

BRIEF FOR THE POSITION OF

HEAD OF FINANCE

WOLDINGHAM SCHOOL



APRIL 2025



The school

Set in hundreds of acres of beautiful Surrey countryside, Woldingham is one of the UK's leading day and boarding schools for girls aged 11-18. Our vision is to provide an outstanding education that empowers women to change the world for the better.

Woldingham is proud to be a pioneer of women's education, our single-sex environment is supportive and stimulating. Our empowered learning philosophy and values-driven ethos enable students to #WriteYourOwnStory.

Woldingham is increasingly popular and we have more than 540 students enrolled.

Students achieve outstanding GCSE and A Level results opening doors to exciting careers. Woldingham is in the top 10% of schools for added value.

Most students leave Woldingham to take university places at prestigious institutions in the UK and overseas. Around 75% go to courses at Oxbridge or Russell Group universities. In recent years some of the most popular UK universities for students have included Bristol, Durham, Edinburgh and Exeter. Woldingham students have also taken up places at a range of

universities overseas including Dartmouth, NYU and Cornell in the USA.

Academic excellence in all subject areas goes hand in hand with learning beyond the classroom. Our exceptional extra-curricular programme of sport, clubs, performing arts and outreach into our local community enables students to develop a wonderful range of skills, expertise and interests, alongside high-level academic achievement. Every student is unique. Our aim is for girls to 'write your own story' at school and throughout life.

Around 50% of students board – full, weekly or flexi. Around 40% of our students live locally, 40% come from London and 20% from overseas. Our global community is very important to us and students from more than 30 different nationalities attend Woldingham.





HISTORY

Founded by Saint Madeleine Sophie Barat in 1842, Woldingham is one of the oldest girls' schools in the UK. Initially based in Acton, the school later moved to Roehampton and in 1946 moved to our current home at Marden Park. Initially a full boarding school, Woldingham now has a well-balanced mix of boarders and day students.

As the first Sacred Heart school in England, Woldingham was initially called the Convent of the Sacred Heart. It became Woldingham School in 1985 when it moved to lay leadership.

ETHOS

Woldingham is a happy and successful school where we develop confident, compassionate and courageous young women.

Students are encouraged to nurture respect for self, each other and for the environment. The Woldingham community is strong, forward-thinking and kind. Students leave Woldingham with academic results that open doors, values to navigate successful careers and friendships that last a lifetime.

Woldingham is a Catholic school, where we welcome girls of all faiths or none. Woldingham is part of the Sacred Heart Network, which has schools in more than 40 countries around the world.

Woldingham has a strong sense of community underpinned by a set of shared values, based on the Sacred Heart goals, which are:

- Faith and living responsibly in the world today.
- Social justice and an awareness which impels to action.
- Community and sharing friendships with those outside it.
- Scholarship and a deep respect for intellectual values.
- Personal responsibility and growth in an atmosphere of wide and appropriate freedom.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Woldingham is committed to fulfilling the academic potential of every student. A selective school, We are proud of our 'value added' outcomes where students regularly achieve a grade higher than their baseline predictions in all subjects at GCSE. In 2024, 51% of A Level grades

were A*-A and 30% of GCSE grades were 9. 83% of students achieved a place at their first choice university.

Empowered Learning is a student-focussed, teacher led approach to academic curriculum, designed to cater for the needs of each individual student, create independent learners and inspire students to love their subjects.

The school offers a broad curriculum with 26 A Level choices available in the Sixth Form. There is an excellent academic enrichment programme for all students, as well as a dedicated programme for academic scholars. We also provide intensive support for students applying to Oxbridge, and for medicine, dentistry and veterinary science.





Boarders in Years 7, 8 and 9 live in Marden and Years 10 and 11 in Main House, with individual study bedrooms from Year 10 upwards. Students in the Sixth Form live in purpose-built modern accommodation, providing the perfect transition from school to university.

There is a busy range of evening and weekend activities with students in the older years enjoying greater independence.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR

Woldingham has a rich and varied extra-curricular programme with more than 100 clubs and activities to choose from. Students are encouraged to balance study with activity, and to be committed and proud of their wider abilities.

The House system fosters community across the school, with a busy programme of activities and competitions. Woldingham has four mixed-age Houses, each of which promotes a spirit of community among students of different ages and staff. Students belong to one of four Houses named after Patrons with a close association to the Society of the Sacred Heart. Houses organise a wide variety of activities including charity fund-raising events, inter-House competitions and, a highlight of the year, the House Festival in September. House assemblies are held fortnightly. Each House has its own Mass and feast where students and staff celebrate together and focus their fund-raising efforts.

Woldingham has an active outreach programme giving back to the community – both locally and further afield.



PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral care is at the heart of the school. At Woldingham every student is known and supported as an individual by both teaching and support staff. The school supports – and expects – students and staff to be kind to each other. Students can be themselves and grow into independent women who will make a positive contribution to the world. Tutors provide excellent academic and pastoral support and guidance for students, in close conjunction with Heads of Year, teaching and support staff.

THRIVE & WELLBEING

The school's THRIVE programme promotes emotional well-being and enables every student to develop the growth mindset, resilience and self-worth to enjoy success as well as learn from setbacks. It helps students face changes with flexibility, meet failure with resilience and manage their own busy lives calmly.

As part of the THRIVE programme, students develop study skills. Study skills are developed as girls move up through the school, with the strong foundations built in Years 7 and 8 carried on through to the Sixth Form.

THRIVE focuses on the importance of wellbeing. Students learn about handling social media, self-esteem and body image. They learn how to deal with pressure, responsibility and making the right choices. All skills needed to be successful at school and as an adult.

BOARDING

Woldingham is first and foremost a boarding school with strong traditions. We offer a flexible approach to boarding to meet the needs of families today. Around half of current students board with options including full, weekly and flexi-boarding.

Boarders live in year groups and are cared for by a Head of Year, housemistress, assistant housemistress and resident tutor.



SPORT

Sport is extremely important to life at Woldingham and plays a vital role in supporting physical and emotional health and wellbeing.

Sport is about enjoyment, inclusion, team spirit, fitness, competition and performance. By the time our students leave, our aim is for them to have a lifelong commitment to sport and healthy living. We rightly celebrate the achievements of our athletes, some of whom represent their county and even country, and our school teams who do well in local and regional competitions.

Woldingham has excellent sports facilities including a sports centre with a large sports hall, two squash courts, fitness studio and a dance/gymnastics studio. We have extensive outdoor courts and pitches, an indoor tennis dome, an indoor swimming pool and an all-weather pitch.

In the autumn and spring terms, netball and hockey are our major sports. In the summer we play cricket, tennis and athletics. In addition, students compete in sports such as swimming and cross country. We place great value in being part of a team as well as excelling as an individual.

The school has a busy weekday and Saturday fixture list and participates in district and county tournaments.

There are strongly contested House sport competitions throughout the year, culminating in our annual sports day. We also offer a fantastic range of sport trips within the UK and overseas.

CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS

Woldingham's Millennium Centre has some of the best facilities for music and drama performance of any school in the country. The 630-seater acoustically designed Dineen Auditorium includes an orchestra pit and fully computerised sound and lighting system. The Millennium Centre also has recital and rehearsal rooms, a studio theatre, wardrobe room, dressing rooms and fantastic foyer area.

Woldingham School has an outstanding reputation for drama. The industry standard facilities and specialist drama staff support students to create productions of the very highest standard. The school has high specification technical support with state-of-the-art sound and lighting run by a highly-qualified technical crew.

The Music Department is well resourced, dynamic and busy, providing many and varied opportunities for our musicians to perform. Standards and expectations are very high.

Each term there is a large-scale concert and a number of informal and formal recitals. Our musicians perform in the numerous joint productions with the Drama Department and the choirs lead the singing at Westminster Cathedral for our annual school carol service.

Woldingham's art facilities are outstanding with purpose-built art and textiles studios comprising two studios, a 3-D area equipped with a range of power tools and two kilns, a dark room and a textile room. Student artwork is displayed throughout the school.

LOOKING FORWARD

The school's vision is to provide an outstanding education that empowers women to change the world. Woldingham's mission is to be a happy and successful school developing confident, compassionate and courageous young women.

Sue Baillie, Head joined in September 2024 and says "Woldingham is a very special place, where the strength of our values-led ethos combined with our empowered approach to education creates a warm and caring community where girls flourish."



Head of Finance

SUMMARY

To assist the Director of Finance and Operations (DFO) in the financial management of the School and to lead and oversee the financial functions of the School together with its subsidiary companies and the Foundation. This is an excellent opportunity to play a significant part in the management and leadership the School at an exciting time as a new strategic plan is developed. The Head of Finance leads the Finance Department comprising the Senior Finance Officer, Billing Officer and Finance Assistant - Purchasing and Payroll. They will be supportive of the Catholic, Sacred Heart ethos of the school.

THE ROLE

Reporting to the DFO, this is a hands-on and varied role. The successful candidate will play a key role ensuring a robust financial control environment is maintained and processes are as efficient as possible.

The successful candidate will be able to implement change to achieve best practice throughout the school. They will be a strong communicator, collegial, decisive, and have sound problem-solving skills.

He/she will be a qualified accountant, with strong technical skills and knowledge, who works positively with other professionals. They will have to demonstrate leadership, flexibility and tact and enjoy working as part of a team with all members of the school community.

The successful candidate will be instrumental in managing the implementation of a new payroll system, and in the continued development of financial systems.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

- Lead and manage the school Finance team, including overseeing day-to-day processes, communication, motivation, succession planning and performance management.
- Ensure regular performance reviews are carried out and appropriate professional development is undertaken for all team members.
- Advise the DFO on the optimal structure and resources for the Department.



BUDGETS

- Supporting the DFO in the preparation of annual budgets, working with all budget holders to ensure submissions are accurate and timely, challenging where necessary, leading on departmental budget setting.
- Working closely with the DFO and Director of Estates to support the financing and budgeting for maintenance programme and building projects.
- Liaise with budget holders supporting them with managing spend against budgets and objectives.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- Assist the Governors, Head and DFO in implementing the School's strategic financial objectives.
- Ensure financial systems and controls are efficient and effective.
- Prepare monthly management accounts, including narrative on performance against budget, and forecasts for the financial year.
- Prepare required papers for, and attend and contribute to, the Governors' Resources Committee.
- Prepare long-term forecasts and sensitivity analysis, undertaking modelling and feasibility studies as appropriate.
- Undertake competitor analysis and benchmarking studies.
- Maintain continuous professional development and keep up to date with regulatory changes.
- Proactively investigate and promote ways of improving value for money.
- Prepare analysis of financing options for major capital projects.



ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING

- Ensure the School's accounting records, bank reconciliations, fees ledger, purchase ledger, nominal ledger, and fixed assets register are maintained accurately and kept up to date in accordance with agreed timetables and procedures.
- Prepare annual consolidated and subsidiary statutory accounts for the School and its subsidiaries.
- Liaise with external auditors on all matters connected with the annual audit of the School's accounts and other external accountancy advice.
- Liaise with tax advisors regarding the preparation of corporation tax returns and ensure timely submission.
- Ensure compliance with external regulators, including HMRC, the Charity Commission and Companies House.
- Oversee the quarterly preparation of and submit accurate and timely VAT returns.
- Oversee payroll function to ensure that salaries, including PAYE; pension and NI contributions, are paid correctly; liaising with the Head of HR as required.
- Oversee the statutory implementation of auto enrolment of pensions and Teachers Pensions regulations; advising and implementing changes to provision as required.
- Advising on benefits in kind (overseeing timely submission of P11Ds) and all other employment taxation matters.
- Oversee fee collection and ensure fee debt is managed proactively, working with the DFO.
- Manage the Fees in Advance scheme and provide quotations for parents.
- Oversee the School's financial investments, including liaison and review with the School's investment advisors/managers.
- Arrange appropriate review of financial advisors and service providers including auditors, bankers and investment advisors managers.
- Continue to develop and improve the School's accounting and finance systems.
- Support the Director of External Relations with fundraising matters, including advising on gift aid claims and the Head of Commercial with the management of commercial activity.
- The post holder will be expected to carry out such other duties as reasonably requested by the DFO that are commensurate with its level of responsibility.



The person

LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION

Essential

- Experience in leading a finance team.
- Calm, positive and measured whilst under pressure.
- A considered and confident decision maker.
- The ability to lead and manage people to work towards a common goal.
- The ability to blend firmness, patience and empathy when dealing with difficult situations.
- The ability to convey financial matters to non-specialists.

QUALIFICATION AND ACCOUNTANCY

Essential

- ACA, ACCA or CIMA qualified
- In depth knowledge of FRS102, the preparation of annual accounts and detailed audit file
- Good knowledge of VAT.
- Working knowledge of corporation tax.

Desirable

- Experience of working in schools or charity sector.
- Knowledge of the Charities SORP.



OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Essential

- Exceptional levels of planning and organisation, with outstanding attention to detail.
- Significant initiative and drive allied to the ability to work quickly and accurately.
- Articulate in all forms of communication; fluent and accurate written and spoken English.
- Excellent time management skills.
- Excellent IT skills, especially Microsoft Excel.
- Excellent organisational skills with the ability to prioritise work and meet deadlines.

ETHOS AND WHOLE SCHOOL VALUES

Essential

- Committed to operating as part of the School community.
- Committed to the Sacred Heart values.
- Commitment to Woldingham as a school with high academic standing providing a holistic education and outstanding pastoral care.

SAFEGUARDING AND PASTORAL

Essential

- Committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.
- A satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure from the DBS.



TERMS AND BENEFITS

- **Start date:** Summer 2025
- **Salary:** £65,000 to £70,000 per annum.
- **Pension:** The Head of Finance will be auto enrolled into the appropriate pension scheme, which includes life assurance.
- **Lunch:** A free lunch is available in the dining room each working day when the kitchens are open.
- **Parking:** There is free parking on site
- **Gym and pool:** There are staff sessions for use of these facilities.
- **School fees:** Subject to Governors' discretion school fee remission may be available for dependants of the job holder attending the school. If not already at the school, any child would have to meet all of the normal entrance requirements.



How to apply

CLOSING DATE AND APPLICATION ARRANGEMENTS

The closing date for applications is 9.00am on **Tuesday 22 April 2025**.

Long list interviews will be held on **Friday 25 April 2025**.

Short list interviews will be held on **Tuesday 29 April 2025**.

To apply please submit your completed application form to hr@woldinghamschool.co.uk with a supporting letter.

Candidates will need to ensure they are available to attend both interviews on site should they be long/shortlisted.





Marden Park, Woldingham, Surrey, CR3 7YA
(for satellite navigation please use postcode CR3 7LR)
+44 (0)1883 654308 hr@woldinghamschool.co.uk
woldinghamschool.co.uk