



# APPLICANT Information Pack

Assistant Headteacher  
(Culture and Belonging)



Highcliffe School



Dear Colleague,

I am delighted you are considering applying for a post at Highcliffe School, part of HISP Multi Academy Trust. Please find alongside this letter information, which, I hope, provides an insight to our school and the opportunities that await the successful candidate.

Highcliffe is a remarkable school with a special atmosphere. We are very highly respected in our community, with whole generations of families coming here for over 50 years from Christchurch and the New Forest. Former students, current students and their parents frequently speak of their powerful emotional bonds to our school lasting a lifetime. Although we have raised our PAN twice in recent years, demand for places still exceeds availability. This is a result of our caring and aspirational ethos combined with our engaging curriculum and excellent extra-curricular opportunities, although our track record of exam success is surely another factor. Our students are lovely young people to work with who respond enthusiastically to good teaching and are keen to learn.

Former students go on to work in international finance, law, education, politics, engineering, medicine, science, and in the Paris fashion houses, or as great chefs, carers, artists, musicians, mechanics, gardeners and much more – but not before they have thrived at Highcliffe academically, creatively and socially. We have an excellent record of success placing students into the top universities in their chosen field. Every year for the last 12 years at least one of our Sixth Form students have gone on to study at either Oxford or Cambridge universities; In the last 3 years, 10 students have had the opportunity to progress to Oxford or Cambridge. Our Sixth Form achieved an ALPS Gold Award in 2024 for value-added outcomes inside the top 25% nationally. We have successful programmes for students accessing careers in medicine, the law and engineering. We are an outwardly focused community with extensive school links in France, Spain and Japan including a unique exchange programme with a school in Hiroshima.

Our teaching staff are highly experienced, knowledgeable professionals who work together superbly. Our SEND, pastoral, clerical, financial, technical and site staff, who form a good team, are also extremely good at their jobs and committed to the school's success. We are a friendly, welcoming and supportive environment in which to work or learn, located in a great part of the country. As part of the HISP Multi Academy Trust we offer our team extensive opportunities for professional development; direct collaborative working with Thornden School in Chandler's Ford and more widely across the Trust region; and career progression routes associated with our development as a regional Hub for school improvement and professional development delivering NPQs, the local ECT programme, and the Science Learning Partnership. We are a happy and upbeat school, characterised by warm and trusting relationships between staff and students. We recently completed a £1.8 million capital project improving heating and hot water, and in December 2022 successfully entered the School Rebuilding Programme to replace 18 classrooms with brand new buildings. We expect to formally engage with the DfE as a Phase 3 school in April/May 2025, with completion by July 2029.

We have a strong focus on staff well-being and an exceptional in-house professional development programme for teachers, ensuring that Highcliffe is a positive and supportive working environment for our staff. Visitors and new staff remark on how we feel like 'one big family'.

We welcome applicants who share our ethos, bring outstanding professional skills and personal qualities, and have an unshakeable drive to make a difference to young lives through education. Unfortunately, we will not be able to contact every applicant who applies and take this opportunity to thank you for considering our school.

I look forward to hearing from you, but whatever your decision, I wish you all the best for your professional future.

**Patrick Earnshaw (BA) Hons, MA**  
**HEADTEACHER**

March 2025



## Application:

Submit a completed application form.

Submit a personal letter or statement of no more than 2 sides of A4, 11-point Calibri font, explaining your vision, skills and experience relevant to the post.

**Please note that CVs will not be accepted.**

## Application Form

The form must be completed in full and signed. Please use black ink or word processing as your form will be photocopied. Please complete all sections of the application form and ensure that your employment record is set out in full with an explanation of any gaps.

Please do not include photocopies of open testimonials. We will always write to your current or previous employer for a reference and to ask for a professional assessment of your suitability for the post. We reserve the right to approach any previous employer for a reference.

Please complete the application form carefully and ensure that you sign it at the end. You should use section 5 to set out your relevant skills, knowledge and experience.

Your completed application form and letter should be returned to Angie Parsons, PA to the Headteacher, Highcliffe School, Parkside, Highcliffe, BH23 4QD by email [aparsons@highcliffeschool.com](mailto:aparsons@highcliffeschool.com). Due to usually high volume, applications will not normally be acknowledged.

## Information about the area

Highcliffe School is ideally situated minutes from Highcliffe and Avon beaches, Mudeford Quay and Christchurch Harbour. A few minutes' drive or cycle away are the beaches of Bournemouth while Poole Harbour, a mecca for watersports, is approximately 12 miles away. As a result, sailing, kitesurfing, kayaking, paddle boarding, surfing and beach life are prominent parts of life in the area.

Highcliffe is also on the doorstep of the New Forest, meaning that equestrian sports, cycling, walking and running are also prominent features of local life. There is an extensive range of top-class pubs, cafes, clubs, theatres and cinemas throughout the area catering for people of all ages and tastes.

Highcliffe School is easily accessible from the urban centre of Bournemouth and Poole. With its large student population Bournemouth uniquely offers a multicultural city buzz combined with the relaxed South Coast surfing and holiday culture. London, the South East and the South West are easily reached by road or rail links. The European mainland is easily reached by ferry from Weymouth, Poole, and Portsmouth, while Bournemouth and Southampton airports offer continental and worldwide flights.



## Information about the School

We encourage potential applicants to explore in depth the School's website which includes recent publications and a prospectus. Potential applicants are also encouraged to read both the most recent Ofsted reports which are available via the school website or directly from [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) and the published performance data available on the DfES performance tables site. [www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance)

March 2025



## Highcliffe School

We are a large 11 to 18 school currently with 1560 students on roll including the Sixth Form. Each year group from Year 7 to 11 on average contains around 264 students. Our ethos is unequivocal: We Value the Power of Education to Change Lives. We combine a strong focus on pastoral care and support with high expectations of student behaviour and attendance. Attendance is consistently above the national average; persistent absence and severe absence both consistently below. Despite our robust management of behaviour, suspension rates compare favourably with national trends and permanent exclusion rates even more so – indicative of the student culture. Visitors always remark on the calm, purposeful and friendly atmosphere around school, how smartly students wear their uniform, and on their politeness.

Potential applicants are encouraged to study our website to gain a greater insight into our ethos, culture and day-to-day life. Please explore our culture and community-related policies too, such as the Rewards Policy and Behaviour Policy – they reveal which attitudes and behaviours we foster and those we seek to educate out of young people, and give you an insight into how we go about this. You are welcome to follow us on Facebook, Instagram and X too.

Since 2016 we have structured our pastoral support systems around the principle that just as a young person deserves subject teachers who are specialists in their field, so they deserve pastoral care from specialists in the different stages of their education and personal development. Sixth Form students have Heads of Year and Tutors who focus on supporting them at this unique stage in life, so too do Year 7, Year 8 and 9 together, and Year 10 and 11 together. Heads of Achievement remain as leaders of either Year 7 plus transition from Year 6, or Year 8 and 9, or Year 10 and 11, leading teams of Form Tutors who also remain in their focus year groups. Consequently, Year 7 are supported by staff who know the experience of transition inside out because they support every Year 7 cohort; Year 8 and 9 are supported by staff who understand the unique demands of mid-adolescence and the decisions associated with choosing GCSE options in Year 9; and Year 10 and 11 are supported by staff who know the unique demands of being 15 or 16 years of age, the pressure of GCSEs and the support needed to successfully transition to education or training at the end of Year 11. Tutor teams are co-located near each other in areas of the school with students moving to new Tutors and rooms in Year 8 and Year 10, like they do in Year 12. Each year group benefits from the support of a non-teaching pastoral and behaviour support worker who builds relationships with vulnerable or complex students and follows the year group through the school from Years 7 to 11.

In addition, we have a team of mental health support staff who provide ELSA-level interventions and counselling, and a separate facility called Jubilee (after the year 1977 in which the building was built) where two staff provide part-time or full-time nurture support and education to students with more serious medical or mental health needs which may otherwise prevent them from maintaining high attendance.

We operate an internal seclusion programme known as Learn and Reflect, which is staffed on a rota basis by senior and middle leaders and other teaching staff. Students are referred here either for short spells in response to specific incidents or for longer periods of time to support gradual reintegration to lessons. Students are also supported by a brilliant Learning Support department, with 56 EHCPs currently on roll and approximately 10 pending. 13% of students on roll are on the SEND register.

Strategic leadership and oversight of the full range of inclusion, attendance and behaviour and culture aspects is provided by a team of senior leaders consisting of the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion (who is also the DSL), the Assistant Headteacher for Culture and Belonging, and the Assistant Headteacher for Equalities, Diversity and Identity. From September 2025, this group is likely to be known as the Climate for Learning Circle or Team, and some operational changes to management process are likely to see them co-leading within a wider group of staff associated with these aspects of the school, e.g. the SENDCO, Jubilee staff and the AHT - Sixth Form.

March 2025

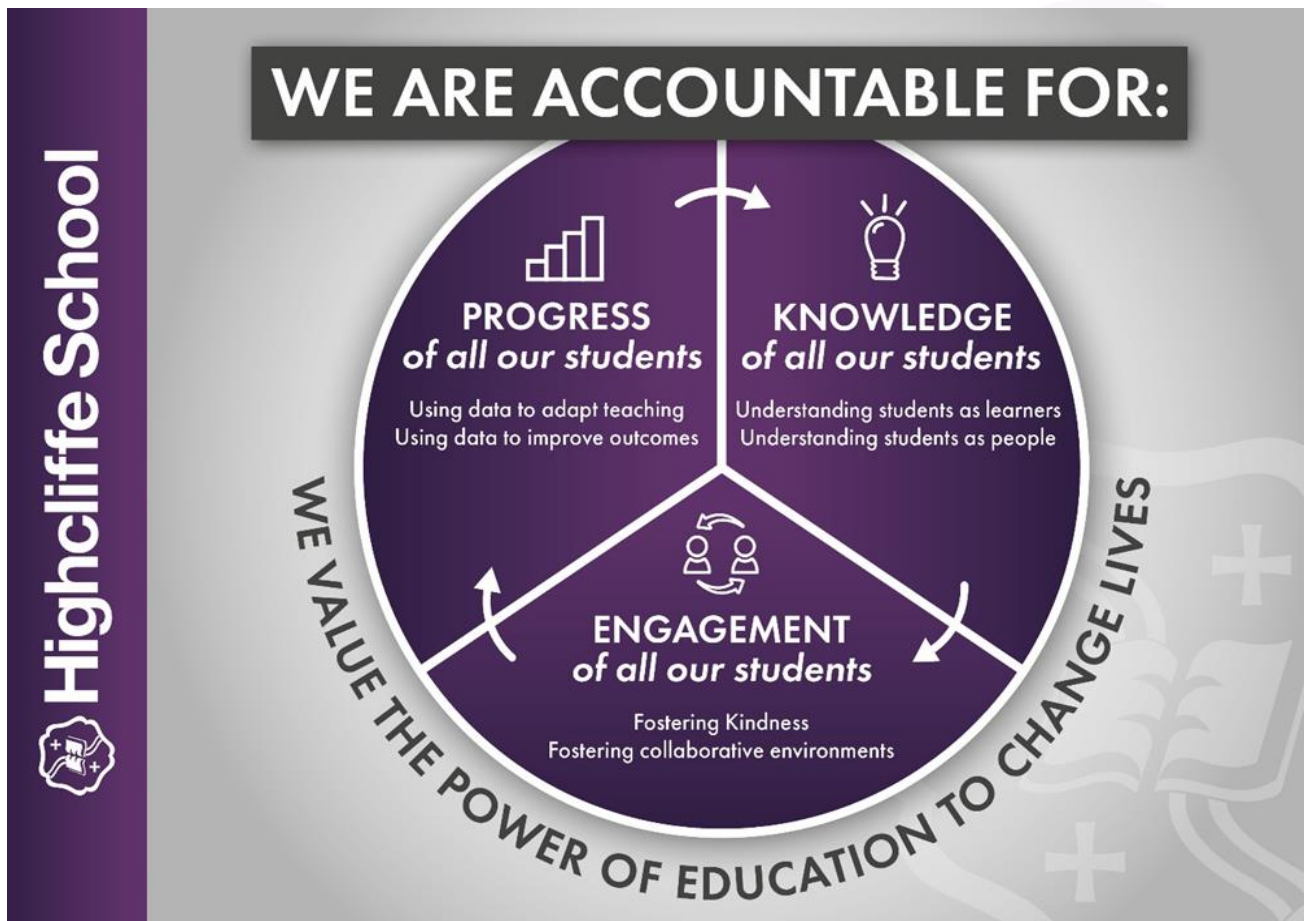


We are not immune to the issues experienced nationally in secondary schools. Improving the attendance, behaviour and academic progress of Disadvantaged students remain key priorities. More complex SEND students, on roll in higher numbers, present challenges to daily routines and behaviour management, as well as to adaptive teaching. A small but persistent minority of students in each year group are relatively disengaged, communicating this through lateness to lessons, persistent talking instead of working, desktop truancy, and requests to leave class. Successfully addressing – and transforming – the attitudes and behaviours of these students is a key contribution our new Assistant Headteacher for Culture and Belonging is expected to make.

We are in the preliminary stages of forming a new strategy to extend and expand the on-site co-existing provision and off-site provision, which will better support our most complex, disregulated or disengaged students without recourse to expensive and scarce high-quality AP. Our new Assistant Headteacher will have the opportunity to shape and deliver that strategy, working with the Headteacher and colleagues in the Climate for Learning Team.

Sustaining a strong culture of respectful, purposeful and responsible behaviour from all students at all times and building a strong sense of belonging and community requires dynamic leadership; relentlessness; initiative and cooperation among staff; strong partnerships with parents and external agencies; and a willingness to constantly review and improve systems, policies and processes. Our Assistant Headteacher for Culture and Belonging will play a critical leadership role in our school.

We are looking for a leader able to sustain, in among the operational day-to-day management of a busy and large secondary school, a clear strategic vision for change and improvement, combined with the mental focus and skillset to successfully deliver. In return we offer the opportunity to work in a successful, thriving setting, with access to excellent CPD, in a positive and supportive staff team where professionalism is valued, work-life balance is respected, and relationships are strong.



March 2025



## Job Description: Assistant Headteacher – Culture and Belonging

<b>Salary:</b>	Leadership Scale L12-L16
<b>Contract Type:</b>	Full-time, Permanent
<b>Reports To:</b>	Headteacher
<b>Responsible For:</b>	Leadership of student behaviour and culture, anti-bullying programmes, and the year group structure in Year 7 to 11.

### Key Purpose

The leader of Culture and Belonging will play a pivotal role in the strategic leadership and day-to-day management of the student culture, ensuring that it achieves outstanding levels of behaviour. The postholder will work closely with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to align Culture and Belonging with the whole-school priorities, fostering a culture of high expectations, excellent behaviour, excellent outcomes, and personal development.

### Strategic Leadership and Whole-School Responsibilities

- Contribute to the development and implementation of the School Development Plan, ensuring alignment with whole-school priorities.
- Oversee the subject improvement plan process for specific subjects, ensuring those subject areas are continuously improving and meeting the needs of students.
- Play a key role in preparing for Ofsted inspections, including contributing to the School Self-Evaluation Form (SEF).
- Support the Headteacher in financial planning, resource allocation, and strategic decision-making.
- Promote the school's vision, mission, and values to all stakeholders, ensuring that the language of 'Respectful, Responsible, and Purposeful' is embedded across the school.
- Carry out supervisory duties as required before school, at break and lunchtime and lead a team of duty staff
- Attend or organise school events as required including Open Evenings, Parents Evenings, New Parents Evening, Year Group celebration events, Careers Events, Prize Giving and Results Day.
- Contribute to suspension, exclusion investigations and decisions, including deputising for the HT in suspension/exclusion decisions in his absence/unavailability.
- Inspire and be a role model to staff members by personal example and hard work.
- Be a key point of contact and liaison with the Governing Body, including Link Governors.

### Leadership and Management

- Develop and implement a clear vision and strategic direction for Culture and Belonging, in line with the whole-school vision and priorities.
- Provide an annual Improvement Plan with clear success criteria and report back to the Headteacher and Governing Body on progress towards it.
- Maintain an accurate and up-to-date knowledge and understanding of local and national development relating to student behaviour and culture, advising and supporting the Headteacher and SLT colleagues to ensure the school complies with statutory guidance, and plans effectively to maximise the benefits and minimise the risks arising from local and national developments.
- Lead and manage the Heads of Achievement and coordinate the Pastoral Lead team.
- Monitor and evaluate student behaviour, using data and direct observation, ensuring that it meets the highest standards.
- Challenge any underperformance in Year Teams and act to ensure essential routines are adhered to by all staff.
- Address issues of underperformance by teaching or other staff, bringing about improvement in performance; encourage, celebrate and share high performance.
- Be responsible for the successful operation of 'Learn and Reflect'.
- Promote the well-being of staff by having due regard to workload and work-life balance.

March 2025



- Have line management and performance management responsibility for specific staff/roles.
- Lead individual and team meetings as required, chairing and producing the agenda for effective meetings. Ensure minutes are taken, kept secure and others informed as appropriate.

### **Securing respectful, purposeful and responsible attitudes and behaviours among students aligned to our 'Wave 1 to 3 Support/Intervention Framework'**

- Articulate to students, staff and parents a clear and compelling vision of student attitudes and behaviour rooted in 'Respectful, Purposeful and Responsible'.
- Lead the day-to-day staff management of student behaviour and attitudes around the school, achieving consistency and high standards.
- Provide clear leadership to pastoral and subject middle leaders regarding high standards of student behaviour and attitudes, and their roles in securing this.
- Lead, coordinate and support the Heads of Achievement in achieving consistency and common high standards in their management of attitudes and behaviour among and between their year groups, including managing performance targets for year groups and in transitions between year groups.
- Improve the quality and consistency of the wider staff implementation of the Rewards and Sanctions Policies and related policies, across pastoral support teams, year teams and subject teams.
- Regularly evaluate and develop the Rewards and Behaviour policies, the Dress Code, the Home-School Agreement; and standards and behaviour and student attitudes/ethos.
- Promote and strengthen the understanding and application of the graduated 'Wave 1 to 3 Support/Intervention Framework', including producing guidance diagrams and documents, providing staff CPD, and the routine monitoring and evaluation of consistency in the Framework.
- Promote and strengthen consistency between pastoral team members and best practice in the investigation and response to behaviour incidents.
- Ensure pastoral staff and SLT colleagues' practice is kept up to date with the statutory guidance relating to exclusion, searching, confiscation, physical restraint and any other relevant policies.
- Work closely with the AHT for Inclusion, the AHT for Equality Diversity and Identity, and the SENDCO to maintain an effective system for identifying students needing early intervention or additional internal and external provision.
- Manage arrangements for operating Time-Out, On-Call, Detentions and Isolation.
- Organise (with the Operations Teams) the rota of supervisory duties during the school day, including before and after-school, break and lunch duties, and detention duties; and make arrangements for the quality and impact of duty teams to be regularly monitored, evaluated and developed.
- Coordinate arrangements for sustaining high standards of student behaviour on school-home transport.
- Keep up to date the school website regarding behaviour-related issues and policies.

### **Leading a strong and successful anti-bullying culture**

- Lead, manage, evaluate and develop the school's work programme, aligned to the 'Wave 1 to 3 Support/Intervention Framework', in relation to promoting a safe and respectful environment where students understand what unsafe or bullying behaviours are; bullying is rare; effectively dealt with if it does occur; and students and parents report a strong anti-bullying culture. Work closely with the AHT for Inclusion, the AHT for Equality Diversity and Identity, and the SENDCO.
- Articulate consistently to students, staff and parents a clear vision for achieving a bullying-free school.
- Maintain, review and develop the school's anti-bullying policy and associated policies and practices, in successful pursuit of this vision.
- Keep up to date the school website regarding bullying-related issues and policies.

March 2025



## Safeguarding and Welfare

- Function as one of the team of Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs), ensuring that all safeguarding and welfare policies are adhered to.
- Promote the safety and wellbeing of all students, ensuring that staff are trained and aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Act as a key point of contact for safeguarding concerns within the Sixth Form, ensuring that these are addressed promptly and effectively.

## Communication and Collaboration

- Maintain regular communication with parents, carers, and external stakeholders, providing timely and accurate information about academic progress and pastoral care.
- Assist in effective recruitment and marketing of the whole school and Sixth Form e.g. by attending and supporting Open Evenings, producing press releases, website material and school social media marketing the school. In addition, make regular personal use of school social media to promote activities, events and achievements in school.

## Administration

- Maintain efficient and effective control of the relevant administrative processes, budgets and resources
- Ensure a safe and secure working environment complying with Health and Safety guidelines.

## Professional Development

- Identify and act on one's own professional development priorities through the PM process.
- Delegate tasks in a way which maximises the use of available talent, experience and enthusiasm and provides development opportunities for all staff.
- Contribute a CPD session to the school wide CPD programme
- Use the Performance Management cycle to assist in enhancing the professional development aspirations of colleagues.
- Keep up to date with new research, developments and best practice related to the role

## Equal Opportunities

- The member of staff will always carry out the duties and responsibilities of the post with due regard to the school's equal opportunities policies

## Other

- Undertake a specified teaching commitment
- Undertake any other reasonable duties as required by the Headteacher or their representatives

This job description may be subject to amendment or modification at any time after consultation with the post holder. It is not a comprehensive statement of procedures and tasks but sets out the main expectations of the school in relation to the post holder's professional responsibilities and duties.

<b>Name (Job Holder)</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Line Manager</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

March 2025





## Assistant Headteacher (Culture and Belonging) Person Specification

**CONTEXT:** Before making an application candidates are asked to match their qualifications, experience, skills and abilities against the criteria listed below.

ATTRIBUTES	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	EVIDENCE
<b>QUALIFICATIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualified teacher status.</li> <li>Good Honours degree (2:2 or above) or equivalent in relevant subject.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2:1 Honours Degree or better.</li> <li>Leadership qualification (e.g. NPQH, NPQSL)</li> <li>Further professional development in leadership</li> </ul>	Application
<b>EXPERIENCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Substantial experience of teaching and leadership in a secondary school</li> <li>Experience of managing and supporting staff, including performance management</li> <li>Experience making a substantial and sustained impact on student attitudes and behaviour</li> <li>Experience achieving excellent examination results at GCSE &amp; A Level.</li> <li>Understanding of Data Protection and the statutory regulations about Safeguarding.</li> <li>Experience leading in behaviour and culture at least at middle leadership level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience leading behaviour and culture at senior leadership level</li> <li>Experience of working with external agencies to support individuals and groups with attitude and behaviour</li> <li>Experience positively impacting the attitudes and behaviour of Disadvantaged students</li> </ul>	Application Reference
<b>SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong understanding of the Ofsted inspection framework for Behaviour</li> <li>Knowledge of the research around behaviour and culture, and best practice in strategies to secure excellent behaviour and positive attitudes</li> <li>Knowledge and understanding of national and regional programmes promoting high standards of behaviour and culture in secondary students</li> <li>Excellent communication and interpersonal skills with the ability to inspire and motivate others.</li> <li>Strong organisational skills and the ability to prioritise effectively</li> <li>The ability to think strategically and successfully implement agreed strategies</li> <li>The ability to analyse and solve complex issues with an eye for details.</li> <li>The ability to delegate effectively.</li> <li>The ability to work with, manage and lead a team of tutors to promote the education of children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge of successful strategies with disadvantaged students</li> </ul>	Application References Interview.

March 2025



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The ability to inspire and lead students.</li><li>• The ability to use data to track and improve outcomes for students.</li><li>• The ability to analyse behaviour and attendance data, identify priorities, and plan and implement interventions.</li><li>• Data analysis and target setting.</li></ul>		
<b>PERSONAL QUALITIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Commitment to the ethos and values of the school.</li><li>• High levels of integrity, professionalism and confidentiality</li><li>• The ability to develop good relationships with students, staff, colleagues &amp; community members.</li><li>• Resilience and the ability to work under pressure</li><li>• A proactive and innovative approach to leadership</li><li>• A commitment to continuous professional development</li><li>• Ability to work as part of a team; empathy.</li><li>• Sense of humour, good listener, positive outlook.</li><li>• The ability to support, motivate and inspire others.</li><li>• The ability to reach and justify difficult decisions</li><li>• Energy, stamina and determination.</li></ul>		Reference Interview



## **Equal Opportunities**

This school is an equal opportunities employer. Our policy is to ensure that no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment because of race, colour or nationality, sex, marital status, gender orientation, religion or disabilities. Selection criteria and procedures will be frequently reviewed to ensure that individuals are selected or promoted based on their individual relevant merits and abilities. All employees will be given equal opportunities and, where appropriate, further training to progress within and beyond the organisation.

## **Disclosure of Criminal Convictions**

The post you have applied for is subject to a police check with the DBS. If you are offered the position you will be required to complete an online Disclosure Form. The result of the police check will be sent to you.

The school will need to see and note some original documentation as part of the police check procedure. To speed up the process and avoid important documents getting lost in the post, if you are called to interview please can you bring the following documents which establish your identity and date of birth in addition to certificates of qualifications gained and in order to meet the requirements of the Asylum and Immigration Act, and a formal document showing your National Insurance Number.

- Pay slip, P45 or P60
- Passport or driving licence.
- Birth certificate/marriage certificate
- Current Council tax bill
- Utility bill showing your current home address and dated within the last 3 months

## **Medical Fitness**

In accordance with the Education (Teachers) Regulations 1999, all teachers are required to satisfy their employers of their medical fitness on entry to the teaching profession and during the subsequent employment. In this connection, teachers will be required to complete a medical questionnaire, which is then considered by a Medical Officer. A medical questionnaire will also need to be completed by support staff.

## **Social Media checks**

Highcliffe School will conduct online searches of shortlisted candidates. This check will be part of a safeguarding check, and the search will purely be based on whether an individual is suitable to work with children. All aspects of social media and internet searches will be conducted. As care must be taken to avoid unconscious bias and any risk of discrimination, a person who will not be on the appointment panel will conduct the searches and will only share information if findings are relevant and of concern.

## **No Smoking Statement**

The School operates a No Smoking Policy.

**Highcliffe School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment**

March 2025