.

Pastoral Responsibilities

Every staff member at Forest has collective responsibility for our pastoral processes and policies. Forest staff contribute to the development of the whole child and demonstrate consistent competence, build outstanding relationships alongside the highest expectations.

Our pastoral foundations are as follows:

- Ensure every pupil is known, liked and valued.
- Ensure every pupil feels safe and secure.
- Ensure earliest intervention and a responsibility for personal development.
- Ensure you are incorporating pupil voice into daily decision-making.
- Ensure you have proactive communication with all stakeholders.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

- Ensure that all key policies have been read and understood, including KCSIE Part 1
- Attend Safeguarding and Child Protection training, including updates and Prevent
- Complete an annual declaration regarding the status of DBS

Health and Safety

- Be familiar with and implement all School Policies and Procedures.

Other Professional Duties

- Support and foster the aims of the school.
- Make themselves familiar with the contents of the Staff Handbook, the Staff Code of Conduct, the School's aims and policies and endeavour to follow these closely.
- Notify their Head of Department and the Absence Managers as early as possible if they are going to be absent from School and set rigorous, appropriate work.
- Attend relevant training each year, after obtaining the consent of their Head of Department and the CPD Budget holder.
- Take part in the school's performance management scheme and appraisal.

This generic description should be read alongside the Staff Code of Conduct.

FOREST SCHOOL'S POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The postholder is required to actively follow and abide by all Forest policies and procedures including Equal Opportunities, Staff Code of Conduct, [Safer Recruitment and Child Protection](#), and will maintain an awareness and observation of Fire and Health & Safety Regulations

Forest School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Appointment to this position requires an enhanced DBS disclosure.

If during the course of time the duties and responsibilities should change, the job description will be reviewed and amended in consultation with the postholder.

The postholder will carry out any other duties as are within the scope, spirit and purpose of this job description as requested the line manager or Head of Department/Section.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Category	Details
Contract Type	Part-time (3 days), fixed-term (9 months)
Working Hours	Term time hours: 08:00 - 17:00, three days per week. School holidays: 08:30 – 15:30, three days during the school week Monday – Friday
Holiday Entitlement	30 days per year taken during school holidays and is pro rated for part time staff and for those who join during the leave year (1 January – 31 December)
Additional Details	In addition, and as part of you contracted hours, you will be required to attend Open Day, Information and Welcome Mornings, Entrance Examinations and Commemoration Day (all Saturdays) as well as some evening events. School Office staff will also be required to be in attendance on the day before, and the day of, the A level and GCSE results as well as the last week of the summer holidays. Please note that time off in lieu and additional payment will not be made for these days.