



# HEAD OF BLACKBURN HOUSE

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

WALTHAMSTOW HALL  
SEVENOAKS



“*Thriving girls’ day school in Sevenoaks. Produces quietly confident young women with a ‘can do’ attitude and an adventurous spirit. The strong academic results are a ‘happy by-product’ of all this.*”

The Good Schools Guide

## Introduction

Walthamstow Hall is a thriving girls’ day school based in Sevenoaks, Kent.

From September 2025, it will accept girls aged 7-11 into Blackburn House and girls aged 11-18 into the Senior School. This is an exciting time to join the School as the role will play a pivotal role in shaping the new Junior School provision.

One of the oldest girls’ schools in the country, and certainly the oldest in Kent, the School has a long track record of excellence. The School enjoys marked academic and sporting success, consistently placing it high within the UK’s top 100 schools. Walthamstow Hall carves out a unique space for every individual to aspire, flourish and set the world alight.

Walthamstow Hall offers a **Dynamic Education**. This is a fun, grounded school of boundless opportunity and passionate teachers.

Walthamstow Hall has a focus on students leading **Purposeful Lives**, committed to making a positive difference in the world.

Pupils are **Empowered to Flourish** in an inspiring environment that cares for the whole person.





# History, Ethos & Values

Since our foundation in Walthamstow in 1838 as a school and home for daughters of missionaries, Walthamstow Hall has been sending accomplished, confident young women into the world to lead purposeful lives, making a real difference in their chosen fields. Our earliest pupils went to work in far-flung locations, often as medics and teachers. Today, with an ever-greater wealth of opportunity open to them, this confident spirit of adventure (represented by the School's emblem, the Ship) is more relevant than ever. The development of character, endeavour, resilience and flair within a Christian setting remain central to the School's aims, and at each stage, pupils are actively prepared for what lies beyond and provided with new challenges. Through both the curricular and co-curricular programmes, they are enabled to explore and test their talents and embrace opportunities to

lead and serve within a supportive community and beyond. Pupils and parents alike are appreciative of the rich education and opportunities the School has to offer.

In 1882, Walthamstow Hall moved out of London to its present site in Sevenoaks; since then, it has become a cherished and established part of the wider community. Development in the recent past included a period in which the School was the girls' grammar school in Sevenoaks under the Direct Grant System in the 1970s before becoming fully independent in 1976. The School built one of the first school theatres in 1989. In September 2025, pupils in Years 3 to 6 will move to Blackburn House, their original Holly Bush Lane home and currently being renovated for their return.

*“ Pupils' achievements are excellent, and their very high rates of progress throughout the Junior and Senior Schools ensure that they are highly successful in moving to the next stage of their education or the world beyond school. ”*

*“ Pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong and take full responsibility for their own conduct, with the result that exemplary behaviour is the norm within and beyond the classroom. ”*

*“ Pupils of all ages engage fully, and achieve outstanding success, in a very wide range of extension activities to support the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities. ”*

*“ Pupils' social development is excellent. They are confident in their dealings with adults and value one another's thoughts and opinions when supporting and collaborating with each other and their teachers. ”*

*“ The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent. ”*

*“ Pupils have excellent attitudes towards their learning. ”*

*“ Pupils are exceptionally positive in their commitment to improving the lives of others. ”*

## Independent Schools Inspectorate

*“ No matter who you are, the Sixth Form at Wally encourages you to be the best you can, and not just in your studies. There are so many co-curricular opportunities that help to build confidence, self-esteem and a sense of achievement. ”*

Grace, Year 13

*“ When I talk to my friends from other schools it strikes me that that they aren't known properly by their teachers, but I am known as an individual here. ”*

Isabella, Year 11

*“ I found it very easy to settle in at Wally Hall because both my sisters went here and I knew everyone was very friendly and welcoming. At Wally, there is something for everyone to be a part of. ”*

Valya, Year 9

# Location, Buildings, Development & Finance

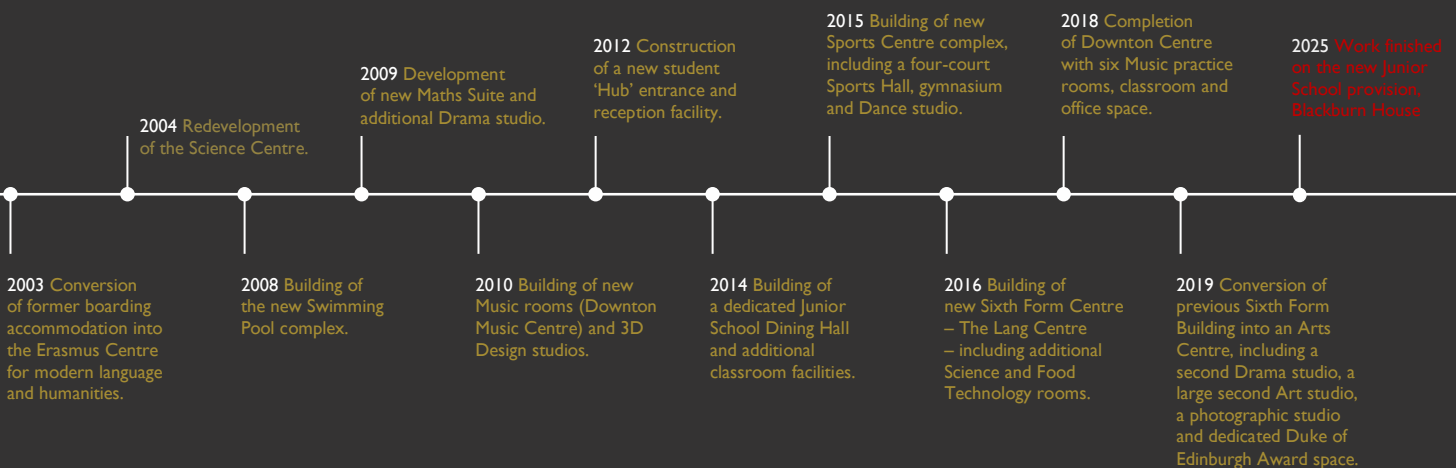
The School enjoys views of Knole Park and the Downs whilst being close to the centre of Sevenoaks and to the station with its fast (22 minutes) and frequent links to London.

Since moving to Sevenoaks in 1882, every Walthamstow Hall building, from its original Arts and Crafts heart to the new Sports Hall, Swimming Pool Complex and Sixth Form Centre, has been designed and purpose-built to meet the School's present and future needs as it has expanded and evolved.

In 2025 we introduce our new Junior School provision, Blackburn House, hosted on the Senior School site.



## *The past 20 years have been a period of estate development, including:*



The latest major development was the construction of the £5.7 million Sixth Form Centre. This four-storey building includes an additional Science/Technology suite as well as dedicated Sixth Form teaching rooms and communal spaces. Subsequent refurbishment projects have included the previous Sixth Form Building, additional Music practice rooms and completion of the Downton Music Centre.

For 185 years, the School has constantly evolved: investing, building and planning for the future. We now plan to bring girls in Key Stage 2 back onto the Holly Bush Lane site, bringing the School back onto one site with the enhanced community spirit that offers.



# Curriculum

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The Junior, Senior and Sixth Form curriculums all reflect our belief in the importance of the individual: they are designed to offer unusual breadth, choice and flexibility, tailored to the needs of each pupil.

Across the School, lessons are taught by highly qualified, enthusiastic specialists with a love for their subjects and a real commitment to their pupils and the craft of teaching and learning.

From the beginning, teaching takes place in optimum sized groups in attractive, modern classrooms grouped in

dedicated department areas. Lessons are well equipped with IT, including interactive white boards, tablets, laptops, Firefly VLE and MS Teams.

The core academic curriculum is supported by extensive PSHEE, Careers and Personal Development Programmes throughout the School. The Sixth Form curriculum is supplemented by a dedicated Horizons programme, including external lectures, 'Future Ready' life skills and complementary mathematics for non-specialists.

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## RESULTS

Walthamstow Hall's record of academic excellence is long established and can be seen at every point of external assessment.

Junior School pupils consistently gain places and scholarships at highly regarded and competitive senior schools, including our own Senior School, local grammar schools following Kent test success, Sevenoaks School and St Paul's Girls' School.

In the Senior School, pupils typically take an average of 10 subjects at GCSE and 3 at A Level. The EPQ is a popular addition taken by Sixth Form students, and achievement is very high.

In 2024, 86% of A Levels were awarded at A\*-B, with 63% at A\*-A and 33% at A\*. 34% of GCSEs in 2024 were awarded at 9, with 57% at 8-9; and 74% of all GCSEs taken achieved a 7, 8 or 9.

Value-added analysis is equally favourable: for Year 7 to I/GCSE in 2024, Walthamstow Hall is ranked in the top 10% out of 283 Independent Schools. At A Level, Walthamstow Hall's value-added results have put us in the top 7% of independent schools nationally.

## LEAVER DESTINATIONS

The breadth and flexibility of the Walthamstow Hall curriculum, coupled with expert teaching, enables students to pursue the further education and career path that is absolutely right for them.

The majority of Year 13 leavers go on to higher education, and typically over 80% go to Russell Group universities.

The most popular universities are Nottingham, Loughborough, York, Bath, Manchester, Bristol, Exeter and Durham. Over the last two years, we have had students go to Oxford and Cambridge for Music, History and Sanskrit.

**The most popular university courses for leavers in the past three years have been:**

- 29% Science-related, including Psychology, Maths, Veterinary Science and Medicine.
- 23% Business, Management and Marketing.
- 10% Classical Studies, Archaeology and Ancient History.
- 10% Architecture, Textiles and Art.
- Other popular courses are Geography, Law and English.

Students have also pursued alternatives to university, including Higher Apprenticeships in fields such as Accountancy, Logistics and Management Consulting. Recently leavers have taken up apprenticeships at Barclays, Laing O'Rourke and Unilever.



# Co-curricular Enrichment

*Co-curricular learning is key, with Music, Drama, Art, Sport and Service all components of everyday life at Walthamstow Hall.*

## SPORT

The School 'punches above its weight' in the sporting arena with significant numbers of pupils competing and winning medals at the national level across a wide range of sports, including athletics, badminton, cross-country, lacrosse, show jumping, gymnastics, swimming and tennis. Sport is not just about the elite: 'Sport for all' is encouraged and celebrated at every stage with a diverse range of sport on offer from lacrosse and swimming to cheerleading and yoga. Pupils enjoy five lessons of sport in Year 7 and, counter to national trends, participation and enthusiasm continue right through to Year 13.

Indoor cricket nets were opened in 2024, thanks to a generous parental donation.

The opening of Blackburn House offers an expansion of the provision of sport for girls in Years 3 to 6.

“ Team, group or individual achievements in drama, music and sport are recognised at local, county and national level. ”

**ISI Inspection**

## MUSIC & DRAMA

Walthamstow Hall is renowned for the exceptional quality of Music and Drama on offer. Junior pupils are introduced to a variety of musical instruments and a third of pupils take weekly lessons in an instrument, and a third also take Trinity Drama lessons. Over 90% of Trinity Drama grades are passed at the highest level, Distinction. There are formal and informal concerts every term, involving the orchestra and a wide range of chamber groups and choirs. All pupils in Key Stage 2 sing in a School choir.

Plays take place in The Ship Theatre every term. Junior School recent productions have included *The Little Mermaid*, *Lion King*, and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

“ Large numbers of pupils contribute on stage or behind the scenes to highly successful drama productions. ”

“ Numerous ensembles and choirs perform in concerts and recitals in school and as far afield as Tuscany. ”





## Community

A strong sense of community, respect for self and others and the pride that comes from sharing a great tradition make Walthamstow Hall a school where every pupil can flourish, achieve and make lifelong friendships. It is a setting in which achievement can be celebrated and where effort is rewarded and recognised. The strong, positive and supportive relationships between staff, students and parents are a fundamental component of the School's success, and effective teamwork is prized at all levels. There is a palpable sense of community spirit, affection, fun and pride in what the School represents. This is all underpinned by skilled and highly committed governance by Governors who know the School well. The extremely active vertical House system enables pupils and students to mix across year groups and engage in friendly competition, and it complements the pastoral structure and increasing focus on Pupil Voice.

*“ Parents ... showed their appreciation for the way that leadership and governance carefully monitor and develop arrangements for pupils. ”*

**ISI Inspection**



## Pastoral Care & Wellbeing

Walthamstow Hall is a harmonious community in which all individuals are respected and feel able to contribute. Our success is built on the conviction that strong pastoral systems underpin academic progress and that emotional, personal and intellectual development go hand in hand. Great value is placed on every student's happiness and personal development, and they leave as accomplished, assured and happy young adults.

Pastoral Heads and Form Tutors provide guidance and monitor personal and academic well-being, working alongside their tutees, who are actively involved in reviewing their own progress and setting targets. There is plenty of praise and advice when needed.

Discipline in a school where pupils are known, valued and well-motivated is rarely a problem. There is a School Code, formulated in consultation with pupils, covering topics including standards of behaviour and relationships. The School has firm policies on behaviour, and minor transgressions are swiftly dealt with. Consideration for others, self-discipline and good behaviour are the norm, and rewards and sanctions are applied consistently and fairly. Pupils respect this, themselves and each other.

Pupils have a strong voice in school matters formally through the Student Council, Food Council and Eco Council and more informally in the friendly and respectful contact between staff and pupils.

Close and regular communication between the School and parents is encouraged, and the School takes pride in the productive partnership which exists between parents, staff and pupils.



# Admissions

West Kent is privileged to benefit from a concentration of high-achieving junior and senior schools in both the maintained and independent sectors. This is particularly pronounced in the catchment areas of Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells.

It is not uncommon for prospective families to consider a range of schools at key points of entry.

In the junior sector, Walthamstow Hall is often considered alongside high-performing state primary schools (Amherst, Lady Boswell's), larger co-ed prep schools (Sevenoaks Prep and St Michael's) and The Granville, an all girls' prep.

At the senior level, the competitive pool covers a larger geographic area and includes Sevenoaks, Kent College Pembury and Caterham Schools in the independent sector and local grammars such as Tonbridge Grammar School. The Weald of Kent grammar school has an "annexe" at Sevenoaks alongside the co-ed Christian inter-faith school, Trinity School, and an annexe of Tunbridge Wells Boys Grammar, which accepts girls into Sixth Form.

From September 2025, Walthamstow Hall's main points of entry will be Years 3 and 7, although pupils are welcomed into all year groups where there is space including a significant number into Years 9 and 12. With its close links to London, Sevenoaks is ideally placed for the City, and many Walthamstow Hall parents are employed there.

Blackburn House will receive applications from families with girls aged 7 to 11.

The main entry points to the School are at Year 3 (18 places) and Year 7 (60 places). The School offers 'deferred entry' places from Year 7 to Year 9, a programme which is offered to local prep schools which go to 13+.

Entry to Blackburn House will involve prospective pupils attending a taster session with their year group; these sessions include age-appropriate assessments which take the shape of more formal tests higher up the School.

The Senior School is academically selective, and entry is based on success in three areas – performance in the ISEB Common Pre-Test, a report from the head of the pupil's current school and an interview with a senior member of Walthamstow Hall teaching staff. Over the past few years, the average number of applicants for the 60 Year 7 places has been around 120. Provision is made for any applicants who have learning support needs.

Pupils from Blackburn House will go through the same entrance process for Year 7 as all other applicants, although Year 5 pupils making good progress may receive an early offer conditional on Year 6 assessments confirming their level of attainment.

Academic, Music, Drama, Art and Sports scholarships and exhibitions are offered at the Senior School and in Sixth Form, as are means-tested bursaries. Founder's bursaries, worth nearly the entire value of fees, are also offered at the Senior stage to those families meeting the criteria for support.







# Senior Leadership Team



From September 2025, The Senior Leadership Team will comprise of the Headmistress, Bursar, Deputy Head, Head of Blackburn House, Heads of Key Stages 3 and 4, Head of Sixth Form, Director of Studies, Director of Data and Operations and Director of Digital Services and Innovation.

The Headmistress and Bursar attend all Governor committee meetings, with other members of the Team attending those relevant for their role.

The Head of Blackburn House reports directly to the Headmistress.

Good communication is prized, and the team operates particularly effectively together, as well as in individually delegated roles.

There are four pastoral sections at the School: Key Stage 2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6), Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 and 9), Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11) and Sixth Form/Key Stage 5 (Years 12 and 13).

Every member of staff has pastoral as well as academic responsibilities. There are also six Staff Heads of House who support the student House Captains in making the House system such a success within the School. The School is looking to incorporate Blackburn House pupils into the Senior School House system.

At Blackburn House, pastoral and academic roles will be similarly combined, with staff always taking an active interest in pupils' wider interests and personal development alongside their academic progress.

## **We are committed to:**

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.
- Equal opportunities in respect of any protected characteristic.
- Recruiting the staff who have the vision and competencies to lead the School into its next exciting phase.



# The Appointment

From September 2025, we seek to appoint the inaugural Head of Blackburn House, an individual who is dedicated to providing an education that enables each pupil to aspire, flourish and set the world alight.

This is an exciting time to join the Senior Leadership Team, as the individual will play a pivotal role in shaping the new Junior School site and provision.

Specific leadership qualifications are less important than the right skills, personal qualities and experiences, and the School is keen to consider candidates with a range of experience relevant to the flourishing development of Blackburn House.

As a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the candidate should have a good understanding of the educational priorities and operation of the School in its entirety.

Walthamstow Hall is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

The salary will be dependent on the experience of the successful candidate and will include significant benefits, including discounted School fees.

## Role Summary

The Head of Blackburn House is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and is responsible for the progress and welfare of pupils in Years 3 to 6.

The inaugural Head of Blackburn House will take the lead in the development of an exciting new phase of the School's life. They will be an inspirational leader with high warmth, vision and enthusiasm, as well as the ability to develop academic provision which meets the needs of the pupils in keeping with our Christian ethos.

We are looking for someone who is capable of bringing people with them and who conveys a sense of purposeful enjoyment about all aspects of School life. We are seeking a professional who exercises sound judgement, seeks to understand each pupil as an individual and who strives for the highest standards, including when under pressure. They will have the collaborative skills to ensure a smooth transition to a "one site" mentality.

The Head of Blackburn House is expected to teach a significantly reduced timetable to Key Stage 2 children.

This role will suit someone who thoroughly commits to their current role and will bring that same commitment with them as our Head of Blackburn House.





## **Marketing**

- Work with the Director of Marketing and Alumnae to attract new pupils to Blackburn House including through hosting Open Events.
- Work with the Director of Marketing and Alumnae to communicate news about Blackburn House.
- Be an enthusiastic and pro-active ambassador for the School, using every opportunity to grow our numbers and showcase the achievements of pupils in Blackburn House.

## **Key Stage 2 Management**

- Ensure that the Headmistress is always well informed about Key Stage 2 pupil matters.
- Chair meetings with Key Stage 2 staff and ensure that those colleagues are fully engaged and able to carry out their roles with confidence.
- Ensure appropriate information sharing about pupils.

## **Pupil Welfare and Behaviour**

- Ensure that all pupils joining Blackburn House feel a strong sense of belonging and being known within the ethos of the School.
- Be a highly visible presence around the School, particularly in areas where and when Blackburn House pupils are, maintaining an atmosphere of happiness, warmth and calm purpose.
- Set the tone for a culture of high expectations combined with optimistic resilience around mistakes.
- Ensure that Blackburn House pupil behavioural and welfare issues are responded to at the earliest stage in a way that facilitates holistic flourishing and promotes the development of healthy relationships.
- Liaise with the Medical team, Counsellor, Headmistress and external agencies where appropriate, to ensure that Blackburn House pupil mental and physical health concerns are well supported.
- Ensure that Blackburn House pupils' voices are heard and that pupil leadership flourishes as a central part of how the School operates.

## **Pupils' Academic Progress**

- Work with the Director of Studies and Director of Data and Operations to ensure that pupils in Years 3 to 6 enjoy a rich curriculum which aims to exceed national curriculum provision and provides a confident foundation for Senior School assessments, including those with highly competitive requirements.
- Instil classroom routines which facilitate behaviour for learning by all.
- Ensure that a culture of high expectations combined with optimistic resilience around mistakes extends to academic attainment and progress as well as behaviour.
- Have good oversight of learning support and the application of recommended strategies for individual pupils.

## **Transition to Key Stage Three**

- Work with the Head of Year 7 at Walthamstow Hall and their counterparts at other senior schools to facilitate a smooth transition into Year 7.
- Work with the Director of Marketing, and Registrar to market Year 7 to pupils in Blackburn House.
- Oversight of overnight residential experiences for pupils in Years 5 and 6.

## **Parent Liaison**

- Build and maintain excellent working relationships with parents.
- Oversee provision of parent workshops including on transition to Senior School.



## General

- Attend the regular weekly meetings of SLT and extraordinary SLT meetings.
- Line management leader responsibilities and communications during the period of transition as well as going forward into the future as required.
- Lead a clear, inclusive and innovative vision for teaching and learning, professional development and partnerships.
- Cultivate a positive staff culture and ensure that areas such as wellbeing, capability concerns and other disciplinary matters are effectively dealt with in a timely and professional manner as required by the Headmistress.
- Manage the budget for Blackburn House with prudence, in cooperation with the Bursar.
- Attend all major School events involving Key Stage 2 pupils.
- Lead staff INSET sessions as required by the Headmistress.

## Safeguarding

- Be the Designated Safeguarding Lead for Key Stage 2.
- Be an excellent role model for compliance with policies and procedures relating to Child Protection and Safeguarding.
- Attend Safeguarding training as required.

## Governance

- Prepare and assist in the collaborative preparation of reports for Governors' committee meetings, participating in those meetings as required.





# Person Specification

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## Essential

- A good honours degree.
- Teaching qualification.
- Experience of teaching Key Stage 2 children in readiness for competitive senior school entry processes.
- High warmth leadership style, able to inspire confidence and trust.
- DSL level 3 Safeguarding trained.
- Confident public speaker.
- A strong focus on what is in the best interests of the pupils as individuals and in community.
- A proven track record of supporting high attaining pupils, including those with additional learning and social needs.
- Outstanding interpersonal and strong leadership qualities to work together with experience of working together with parents and carers, and staff.
- Strong organisational and administrative skills
- The ability to work collaboratively and effectively as part of a wider team.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including numeracy and IT skills; good attention to detail.
- Excellent interpersonal skills and experience of building warm productive working relationships
- The ability to enable a diverse range of people to feel a sense of belonging.
- The ability to navigate through change, the unexpected and the challenging with calm, positive purpose.
- The ability to act with diplomacy, persuasion and tact.
- Commitment to the priorities and ethos of the School.

## Desirable

- Experience as a DSL.
- Science as a specialism.
- Experience of using CPOMS or similar to manage safeguarding and welfare concerns.
- Experience of working in a school with Junior and Senior phases.



# Terms & Conditions

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**Notice:** Two terms

**Holidays:** School holidays

**Remuneration:** To be commensurate with qualifications and experience.

**Benefits:**

- Staff fee concession for any daughters attending Walthamstow Hall. If not already at the School, any child would have to meet all of the normal entrance requirements.
- Reciprocal staff fee concessions for sons attending New Beacon School and Tonbridge School.
- Refreshments/meals during working hours.
- Salary sacrifice on pension scheme.
- Cycle to Work Scheme.
- Use of the School's Fitness Room and Swimming Pool (at allocated times).
- Free onsite parking.
- Healthcare.

**Pension:** Member of the School's teaching staff pension scheme, with a generous contribution by the School.

**Note:** The job description sets out the School's principal expectations of the Head of Blackburn House's professional responsibilities and duties. However, it should be noted that it is not intended to be a comprehensive statement and we are looking for an adaptable individual who has the capacity to work flexibly, taking the initiative to ensure that the Head of Blackburn House pro-actively supports the flourishing of the School.





# Application Process

For a confidential, informal conversation about the role, please contact Ms Louise Chamberlain, the Headmistress, via HR [HR@whall.school](mailto:HR@whall.school)

Closing date: 10am on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

**You should submit:**

- A completed application form.
- A covering letter addressed to Ms Louise Chamberlain, Headmistress [HR@whall.school](mailto:HR@whall.school). The letter should explain your reasons for applying and outline your suitability for the role. There is no need to submit a CV.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to the School for a first round of interviews during the week commencing Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January.

*Walthamstow Hall is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including but not exhaustive, checks with past employers, prohibition from management, online checks, and the Disclosure and Barring Service.*

*This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Safeguarding checks will be undertaken on all successful candidates.*

