



Human Resources Manager

Information for Applicants

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER

Summer Fields is a boarding and day school for approximately 305 boys aged 4 to 13 years. Located in Summertown, two miles north of central Oxford, the school occupies 70 acres of exceptional grounds. This is a rare opportunity to shape the people culture of one of the UK's most respected preparatory schools.

We are seeking an exceptional HR Manager to lead a modern, proactive and service focused HR function that supports our staff, strengthens our culture and underpins the school's long-term success.

This is a senior, highly visible role at the centre of school life. Reporting to the Bursar and working closely with the Headmaster and Finance Director, you will lead HR strategy, compliance and operations across the school. You will be the trusted expert colleagues turn to for guidance, clarity and support and a champion of professionalism, inclusion and wellbeing.

The HR Manager will be responsible for:

- HR strategy aligned with the School Development Plan, ensuring a coherent, efficient and forward-looking HR service.
- Safeguarding and compliance including safer recruitment, SCR oversight, UKVI requirements and policy governance.
- Recruitment and workforce planning across teaching, support and overseas programmes, ensuring an excellent candidate experience.
- Employee relations - coaching managers and heads of department, resolving sensitive issues and fostering a high trust culture.
- Payroll in partnership with the Finance Officer, including pensions, benefits and annual reviews.
- HR systems and reporting ensuring data integrity, insight and operational excellence.
- Wellbeing, inclusion and engagement through initiatives, forums and staff feedback mechanisms.

The successful candidate will have:

- Degree appropriate to HR and/or CIPD qualification (Level 5 minimum).
- A strong track record of HR leadership in a service focused environment.
- Deep knowledge of UK employment law, safer recruitment and HR best practice.
- Experience advising senior leaders on complex people matters.
- Outstanding communication, judgement and organisational skills.
- Warmth, professionalism and a genuine alignment with the ethos of Summer Fields.

This is an excellent opportunity to work in a prestigious independent school in a beautiful location in Summertown. Benefits include enrolment into the school's contributory Group Personal Pension Scheme, which also provides life assurance at three times annual salary. Additional benefits include private medical insurance, access to an Employee Assistance Programme, an annual flu vaccination, membership of the Staff Swimming Club, lunch in the dining room during term time, free on-site parking, and discount for holiday activity clubs. There is also the opportunity for continuing professional development.

For further information about the school and an application form please visit www.summerfields.com.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Please apply by submitting a fully completed application form with a letter of application addressed to James Kirk, Bursar. To satisfy the requirements for safer recruitment, we need to ask you for your full employment record. Details of any gaps between jobs or between finishing education and employment must be provided. If you have a CV you wish to send, please do so, however a completed application form with full employment history must still be provided. Applications should be saved as Word or PDF files and emailed to recruitment@summerfields.com.

Closing date: 10.00am UK time on Monday 7th September 2026.

If you require any further information, please call 01865 459238. We look forward to hearing from you.

Summer Fields is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and we expect all staff to share this commitment. Applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

The school is fully committed to the principles of equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion. Summer Fields does not discriminate on the grounds of race or colour, nationality or national or ethnic origins, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, age, and disability. Applications are welcome from a diverse range of backgrounds.

ABOUT SUMMER FIELDS

Summer Fields was founded in 1864 by Archibald and Gertrude Maclaren at their home in North Oxford. Mrs Maclaren was a gifted classical scholar and Mr Maclaren was a fencing master with a passionate belief in the importance of physical fitness. It is from these roots that our school motto was born: *Mens sana in corpore sano*, A healthy mind in a healthy body. The Maclarens established the importance of a breadth of education inside and outside the classroom, values which remain central to the education we offer today.

Summer Fields is a full-boarding and day school for approximately 305 boys aged 4 to 13. We offer excellent teaching, traditional values and exceptional pastoral care. We continue to build on a strong academic legacy with an individual focus on strengthening each boy's confidence and abilities.



Summer Fields is a special place and pastoral care is very strong. The school is a vibrant, extended family of staff and boys, living side-by-side in a busy, caring and friendly boarding community. We aim to ensure that each boy is happy, academically challenged and is taking full advantage of life at Summer Fields, with its many possibilities and opportunities. Our most recent ISI inspection, in June 2025, was glowing in all respects and is easily available online.

The school is thriving at all levels and in 2018 we entered an exciting new phase in our history with the opening of a brand-new Summer Fields Pre-prep school, catering for boys from Reception to Year 3. The school is housed in a stand-alone building, Newton, one of the oldest and most historic buildings on the school's 70-acre site. The building underwent a complete re-development, including the addition of a striking, modernist new extension; it now provides purpose-built facilities for up to 80 boys aged 4 to 8.

Summer Fields celebrated its 160th birthday in 2024 and recent years have seen the redevelopment of various areas of the school. The Salata Pavilion provides sports changing and other facilities, and what was New Room now provides a state-of-the-art new school library, including an archive room, a periodicals room and associated teaching rooms in what is the oldest and largest teaching space in the school. The £2.5m project, completed during lockdown, included a major refurbishment of the school Chapel, as well as the DT and Learning Support areas.

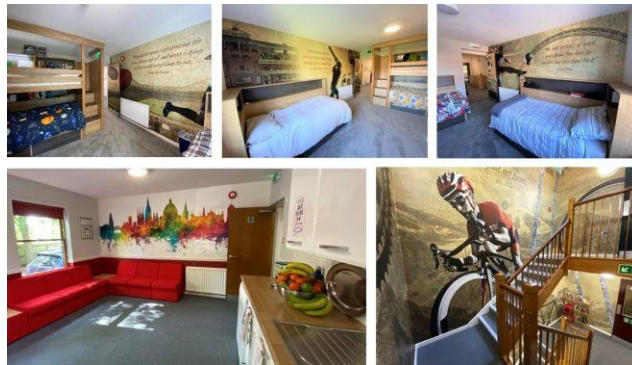
ACADEMIC RECORD

Academic standards and outcomes are high. The principal entry point to the prep school is in Year 4, although a few boys join in Years 5, 6 and 7 depending on places being available. Some 20 boys will join the prep school from the Pre-prep each year, in addition to those joining directly, both boarders and day boys, in Year 4. Admission is by selection. The aspirations of boys and parents are high and the school prides itself on the outstanding exam results achieved by our leavers. The school's greatest academic strength is excellent teaching at all levels and we are proud of the academic achievements of boys of all abilities. Each year boys pass Common Entrance and regularly win scholarships to the top public schools in the country.

BOARDING

The boarding structure is horizontal, according to age, in six Lodges (boarding houses), where the boys are usually looked after by two Lodge Parents. Every boy has a personal tutor, responsible for overseeing all aspects of his life at school and with whom he meets regularly, one-to-one. In addition, a boy can seek help from Lodge Parents, Form Masters and Mistresses, the Head Sister and, of course, the Headmaster.

The school is set within 70 acres of grounds and is extremely well resourced with many outstanding and modern facilities, which are continually enhanced. In addition to the academic curriculum, sport plays an important part in the life of the school, as does music, art, design and technology and drama; recent results in music scholarship exams, in particular, have been outstanding. All these activities, and many others, are extremely well provided for. The Chapel is at the heart of the school, both literally and figuratively.



WORKING AT SUMMER FIELDS

Summer Fields recognises that staff are one of the school's most valuable assets. We therefore seek to recruit and retain well-qualified academic and non-academic staff who demonstrate enthusiasm for their area of expertise. There are currently around 155 full-time and part-time staff with most teaching staff and their families living on site. Working at Summer Fields is rewarding and all staff are encouraged to get fully involved with the life of the school. We are surrounded by beautiful grounds and we enjoy superb facilities.

THE POSITION

Reporting to the Bursar, the HR Manager is a senior operational and advisory leader responsible for delivering a modern, compliant and service focused HR function across Summer Fields. The role ensures excellence in HR compliance, safer recruitment, employee relations, payroll, and people operations, supporting the school's strategic priorities and long-term sustainability.

Working in close partnership with the Bursar, Headmaster and Finance Director, the HR Manager provides professional guidance, ensures regulatory compliance, and fosters a positive, inclusive and high trust working environment in which colleagues can thrive.

The post holder will be a visible and trusted presence across the school and is expected to be fully immersed in its day-to-day life and culture.

The Bursary office team includes the Bursar, Part-time Finance Director, Senior Finance Officer, Payroll & Finance Officer, Domestic Bursar, and the HR Manager.

The role is full-time, Monday to Friday, with some evening and weekend work required to successfully execute the role. Competitive salary dependent on skills and experience with a contributory pension scheme. Paid holiday entitlement is 30 days per annum plus bank holidays, where those fall in school holidays, to be taken at times as agreed with the Bursar. Holidays should generally be taken outside of school term time.

APPLICATION

In order to ensure the safety and security of all pupils at the school, applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening. We are required to carry out several pre-employment checks including:

- obtaining references from past employers;
- checking a full history of employment and verifying reasons for any gaps in employment or education;
- an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service criminal records check;
- an overseas criminal record check is required for applicants who have lived abroad for three months or more in the last five years.

Please apply by submitting a fully completed application form with a letter of application. Applications should be saved as Word or PDF files and emailed to recruitment@summerfields.com. James Kirk, Bursar.

If you require any further information, please call 01865 459238.

JOB DESCRIPTION

The key responsibilities associated with the post are:

(Other tasks may be allocated as necessary to ensure the efficient running of the Bursary.)

HR Strategy, Leadership and Culture

- Deliver a coherent, efficient and compliant HR service aligned with the School Development Plan.
- Provide strategic advice to the Bursar, Headmaster and senior leaders on workforce planning, organisational development, culture and people related risk.
- Lead a professional, service focused HR function with clear standards, strong capability and a culture of continuous improvement.
- Maintain awareness of sector trends, regulatory changes and best practice, ensuring Summer Fields remains compliant and forward looking.
- Promote a positive, inclusive and high trust working environment across all departments.

HR Compliance, Safeguarding and Risk Management

- Ensure full compliance with employment legislation, Independent School Standards, ISI requirements and DfE guidance.
- Maintain and oversee the Single Central Register (SCR), ensuring accuracy, completeness and readiness for inspection.
- Lead safer recruitment practice across the school, ensuring all checks (DBS, Barred List, references, right to work, qualifications, medical) are completed before employment commences.
- Oversee UKVI compliance where relevant.
- Lead HR audit processes, risk reporting and policy review cycle.

Recruitment, Onboarding and Workforce Planning

- Manage the full recruitment lifecycle, ensuring timely appointments and an excellent candidate experience.
- Prepare and maintain recruitment documentation including job descriptions, recruitment packs, contracts and template correspondence, in accordance with the Summer Fields brand strategy.
- Work closely with the Headmaster and Heads of Department to forecast staffing needs and support workforce planning.
- Oversee induction and probation processes, ensuring new colleagues are welcomed, supported and integrated effectively.
- Coordinate annual overseas recruitment programmes (e.g. Gappers) and support apprenticeship recruitment.

Employee Relations and Engagement

- Provide high-quality advice on disciplinary, grievance, capability, absence and family leave matters.
- Coach and support managers and heads of department in handling sensitive people issues with fairness, consistency and sound judgment.
- Promote effective communication, staff engagement and a solution focused culture.

- Support performance management, appraisal and professional development processes.
- Act as liaison with external employment law advisers.

Payroll, Reward and Benefits

- Support the Payroll Officer in preparing and processing monthly payroll, year-end procedures and HMRC returns.
- Administer pension schemes, group life assurance, income protection and private healthcare.
- Coordinate Teachers' Pensions annual service returns and related audit requirements.
- Issue salary review letters and support the annual salary review process.
- Maintain accurate HRIS records (Every HR) and ensure data integrity for payroll and reporting.

HR Systems, Data and Reporting

- Maintain accurate employee records, contractual documentation and HRIS data.
- Monitor and report on staff absence trends, training records and workforce metrics.
- Ensure HR systems are secure, compliant and used effectively to support decision making.
- Manage HR inboxes and respond to general enquiries promptly and professionally.

Wellbeing, Inclusion and Community

- Champion staff wellbeing, ensuring initiatives, communications and support services promote a healthy working environment.
- Develop staff feedback mechanisms, including surveys and wellbeing forums, and act on emerging themes.
- Promote equity, diversity and inclusion across all HR processes and policies.
- Consider and administer occupational-health referrals, reasonable adjustments and flexible-working requests.
- Serve as the HR representative on relevant Health & Safety Committees.

Professional Development

- Model continuous improvement and maintain up to date knowledge of employment law and HR best practice.
- Engage in relevant CPD, including Safer Recruitment training.

General

- Support the aims, ethos and objectives of the school.
- Summer Fields is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and we expect all staff to share this commitment. All staff must adhere to, and ensure compliance with, the school's safeguarding policies and procedures in the context of their role.
- Comply with the school's health and safety procedures.
- Undertake any other duties as reasonably requested by the Bursar, Finance Director or Headmaster that are commensurate with the level of the post.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Qualifications and Experience

- Degree appropriate to HR and/or CIPD qualification (Level 5 minimum).
- Strong track record of HR management in a service focused environment.
- Experience advising senior leaders on complex and sensitive people matters.
- Experience managing recruitment, employee relations, performance management, absence and organisational change.
- Experience within education is desirable.

Skills and Knowledge

- Excellent understanding of UK employment law and HR best practice.
- Strong knowledge of recruitment, retention, employee relations, pay and reward, and organisational development.
- Clear understanding of safeguarding and safer recruitment responsibilities.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Strong analytical, organisational and problem-solving skills.
- Ability to work effectively across a multi stakeholder environment.
- Effective budget awareness and ability to drive operational efficiencies.
- High-level IT skills and HRIS proficiency.
- Experience of operating with UK GDPR, confidentiality, data retention and subject-access requests.

Personal Attributes

- Visible, compassionate and highly professional.
- Collaborative, flexible and able to inspire confidence.
- High levels of self-awareness, humility and resilience.
- Strong alignment with the ethos and values of Summer Fields.
- Commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

APPLICATION AND RECRUITMENT PROCESS GUIDANCE NOTES

Summer Fields is committed to ensuring the best possible environment for the children and young people in its care. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is our highest priority.

The school's Safeguarding Policy and Safer Recruitment Policy can be found [here](#).

The school aims to recruit staff that share and understand our commitment and to ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly by reason of a protected characteristic as defined within the Equality Act 2010.

APPLICATION

- Applications will only be accepted from candidates completing the relevant Application Form in full. CVs will not be accepted in substitution for completed Application Forms but are permitted to be submitted alongside a completed Application Form.
- Candidates should be aware that all posts in the school involve some degree of responsibility for safeguarding children, although the extent of that responsibility will vary according to the nature of the post. Please see the job description for the post. If you are invited to attend a formal interview your suitability to work with children will be assessed.
- As the job for which you are applying involves substantial opportunity for access to children, it is important that you provide us with legally accurate answers.
- The successful applicant will be required to complete a Disclosure Form from the Disclosure and Barring Service ("DBS") for the post and, where appropriate, a check of the Barred List maintained by the DBS will be made. Any offers of appointment will be made conditional on obtaining such satisfactory checks. Additionally, successful applicants should be aware that they are required to notify the school immediately if there are any reasons why they should not be working with children.
- The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 apply to those providing early years childcare or later years childcare, including before school and after school clubs, to children who have not attained the age of 8 and to those who are directly concerned in the management of that childcare.
- The school takes its responsibility to safeguard children very seriously and any staff member and/or successful candidate who is aware of anything that may affect his/her suitability to work with children must notify the school/their manager immediately. This will include notification of any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings he/she may receive.
- Staff and/or successful candidates who are disqualified from childcare or registration may apply to Ofsted for a waiver of disqualification. Such individuals may not be employed in the areas from which they are disqualified, or involved in the management of those settings, unless and until such waiver is confirmed.
- As part of its due-diligence checks, the school may carry out an online search on shortlisted candidates. Any relevant matters may be discussed at interview.
- The post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the school is therefore permitted to ask job applicants to declare all convictions and cautions on a self-declaration form in advance of attending an interview (including those which are "spent" unless they are "protected" under the DBS filtering rules) in order to assess their suitability to work with children.
- If you are currently working with children, on either a paid or voluntary basis, your current employer will be asked about disciplinary offences, including disciplinary offences relating to children or young persons (whether the disciplinary sanction is current or time expired), and whether you have been the subject of any child protection allegations or concerns and if so the outcome of any enquiry or disciplinary procedure. Any information about past disciplinary action or substantiated allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual.

- If you are not currently working with children but have done so in the past, that previous employer will be asked about those issues. Where neither your current nor previous employment has involved working with children, your current employer will still be asked about your suitability to work with children. Where you have no previous employment history, we may request character references which may include references from your school or university.
- You should be aware that provision of false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if you have been appointed, and a possible referral to the police and/or DBS.

CONDITIONAL OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT

Any offer to a successful candidate will be conditional upon the following criteria:

- Receipt of at least two satisfactory references (if these have not already been received), including for internal appointments. All references should be provided by a senior person with appropriate authority, subject to the satisfaction of the school. All referees will be asked if the candidate is suitable to work with children. The school will compare any information provided by the referee with that provided by the candidate on the application form. Any inconsistencies will be discussed with the candidate.
- Verification of identity and qualifications.
- Evidence of the right to work in the UK.
- A satisfactory enhanced DBS check and if appropriate, a check of the Barred List maintained by the DBS.
- For a candidate to be employed as a teacher, a check that the candidate is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State or any sanction or restriction imposed (that remains current) by the historic General Teaching Council for England before its abolition in March 2012.
- Verification of professional qualifications, including, where applicable, any award of Qualified Teacher Status.
- Where the successful candidate has worked or been resident overseas, such checks and confirmations as the school may consider appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. This shall include the candidate providing the school with proof of his/her past conduct as a teacher in the form of a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country in which he/she has worked.
- Where the role involves providing care for pupils under eight, receipt of a signed Self-Declaration form showing the candidate is not disqualified from providing childcare as set out in the statutory guidance "Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (July 2018)".
- Verification of medical and physical fitness to undertake the duties of the role in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- For a candidate to be employed into a senior management position as set out within the school's Safer Recruitment Policy, receipt of a signed "senior charity manager positions: automatic disqualification declaration" confirming that the candidate is not disqualified from acting in a senior management position for a charity in accordance with the automatic disqualification rules for charities;
- If you are undertaking a management role, a check that you have not been prohibited from participating in the management of independent schools.

It is the school's practice that a successful candidate must complete a pre-employment health questionnaire. The information contained in the questionnaire will then be held by the school in strictest confidence and used as set out in the school's Staff Privacy Notice and Staff Information Security Policy. This information will be reviewed against the Job Description and the Person Specification for the role, together with details of any other physical or mental requirements of the role i.e. proposed workload, extra-curricular activities, and layout of the school. The school is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010. No job offer will be withdrawn without first consulting with the applicant, considering medical evidence and considering reasonable adjustments.