



THORNTON

HEAD OF GROUNDS JOB DESCRIPTION



Thornton College

Thornton College is a leading independent Catholic day and boarding school for girls. It is one of the most successful non-selective schools in the UK and offers a warm and nurturing educational environment alongside a rigorous and exciting curriculum.

There are 400 children in our Pre- Reception, Pre-Prep, Prep and Senior departments, aged from 3-18. Over 60 girls board on a weekly or termly basis and many more take advantage of our occasional boarding option.

The School is set within 25 acres of beautiful parkland just outside Buckingham and within easy reach of Milton Keynes, and conveniently located between Oxford & Cambridge. Girls of all Christian denominations, of other faiths and of no faith are welcome in our school. All are equally valued, and all are equally important.

Thornton is a school that parents and girls can trust to deliver the highest standards of education coupled with outstanding pastoral care. We are dedicated to blending academic excellence with a richness of opportunity beyond the classroom. We believe that teaching and learning should be both challenging and enjoyable for pupils of all abilities and we aim for the highest possible standards. Our academic results are testament to the way the girls are challenged and motivated to give their best in all they do.

The provision of single-sex education during formative years enables students to grow in confidence, whilst enjoying an education that is specifically tailored and that recognises the different ways in which girls learn.

There is an exciting School Development Plan, which has the continued strengthening of the school's academic standing as the priority. Following the successful opening of our award-winning Science and Prep Classroom building and our Expressive Arts Studio, we opened a Sixth Form in September 2016.

School Mission Statement

To educate young people to meet the challenges of life courageously, to use their talents to the full, and to live the values of Christ's Gospel.

School Aims

1. To foster students' academic, physical and spiritual growth; in order that we ensure that our young people are happy, confident individuals who are well prepared for life in a rapidly changing world.
2. To enable our students to discover their true potential and to work towards their full development; in order that we encourage students to see themselves and what they have to offer in the context of the wider community.
3. To enable students to grow in the knowledge and love of God; in order that we encourage them to serve Him in others and to spread the knowledge of Gospel Values.

Key Skills Necessary to Fulfil Role:

Essential:

- A minimum of 5 years experience within the industry managing a range of gardening skills annually.
- A genuine interest in gardens, working outdoors and horticulture.
- An understanding of plants, including botanical names, pests, diseases, and management requirements.
- Knowledge and use of general garden duties, organisation and management of gardens, pedestrian mowers, hedge trimmers, general garden machinery.
- Be a highly motivated individual, keen to improve their knowledge and skills.
- A demonstrable understanding of how to maintain sports pitches.
- Able to reliably commute to our remote site.
- Proven tact and diplomacy in dealing with adults and children
- Ability to prioritise workload and meet deadlines
- Grass Management with Pedestrian and Ride on Mowers.
- Strimming, Hedge / Topiary Cutting and Pruning.
- Edging, Weeding, Mulching of beds.
- General Garden / Estate maintenance.
- Strong organisational skills
- Sense of humour.
- The capacity to remain calm and to cope with the unexpected.
- Physically fit and able to fulfil your duties; with an excellent health and time keeping record.
- The ability to work as a member of a collaborative team.
- The capacity to remain calm and to cope with the unexpected.

- Full Driving license.

Desirable:

- An RHS Level 2 certificate in horticulture or equivalent.
- NVQ Level 2 Sports Turf
- Knowledge and experience of whole school procedures and organisation
- Some experience of managing a budget
- Chainsaw Use (CS30 / 31)
- Spraying (PA1 / 6)

Reports to: Bursar

Context & Overview of Role:

You will be responsible for maintaining the grounds and sports facilities of our beautiful 25 acre site. The majority of the workload is the maintenance of the existing lawns and borders, with the additional responsibility of working with the Director of Sports to ensure the sports facilities are in place for the students.

This is a management position of an Organisational nature within the wider Support Team. The post-holder works within specific areas and therefore work is prioritised as required. Due to the routine of schools, the workload may not be evenly spread throughout the year. You will be supervised by the Bursar, however organisation of own workload and priorities on a day-to-day basis using own initiative and knowledge of work is essential. You will attend a weekly meeting with Bursar to review needs and priorities.

This is a hands on role, within the Operational Function of the College. At times you will be expected to support the wider Support Team in their areas of work. The post-holder provides an efficient and high calibre service to the College in respect of all matters. You will need to contribute to a positive culture that supports the Teaching and Learning environment effectively. All staff are expected to contribute to the wider life of the College and support its Catholic ethos, as outlined in the Mission Statement and Aims of the College. You will play an active role in supporting the operational function and ensure H&S is a focus of priority at the College.

Main Responsibilities

Report to Bursar regularly to agree grounds maintenance plan. Liaise with the Head of Operations on progress with grounds upkeep/refurbishment to allow update to the Estates Development Plan and rolling programme. Supervise smaller grounds tradesmen/ground people on site. Line manage the 'Junior Trainee Grounds Assistant'.

Duties

- Maintain Grounds
- Maintaining Sports Pitches & Courts: The preparation and maintenance of sports playing surfaces to a high standard to include cricket, athletics, tennis, rugby, football, hockey, rounders etc
- Boundaries – hedging and fences
- Topiary, trees & hedges, annual lawn care, plant care & pruning, pest & disease control, plant fertilisation, flower bed ongoing management, seasonal pot displays, machinery, and tool management.
- Plan, implement, and achieve garden maintenance schedules using provided digital software.
- Organise tree survey
- Maintain Paths to be free of debris
- Be able to suggest improvements to the garden, pruning, planting, border layout.
- Managing, motivating, and instructing staff and ensuring suitable standards are met.
- Additional adhoc events and estate duties as directed by the Bursar.
- Maintenance duties are to include both mechanical and manual operations and will cover the broad spectrum of Sport ground industry maintenance operations.
- Cricket pitch preparation and maintenance; mowing, scarifying, rolling, marking and autumn renovations
- Football and Rugby Mowing, aeration, scarifying and fertilising; tractor mounted machinery.
- Line marking; Initial setting out and mark and weekly over marking
- Brushing sand dressed artificial sports pitch
- Working closely with the Head of Maintenance & Head of Operations
- Ensuring the swimming pool is maintained appropriately
- Assisting with the car parking
- Maintain car park areas
- Pest Control
- Mowing grass areas
- Landscaping
- Maintaining gates & fencing
- Sports equipment setup – football goals/hockey goals/tennis nets/netball posts etc
- Trimtrail maintenance
- Organise regular servicing of tractors and mowers annually.
- Alarm Call-out priority 3
- Ensure grounds expenditure remains within budget.
- Support the aims and ethos of the school at all times.
- Set a good example in terms of punctuality, attendance and to observe the school's dress code.
- Attend INSET days.
- Participate in / support school events where possible e.g. Open Day, School Fete.
- To be on call for any inclement weather conditions, this will require the staff team to carry out gritting to clear snow/ice around site to enable the school to remain open / re-open for teaching staff and students. Assist with gritting of the site in icy weather, as per the policy, to keep the site safe and hazard free in icy conditions
- Be proactive in maintaining pupil safety and the safety of others.

- Take part in staff annual review.
- Contribute to the implementation of school policies and procedures.
- Regularly review the school Events Calendar and understand your required involvement.
- Read and understand the school's Health & Safety Policy a copy of which is held on the s:drive.
- Dealing with queries from suppliers and contractors
- Reporting matters to the Bursar
- Organise priorities – priorities are ever changing.

All staff are responsible for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of students at Thornton College by ensuring compliance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy at all times. It is a requirement of all staff to report any actual or potential risks to the safety or welfare of students to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

All staff are required to undertake whatever else may reasonably be requested by the Headteacher or Bursar in support of the Aims of the School. Job Descriptions are subject to annual review.

Working Conditions:

Hours of Work 8.00am until 5pm (With 1.5hrs of breaks), Monday to Friday

Holiday 25 days with an additional three days holiday is given between Christmas and New Year in lieu of weekend work to include one Open Day and 2 days of the weekend of the School Fete.

