

Information for Candidates

Head of School

St John's International School, Sidmouth, Devon

Full-time | Permanent | Commencing November/December 2026

A Welcome from the School

Welcome to St John's International School.

Since the laying of our foundation stone in 1883, our historic site has provided both sanctuary and scholarship. A visit to our campus in Sidmouth confirms what many families describe as the feeling of "coming home". We are proud to be a close-knit, global community where every child is known, valued and supported.

Though small in size, St John's offers a rich, personalised and genuinely international education. Our philosophy is built upon three guiding principles: **Individuality, Opportunity and Success**. From age 2½ to 16, we nurture confidence, curiosity and character, ensuring that every pupil flourishes academically, socially and personally.

As part of the International Education Systems (IES) group, we combine educational excellence with a distinctive international perspective. Our mission is to develop collaborative, communicative, enquiring, respectful and creative young people who will contribute meaningfully to the wider world.

Job Title: *Head of School*

Responsible to: *IES Board of Directors*

The Board seeks to appoint an ambitious, dynamic and forward-thinking Head of School to lead our vibrant community in the heart of East Devon.

This is a dual-focus leadership role requiring both educational excellence and commercial acumen. The successful candidate will:

- Champion outstanding teaching and learning
- Ensure operational and financial sustainability
- Safeguard and strengthen the school's distinctive ethos
- Lead strategic growth and development

The Head will oversee the full educational journey — from our nurturing Early Years provision and Junior School Enquiry Programme through to Senior School GCSE/iGCSE pathways — working closely with the Head of Early Years, Head of Juniors, Head of Seniors and the wider leadership team.

Above all, the Head will preserve St John's as a place where children flourish in a caring, healthy and aspirational environment.

The post will include a light teaching load of three hours per week.

Key Responsibilities

1. Vision and Strategy

- Develop and implement a clear strategic vision balancing educational excellence with financial sustainability
 - Embed the IES mission and values across all aspects of school life
 - Ensure compliance with regulatory requirements
 - Maintain and enhance the school's facilities and learning environment
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2. Teaching and Learning

- Promote a culture of academic rigour and enquiry-based learning
 - Oversee the continued development of our bespoke curriculum
 - Ensure robust monitoring, tracking and reporting of pupil progress
 - Champion inclusion and ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, reach their full potential
 - Support specialist provision including Forest School, Music, Spanish and co-curricular enrichment
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3. Leadership and Staff Development

- Recruit, develop and retain high-quality teaching and support staff
 - Foster a culture of accountability, collaboration and professional growth
 - Oversee appraisal systems and identify professional development priorities
 - Model visible, values-led leadership
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4. Financial and Operational Management

- Work with the Director of Finance and Administration to oversee budgets and financial planning
- Ensure effective resource allocation
- Provide regular and transparent reporting to the Board on performance indicators including enrolment, academic outcomes and staffing

5. Pastoral Care and Safeguarding

- Maintain a safe, nurturing boarding and day school environment
- Ensure safeguarding remains paramount
- Uphold high standards of behaviour, wellbeing and pastoral care
- Promote a culture of kindness, respect and emotional intelligence

6. Marketing and External Relations

- Act as the public face of the school
- Strengthen engagement with current and prospective families
- Promote the school's international partnerships and boarding provision
- Represent the school within the local, national and international community

About St John's International School

Located on the World Heritage Jurassic Coast, St John's benefits from a unique setting that enhances outdoor learning and field studies.

Our Facilities

Our historic campus combines character with modern provision, including:

- Heated indoor swimming pool
- Sports hall and playing fields
- Tennis courts
- Dedicated Art, DT and ICT suites
- Boarding accommodation

Our Community

We are a co-educational through-school (2½–16) with a small yet thriving boarding community offering full, weekly and flexi-boarding options. Our Senior School is enriched by international students from partner schools worldwide, reflecting our global outlook.

Person Specification

The successful candidate will combine strategic clarity with warmth, resilience and presence.

Essential Experience

- Significant senior leadership experience within an Independent and/or State school
- Evidence of measurable impact on pupil outcomes and staff development
- Deep knowledge of the 2½–16 age range, including EYFS and GCSE/iGCSE frameworks
- Experience in financial oversight or budget management

This role would suit:

- A seasoned Deputy Head seeking first Headship
- An existing Head looking for a new strategic challenge

Professional Attributes

- Strategic thinker with strong commercial awareness
 - Visible, values-led leader
 - Emotionally intelligent and resilient
 - Organised, decisive and outcome-focused
 - Committed to international education and cultural diversity
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Personal Qualities

- Passion for education and child development
 - Outstanding communication skills
 - Integrity, empathy and fairness
 - Energy and stamina for boarding school leadership
 - A calm and assured presence under pressure
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Terms of Appointment

- **Salary:** Competitive, commensurate with experience
- **Pension:** AVIVA APTIS Scheme
- **Holidays:** 30 days plus public holidays
- **Accommodation:** On-site private accommodation may be available
- **Notice Period:** Two full terms
- **Additional Benefits:** Reasonable domestic services and reimbursement of approved business expenses

Application Process

Candidates should send the following documents:

- CV - Maximum of 2 pages long
- A cover letter/letter of application of maximum 2 pages long
- A list of at least 3 professional referees - two must be from previous supervisors of which one must be your current employer/supervisor.

To darryll.lottering@iesmail.com and gemma.gomez@iesmail.com

Include Application for Position as HOS - St. John's in the subject line of your email.

Referees will only be contacted after the first round of interviews if your application moves forward and we will inform you prior.

Applicants must clearly demonstrate how their experience and leadership impact align with the demands of this senior role.



The interviewing process will be ongoing and ***we reserve the right to close applications and appoint at our discretion.*** We therefore encourage candidates to apply as soon as possible.

Only candidates that match our search criteria will be contacted for an interview.

The closing date for applications is **31 May 2026.**

St John's International School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The successful applicant will be subject to an enhanced DBS check and all appropriate safeguarding screenings.