Information Pack

PA to the Usher

Closing date: Midday, 21st November 2023

Interview date: Week commencing 27th November 2023
Introduction from the Master, Helen Pike

Magdalen College School is a remarkable place. We are now well into our sixth century, and our former pupils include scholars, war heroes, musicians, Olympians, two Nobel Prize laureates, a Hollywood film director, and a saint. Our success in public examinations, in securing places at top universities, and in an astonishing array of extra-curricular pursuits ensures that we continue this proud tradition. We do so by nurturing the individual potential of each of our pupils, and above all we believe that learning is as fun as it is fulfilling.

William of Waynflete founded Magdalen College School in 1480: schoolmaster, bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor of England. Being of humble origins, Waynflete was determined that others of ability should be given the opportunity to learn, to serve and to prosper as he did. And so MCS offers a transformative education in our global university city, the community to which we contribute.

We attract and retain the best staff and MCS is a stimulating, welcoming and thriving environment in which both to learn and to work.

A lot happens at MCS. The various sections of our website (www.mcsoxford.org) including the recent News will give you an impression of our school.

Thank you for your interest.
The School

Magdalen College School, founded in 1480 by William of Waynflete, is one of the country’s leading independent day schools. It is situated in an enviable location at the heart of Oxford beside the River Cherwell. Shaped by its Christian Collegiate foundation and links with the university city of which it is part, it aims to inspire in all its pupils a desire to learn, flourish and to serve.

The school will celebrate its 550th anniversary in 2030. The current generation of MCS staff and pupils wish to ensure that we shape a School that is able to flourish for at least another half millennium, and hopefully many more beyond. There are around 980 pupils, boys 7-18 and Sixth Form Girls, and 200 staff who learn and work on the school’s central Oxford site.

The Role

The school is seeking to appoint a PA to the Usher, the school’s Senior Deputy Head, who is Deputy Head Pastoral and responsible for the day to day running of the school. The PA to the Usher is a role that provides essential comprehensive administrative and secretarial support to the Usher. The Usher’s PA ensures the smooth running of the Usher’s office, providing an efficient and discreet service to fellow staff members, parents of pupils and other visitors to the school. Frequently confidential and sensitive matters must be dealt with in the appropriate manner. This is a fixed-term role to provide cover for maternity leave.

Duties of the role will include, but not be restricted to:

- Providing confidential, high-level administrative and secretarial support to the Usher, assisting him in managing his workload and ensuring that tasks have been completed
- Planning and managing the Usher’s diary, appointments and reminder systems, in order to make the most effective use of his time and ensuring the smooth running of the office
• Dealing proactively with all incoming and outgoing correspondence to and from the Usher’s office, including drafting letters and emails, in order to ensure appropriate and timely responses to all communications

• Receiving the Usher’s visitors, incoming telephone calls, other messages and emails; responding on behalf of the Usher to routine enquiries. Ensuring that all visitors and callers to the Usher’s office receive an efficient, professional, approachable and welcoming service, in line with the ethos of the school

• Preparing and processing documents, reports and presentation materials to a suitably high standard, and to agreed timescales, using appropriate software packages, including creation and management of surveys

• Planning and organising internal and external meetings/interviews as required by the Usher, ensuring that appropriate information, facilities and refreshments are provided; making travel arrangements if required

• Preparing agendas and papers for meetings, taking minutes as requested

• Assisting with the weekly Usher’s mailing to all school parents and staff using various methods of communication such as email, school website and Parent Portal

• Arranging safeguarding training for all staff, liaising with the Recruitment Officer to ensure timely training for all new starters

• Responsibility for safeguarding and pastoral administration

• Compiling and maintaining information on disciplinary incidents

• Liaising with senior staff, usually Heads of Section and Heads of Year, regarding letters to parents concerning pastoral care and disciplinary matters
• Assisting the Usher in the allocation of car parking spaces

• Fostering a service-oriented ‘can-do’ approach and a culture of support within the administrative team, ensuring mutually supportive working relationships between academic and support staff

• Developing administrative systems and maintaining records and databases as required by the Usher. This may include information about members of staff and pupils, so must be managed in accordance with data protection requirements

• As part of the school’s administrative team, contributing to the operations of the School’s offices, including providing cover for colleagues and general administrative assistance as required

• Dealing with and managing external lettings enquiries, taking into account various school activities taking place on site and liaising with other departments involved

• Liaising with colleagues organising visits by external speakers regarding risk assessment and gifts, where appropriate
• Assisting with the school prefect selection and appointment process.

• Organising and managing the main school Prizegiving event

• Participating in school projects and providing administrative support across other departments as required

The Candidate

Candidates from a range of backgrounds are encouraged to apply for this role.

The successful candidate will be able to demonstrate:

• Proven experience in a similar role

• Substantial senior secretarial and administrative experience, working independently in a complex environment; and a demonstrable pro-active approach to planning and prioritising work on their own initiative

• Accuracy and thorough attention to detail, as well as first rate organisational skills

• Excellent inter-personal and communication skills, along with a diplomatic and discreet outlook

• Proficient use of Microsoft programmes, including Word, Outlook, Powerpoint and Excel

• A willingness and ability to ‘roll up sleeves’ in an emergency as and when needed along with a professional, unflappable and approachable demeanour

• The ability to maintain a high work-rate and to cope with a range of tasks and competing priorities

• Excellent command of written and spoken English
• Sufficient numeracy skills to deal with statistical data

• Good telephone manner and ability to deal with visitors and callers in a calm and courteous way

• An enjoyment of working in the company of children, and of participating fully in the life of the school

• The ability to engage effectively with all staff members across the school

• A high level of personal integrity, honesty, enthusiasm and stamina

Previous experience within an educational environment will be desirable, but not essential. We are looking for a team player with a positive, cheerful, flexible attitude and a willingness to become involved in the life of the school.

**Application Process**

Candidates should submit the “MCS Application Form for Teaching and Support Staff” which can be found on the Job Vacancy link of the website ([www.mcsoxford.org](http://www.mcsoxford.org)). To access [Click here](http://www.mcsoxford.org). To apply for the position please send the following three documents to the HR Administrator, Miss Yelena Molcanova ([recruitment@mcsoxford.org](mailto:recruitment@mcsoxford.org)).

1. “MCS Application Form for Teaching and Support Staff” Form

2. CV (Curriculum Vitae)

All documentation should be sent no later than **21st November, at midday**; early applications are highly encouraged. The school’s preferred method of communication is by email and it will not be necessary to send a hard copy of the documents by post.
References may be taken up in advance. If you do not wish references to be called for at this stage, please make that clear on the reference section of the application form.

We anticipate holding interviews in the week beginning 27th November, but we reserve the right to interview before this date. We will be in contact with shortlisted candidates by telephone. Please be aware that all shortlisted candidates will be requested to complete a “Self-Disclosure” form before attending their interview.

Equal Opportunities

Magdalen College School recognises and is committed to ensuring applicants and employees from all sections of the community are treated equally regardless of race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, marital and civil partnership status, or pregnancy and maternity. We welcome applications from all sections of the community.

Safeguarding Policy

Magdalen College School is committed to the safeguarding of pupils, and any offer of employment will be subject to an enhanced DBS disclosure, the receipt of satisfactory references, the school’s pre-employment medical questionnaire, plus sight of relevant original ID documentation and degree certificate(s). This role will be in regulated activity and will require a children’s barred list check as well as an enhanced DBS check. The enhanced DBS check is due to this role being exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
Remuneration and other benefits

This is a temporary, full-time term time only post with the basic working hours as 40 hours per week: Monday-Friday 08:00-17:00 with 1 hour (unpaid) for lunch. This is a fixed term role providing maternity cover from 3rd January to 5th July 2024 (in the first instance). It is additionally expected that you will be available when necessary for evening and weekend work as pre-agreed with the Usher. Entitlement to 30 days paid holiday pro rata each academic year plus normal UK public holidays, 5 days of which have to be held over for the Christmas period when the School closes.

Non-teaching staff are automatically enrolled in the school’s contributory Group Pension Scheme. This is a defined contribution pension scheme into which the employee contributes 5% of gross salary and the employer contributes 10%.

Free Private Health Insurance for all staff on permanent contracts and a single membership is treated as a benefit in kind. Concessionary rates are available for partners and dependents.

School fee remission for the children of permanent staff who pass the entrance tests for the school is currently 50%.
The school has a fully equipped gym which is available for staff use, and staff may also enjoy access to the University of Oxford’s Rosenblatt Swimming Pool. Tennis courts are available, and there is a comprehensive programme of staff sports clubs, including football, climbing, yoga, Pilates, and badminton. Staff also have the opportunity to join choirs and music groups, and to get involved in drama productions. There is a wide range of benefits on offer to staff, including a free lunch during term time, free private health insurance and complimentary use of school sports facilities.

Staff are encouraged to make use of the Senior Common Room within and after the school day, as an area for relaxation and shared discussion outside departments. There is also a quiet room located close to the SCR where staff can work and study. Tea and Coffee are served in the SCR at morning break, Lunch is provided in the Dining Hall, and cakes and cut fruit are available in the SCR at the end of the school day. Staff socials, guest nights and Master’s Drinks are regular features of each term.

Please note that MCS is an inner-city school, with very limited parking. Staff are encouraged to use public transport wherever possible for their journey to work. We offer Cycle to work scheme.

Additional Information

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact the HR office: 01865 253401.