



Applying for a job at Highwood

Recruitment is a vital process to make sure we attract and appoint the right people to continually improve the outcomes for pupils in our school. We thought it would be useful to describe the process for potential applicants, so that you may give yourselves the best of success in the application process. In turn this will make sure that we don't miss out on potentially the right person simply due to people being unsure as to what to write in an application form.

This document will guide you through the recruitment process from the school's point of view and will give you an understanding of the procedures from the school's perspective. It will cover:

- Deciding the purpose of the role
- Creating a Job Description (JD) and Person Specification (PS)
- Advertising the position
- Shortlisting applicants against the JD and PS
- Arranging interview day

Deciding the purpose of the role

When a position becomes available within the school, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) discusses what is required to enhance or fill any gaps in the skill base of our existing staff. Once the core purpose of the role has been decided, we then create JD and PS.

Creating a Job Description and Person Specification

These documents will identify exactly what the school is looking for in terms of skills, knowledge, experience and personality. They will not only give you a clear idea as to the job you would be undertaking, but the type of evidence we will want you to show when writing your application form.

Advertising the position

We always advertise on the school's website as well as posting our vacancies on @highwoodjobs Twitter feed. We also post adverts on the Wokingham website and occasionally use the Greensheets, depending on the role.

Shortlisting applicants against the JD and PS

The purpose of short-listing is to identify the candidates who best meet our selection criteria for the post. It helps us identify which applicants are most likely to be capable of carrying out the duties of the job and who would fit into the ethos of our school. Those selected at this time will be the ones called to interview.

Selection for the short-list is done by a group of senior leaders. Candidates are specifically assessed against the criteria stated in the **Job Description** and **Person Specification** and not against each other. This is done using a scoring system, usually on a spreadsheet, where each member of the shortlisting panel assess your application form in relation to the JD and PS.

It is vitally important that in your personal statement you reflect on how your experience, qualifications and personality directly relate to the JD and PS as we will be judging whether to call you to interview solely based on your application form.

On the majority of occasions, we short-list as applications are received; this avoids sifting through a large number of applications in one session, especially where the post is a popular one. If a candidate's application meets the selection criteria, they can be called to interview early in order to give us the best chance of appointing the best candidates.

Arranging interview day

The interview days at Highwood will always contain a task relevant to the position you are applying for; a self-reflection exercise in relation to the set task and a panel interview with a combination of senior leaders. For some roles within the school, this will include a member of the governing body. Applicants will usually find out on the day of interview if they have been successful, but those details will be confirmed by the panel members on the day.

Top Tips

- Arrange a visit – It is important that you find out about the school and that find out if it is a place where you would want to work. It also shows a commitment to finding out about the school and that it is not just one job of many that you are applying for. It will seem strange to a school that you are applying for a job at a school that you know very little about.
- Look at the school website – You will get a great feel for the ethos and culture that schools are aspiring to achieve and being able to include that in your discussion on your visit.
- Ask questions – The whole interview process is about you making sure the school is right for you as well as the school checking that you are right for the role.
- Be yourself – We are not looking for the finished article straight away. The school wants to find the right people that we can mould and develop into fantastic members of staff. Try not to make assumptions of what you think we want to hear, stick to your own values and principles as this is important to us.
- Think carefully about the role – You will need to explain how you think you are suited to the school; how you are suited to the specific role you have applied for and how you feel you are the person described in the JD and PS documents.
- Ask for Feedback – Being unsuccessful should not be seen as a failure, but as part of your personal learning curve. The more feedback you get, the better prepared you will be for any future interviews.

Safer Recruitment

As you will have seen from the job advertisement, Highwood is committed to safeguarding and the welfare of children and young people. All staff and volunteers are expected to share this commitment.

As part of our safer recruitment practises, if you are shortlisted and accept an interview at Highwood, references will be sort prior to your attendance at interview. This is so we can discuss any queries we may have with the reference with you at the interview.

Applications are **only** accepted using the standard application form, CVs are not accepted. You must pay particular attention to your previous work history and account for any gaps in your employment,

explaining why they occurred. Even if you have been employed outside of education, or have had many different roles or worked for many different companies you should include them all along with the dates you worked for them.

Your current employer (or last employer if you are current unemployed) must be one of the references you give, and this should be a member of at least the senior leadership team (for Teachers, the Head Teacher must be given as a reference).

Pre-written references you may provide are not accepted under any circumstances.

If you are not working in Education currently, but have done in the past please give details of the last education establishment you worked in so we can contact them for a reference also.

If you are successful in a role at Highwood, you will have to complete an Enhanced DBS check before you can commence your employment.

Please see the schools web site www.highwood.wokingham.sch.uk under the School Information – Policies tab for the Highwood Safeguarding Policy.