

Job Description – Head of Finance and Operations

The Harpur Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.	
Job Purpose:	As a member of the School's Leadership Team, the Head of Finance and Operations will provide strategic and operational leadership across all non-teaching functions, with a particular emphasis on financial management, strategic planning and operational excellence. This role requires an experienced finance leader who combines strong financial acumen with the ability to oversee a diverse range of operational areas. The post holder will act as a trusted advisor to the Head and Governing Body, ensuring the School's long-term financial health and operational effectiveness.
Job Title:	Head of Finance and Operations
Department:	Senior Leadership Team/Professional Services
Location:	Bedford Girls' School, Bedford (some travel to other Harpur Trust schools and the Trust Office)
Reporting to:	Head, with additional reporting to the School Governing Body Chair
Dotted Line:	Trust Chief Financial Officer
Hours:	37 per week, but the post holder will be required to work as necessary to achieve their objectives (subject to the Working Time Regulations 1998)
Line management responsibility for:	• Estates & Facilities Manager • Accounts Manager • IT Manager • Catering Manager • Head Groundsperson • Trips Co-ordinator • Nursing Manager
Principal Accountabilities/Responsibilities	Strategic and Financial Leadership • Partner with the Head and Governing Body to ensure the School's financial sustainability and to drive long-term strategic planning. • Lead all aspects of the School's financial management, including budgeting, forecasting, reporting, and compliance with Trust and statutory regulations. • Produce timely management reports and financial analyses for the Head, Leadership Team, and Governors. • Oversee the preparation of the annual budget and ensure robust financial controls are in place. • Work closely with the Trust Chief Financial Officer and finance team to ensure consistency of standards and alignment with Trust financial policies. • Drive financial efficiency and value for money without compromising educational quality. • Lead on commercial and income-generating activities, including lettings and third-party contracts. • Work with the Harpur Trust Fees team to manage debtors and the process for recovery of outstanding debts and liaising with parents, where necessary.

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	Operational Leadership • Provide strategic oversight and leadership for Estates, IT, Catering, H&S and other operational functions. • Drive a culture of excellence, accountability, and continuous improvement across all professional services. • Lead the planning and delivery of capital projects and maintenance programmes. • Ensure that the School site remains secure and compliant with health, safety, environmental and regulatory standards. • Oversee property management, including staff accommodation and lettings. • Maintain adequate insurance and ensure the effective handling of data protection, risk, and compliance matters. With support from the Trust office, handle any data breaches or subject access requests. • Support the School's sustainability objectives through efficient resource and energy management. People Leadership and Management • Lead and develop a multi-disciplinary team of professional services staff. • Ensure effective recruitment, appraisal, professional development and performance management. • Promote a cohesive, supportive, and high-performing culture across all teams. • Work collaboratively with Harpur Trust colleagues to share best practice and contribute to cross-Trust initiatives. • Act as a visible, trusted partner to the Head, Leadership Team and Governing Body. Governance, Risk, and Compliance • Serve as Clerk to the School Governing Body for School matters, ensuring effective communication and documentation. • Manage the School's risk register and report regularly on key risks and mitigations. • Ensure full compliance with the Independent School Standards Regulations (ISSRs) and relevant legislation. • Lead on health and safety, data protection, and compliance frameworks in collaboration with the Trust and senior colleagues. Safeguarding Statement The Harpur Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful applicant will be required to undergo an enhanced DBS check.
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You may also be required to undertake such other comparable duties as the Trust/School requires from time to time.

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Person Specification (A- Application, I – Interview, R – Reference)	Essential	Desirable	Identified
Qualifications			
Educated to a degree level	Y		AR
Professional qualified accountant (ACA, ACCA, CIMA or equivalent)		Y	AR
Other suitable financial qualification (e.g. AAT Diploma, CSBM, MBA) or significant financial experience	Y		AR
Evidence of continuous professional development relevant to financial or operational leadership	Y		AR
Project management qualified or willingness to attend training		Y	AR
Health and Safety or risk management training		Y	AR
Experience			
Proven track record of financial leadership and management in a complex organisation	Y		AIR
Experience of preparing, managing and monitoring multi-million-pound budgets	Y		AIR
Experience of financial forecasting, reporting, and long-term financial planning	Y		AIR
Experience of leading multi-disciplinary operational teams (finance, estates, IT, catering, etc.)		Y	AIR
Experience of successful senior management and strategic decision-making	Y		AIR
Experience of developing business plans and delivering efficiency savings	Y		AIR
Experience of estate and facilities management, including capital projects	Y		AIR
Experience of HR management and staff development		Y	AIR
Experience of risk management, compliance, and health and safety	Y		AIR
Experience of working in education or charitable environment		Y	AIR
Experience of leading change and delivering organisational improvement	Y		AIR
Knowledge and Skills			
Excellent financial literacy and understanding of accounting and audit principles	Y		AIR
Strong strategic and analytical skills, able to interpret data and influence decision-making	Y		AIR
Knowledge of financial, administrative, and governance systems	Y		AIR

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Understanding of estates, facilities, IT and catering management in a large organisation		Y	AIR
Knowledge of statutory and regulatory requirements in the education sector (ISSRs, H&S, GDPR)	Y		AIR
Competent IT skills, including familiarity with financial and management information systems	Y		AIR
Excellent written and verbal communication skills	Y		AI
Confident presentation and influencing skills	Y		AI
Ability to prioritise short, medium, and long-term plans to ensure objectives are met.	Y		AIR
Personal competencies and qualities			
A strategic thinker, with the ability to balance detail and vision	Y		AIR
A collaborative and empowering leader who commands respect	Y		AIR
Exceptional interpersonal and relationship-building skills	Y		AIR
High personal integrity, professionalism, and discretion	Y		AIR
Resilient and calm under pressure, with a flexible and results-focused approach	Y		AIR
Strong organisational skills and ability to manage multiple priorities	Y		AIR
Commitment to the aims, ethos, and values of the School and the Harpur Trust	Y		I
Enthusiastic, tenacious, and approachable with a sense of humour	Y		AIR