

Head of Learning Support (SENCO)

Recruitment Pack



SOMERHILL
We grow amazing people



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Welcome to Somerhill

We have a very special school here with a unique offering: the 'best of both worlds', the 'ideal mix' and the 'place I always dreamt of finding' are the comments we often hear from our parents or visitors. With co-educational learning until age 7, Somerhill then offers single-sex classroom lessons until children leave us for senior schools, allowing uninhibited learning and bespoke strategies for the older girls and boys with all the benefits of a co-educational setting.

Our philosophy for the children at Somerhill is straightforward: happy children want to learn. Children are happy if they can play, participate widely and start to master skills of whatever kind, and our stunning setting and outstanding facilities offer endless opportunities for the children to find something that makes them smile.

We believe this offers you the perfect glimpse into our school life. However, to fully appreciate the extraordinary education that we offer and see our vision of confident, curious, and resilient children realised, we invite you to visit us at Somerhill. You will see that this really is an exceptional learning environment where we grow amazing people!



Our unique school

Somerhill is set in a stunning 400-year-old Jacobean mansion surrounded by 150 acres of beautiful parkland. You will be hard-pressed to find a more glorious setting for a school! We have excellent facilities including a multi-purpose sports hall, astro turf, indoor swimming pool complex and purpose-built music suite to name just a few.

Ours is a mixed ability school. Teachers really invest in the children and know them well, with lessons carefully planned to cater to all abilities.

We have very bright and capable pupils and send more pupils to grammar schools each year than any other local school. Destinations include Tonbridge Grammar School, The Judd School, and The Skinners' School. Some pupils are awarded scholarships at independent schools such as Tonbridge School, Sevenoaks School, Walthamstow Hall and Sutton Valence School at 11+/13+.

We also cater to children who find aspects of their learning more challenging and currently approximately 40 pupils receive additional support.

Located just to the south of Tonbridge, we are readily accessed by a slip road off the A21.

Between the ages of 2 and 7 years, girls and boys are together in the classroom. This environment promotes uninhibited development at an age when playing and learning are often synonymous. From 7 to 13 years, children benefit from a single-sex classroom environment, where girls and boys learn in different and bespoke ways. The moment classes finish, everyone is together - at break and lunch as well as for sports, music, clubs and activities. This really is the best of both worlds for our children.

endless opportunities

'Positive mental health is given high priority' and 'the welfare of pupils is given prime importance.'

ISI – February 2024.

Taking a holistic approach to education, we nurture academic, personal, spiritual, social and moral growth, enabling our pupils to become confident, curious and resilient individuals going out into the world.

We encourage our pupils to work hard and take pride in their achievements, to think independently, to face up to challenges, to accept responsibility, to develop a broad range of skills and interests and to show concern for others and the environment.

To put it simply: *we grow amazing people.*

Our school values



pastorally focussed



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Head of Learning Support (SENCO)

- **Employment status: Permanent, full-time**
- **Reporting to: Deputy Head, Academic**
- **Competitive salary, based on our Somerhill PayScale. Subject to qualifications and experience.**

Application process:

Formal applications will only be accepted via the official Somerhill Application Form which will be published alongside this pack. All completed applications should be sent to recruitment@somerhill.org.

A tour will form part of the interview process but please visit our website for further information: www.somerhill.org.

Timeline for applicants:

- Closing date for applications: 1st October 2026
- Interview Date: 9th October 2026
- Required From: January 2027

Somerhill is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All appointments are subject to enhanced DBS checks and safer recruitment procedures.

We are proud to be an equal opportunities employer. We actively promote diversity within our workforce and welcome applications from all sections of the community, regardless of sexual orientation, race, age, gender, disability, religion or belief.

we grow amazing people

Job Description: Head of Learning Support (SENCO)

The Head of Learning Support provides and coordinates strategic advice to the Head and Senior Leadership Team regarding the school's capacity to meet pupils' needs and ensure that SEND provision remains appropriate within a mainstream, academically ambitious preparatory school environment from Nursery to Year 8 (Pre-Prep and Prep School).

They are responsible for ensuring special educational needs are identified and supported effectively through high-quality teaching for SEND in the classroom alongside carefully planned and evidence-based interventions. The post holder is accountable to the Deputy Head, Academic of Somerhill and is part of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

Key responsibilities:

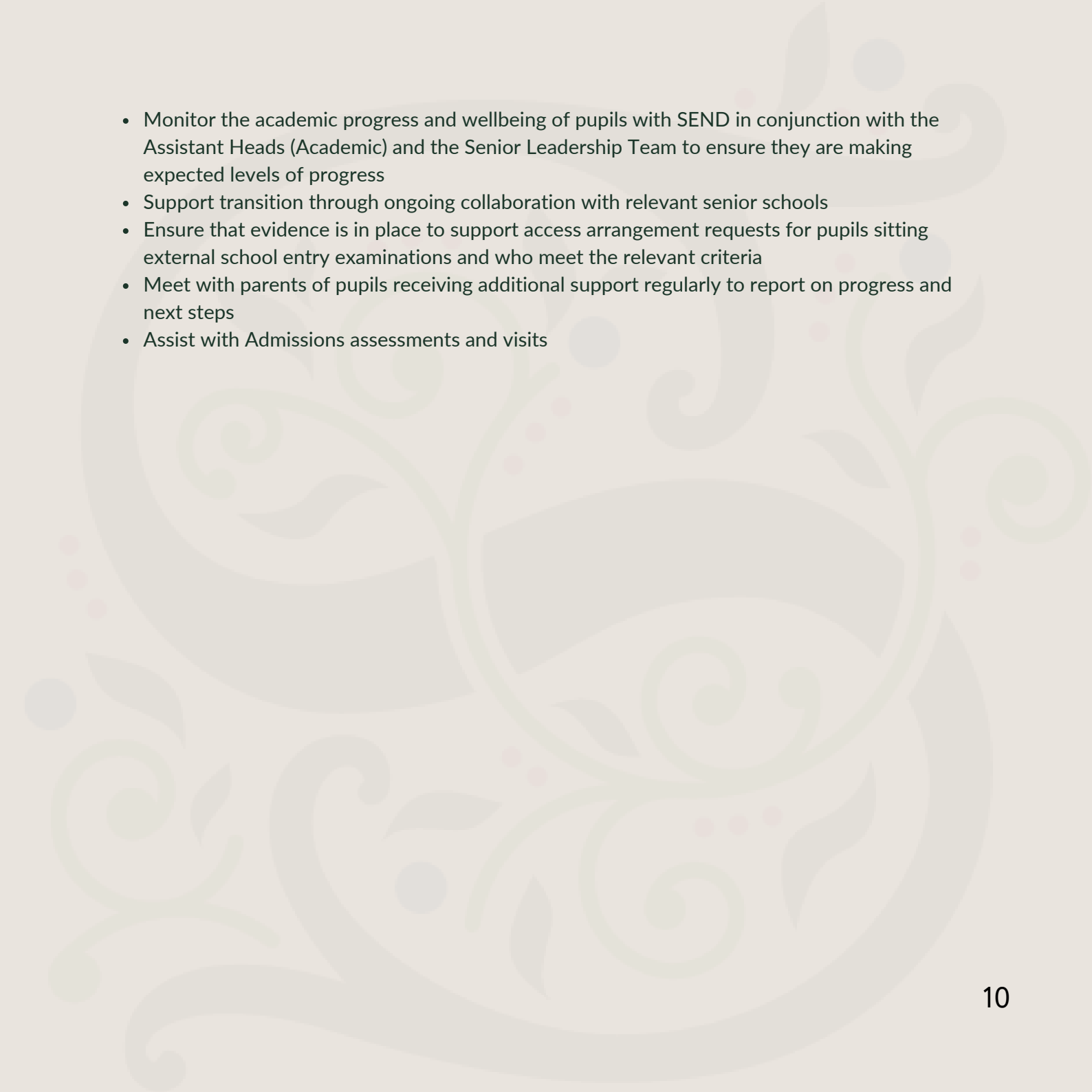
1. Leadership and Communication

- Provide leadership across the school to promote inclusion and deliver high-quality provision for pupils with SEND
- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of safeguarding responsibilities and recognise the additional vulnerabilities that may be experienced by pupils with SEND
- Line manage the Learning Support Teachers across all sections of the school
- Support all staff in understanding the needs of pupils with SEND and deliver/commission professional development sessions/courses as required
- Ensure statutory processes are adhered to for pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans
- Keep the iSAMS SEND register up to date and provide data for ISC and DfE SEND audits
- Maintain effective record-keeping systems so that all staff are aware of pupil profiles and the necessary strategies, adaptations and provision that must be in place
- Liaise effectively with external professionals such as Psychologists, Mental Health Workers, Social Workers, Speech & Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists and Outreach services to ensure that advice and recommendations are embedded within a pupil's support plan and delivered across the curriculum

- Monitor and keep abreast of national developments and advise on policy and statutory changes, updating school policies as required
- Work collaboratively with parents so they are involved and informed at every stage
- Ensure that the pupil voice is heard, particularly for pupils who have difficulties in expressing their views due to their SEND
- Provide information about SEND provision and progress to senior leaders when requested
- Devise and deliver the Learning Support development plan to improve practice and provision across the school in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team
- Prepare budget requests and manage the SEND budget spend efficiently and effectively
- Oversight of EAL and EDI

2. Provision and Progress

- Ensure needs are identified at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate support strategies are put into place and that pupils make good progress
- Carry out targeted observations to support staff in meeting the needs of pupils with SEND through effective collaboration and coaching
- Carry out assessments to explore pupil profiles and inform the advice given to staff
- Interpret specialist assessment reports from external professionals and use this information to inform provision and plans
- Provide guidance documents and individual outcome plans in collaboration with class teachers/form tutors for pupils with significant needs
- Coordinate the deployment of Learning Support teachers across the school as well as Teaching Assistants in consultation with teaching staff.
- Plan, deliver and review targeted learning support sessions for individuals and groups as part of the school's SEND provision plan
- Oversee learning support sessions delivered by other adults to ensure they are evidence-based and effective
- Use whole school and SEN-specific data to analyse pupil progress and adjust provision as necessary

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- Monitor the academic progress and wellbeing of pupils with SEND in conjunction with the Assistant Heads (Academic) and the Senior Leadership Team to ensure they are making expected levels of progress
 - Support transition through ongoing collaboration with relevant senior schools
 - Ensure that evidence is in place to support access arrangement requests for pupils sitting external school entry examinations and who meet the relevant criteria
 - Meet with parents of pupils receiving additional support regularly to report on progress and next steps
 - Assist with Admissions assessments and visits

Person specification: Qualifications

Essential:

- Experience leading SEND provision across a whole school or significant phase
- Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) or equivalent teaching qualification.
- Significant experience supporting pupils with SEND.
- Experience as a SENCO
- Sound knowledge of the national primary curriculum and EYFS curriculum
- Clear understanding of effective pedagogy to inform high-quality teaching across the curriculum
- In-depth knowledge and understanding of a wide range of special educational needs, and a thorough understanding of current educational initiatives
- Good understanding of curriculum issues related to extending pupil performance and the development of thinking skills
- A strong team player with excellent communication skills and able to work with senior management, subject and pastoral teams
- Provides professional direction and possesses strong leadership skills to coach and influence teaching and learning across the school
- Committed and confident in meeting the needs of pupils with SEND Ability to provide specialist teaching sessions for pupils with complex SEND as required
- Patience, good humour and empathy alongside an ability to stay calm under pressure
- Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to engage positively with pupils, parents, colleagues and external professionals
- A high degree of awareness for Safeguarding and the welfare of adults and pupils across the school Is willing to be flexible in their approach and seize opportunities as they arise
- Confident in their skills and abilities, and able to manage difficult conversations
- Efficient administrative skills to ensure high-quality recordkeeping and tracking across the school

- A skilled teacher and assessor who can use information to devise workable support plans and provision for SEND Energetic and enthusiastic with a love of teaching
- Determination and commitment to protect emotional wellbeing and raise academic attainments
- A life-long learner who is always looking to further develop their skills knowledge and abilities and takes responsibility for professional development
- Good time management and personal organisational skills
- Able to analyse problems and formulate creative solutions, to take the initiative, take the lead and take charge
- Makes informed use of specialist resources

Desirable:

- National SENCO Award (if applicable).
- Level 7 Specialist Teacher qualification.
- Experience of working in the independent school sector.
- Assessment for Access Arrangements qualification.
- Experience in middle management and working strategically across a school
- General primary phase teaching experience
- Supporting pupils across EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2
- Sound knowledge of using technology to support teaching and learning, including SEND assistive technology and AI Experience in statutory EHCP processes.

Employee Benefits



Conditions

Format of applications

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Child protection

All staff have a responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children with whom they come into contact and are always required to adhere to and ensure compliance with the school's Safeguarding Policy Statement. If, in the course of carrying out their duties, a member of staff becomes aware of any actual or potential risks to the safety or welfare of children in the school, they must immediately report their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Safer recruitment and offer conditions

Somerhill is an equal opportunities employer and 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 offered the role conditionally, subject to the satisfactory completion of a number of background checks including but not limited to: an enhanced DBS check with the children's barred list check, the taking up and verification of references, the verification of career history and medical fitness to undertake the role. The complete list of required checks will be provided to the successful candidate.

Health and safety

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and subsequent legislation, the school is obliged to provide you with a workplace and working conditions which, so far as is reasonably practicable, are safe and without risk to health. You are required by health and safety legislation to take reasonable care for your own health and safety and for the health and safety and others.

Further information

We are an equal opportunities employer and we welcome applicants from all backgrounds. We celebrate the diverse backgrounds that make up our community and consider it important that people from a diverse range of backgrounds are represented in our setting.

This job description is not intended to be a comprehensive statement of procedures and responsibilities, but instead sets out the principal expectations of the school in relation to the post holder's professional responsibilities and duties. We are looking for an individual who is adaptable, flexible, and willing to carry out the wide range of duties that are likely to be required to make a success of this role. Please note we reserve the right to close prior to the application deadline or extend the deadline depending on the number of applications received. Early applications are encouraged.

If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Jess May at recruitment@somerhill.org for any general queries.



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SOMERHILL

A beautifully unique independent prep school for girls and boys aged 2-13

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