

**HR Lead
(Operations)
Job
Information**



RGS
NEWCASTLE



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HR Lead (Operations)

Newcastle upon Tyne Royal Grammar School
Required as soon as available



THE POSITION

Are you an experienced HR professional looking for your next challenge? RGS Newcastle is seeking a HR Lead (Operations) to join our dynamic team. The successful candidate will have proven track record in delivering the full remit of operational HR matters and bring hands on experience to our dynamic team. Reporting to the Head of HR, you will play a key role in delivering a high-quality HR service across the school.

This is a varied and rewarding role where you will:

- Lead on complex employee relations matters.
- Ensure compliance with statutory requirements.
- Support the Senior Leadership Team and Managers with HR matters within our community.
- Contribute to HR projects and strategic initiatives.
- Deliver training and updates to line managers and staff on HR processes and policies.

What we're looking for:

- CIPD Level 5 (or equivalent) and strong HR advisory experience.
- Excellent knowledge of UK employment law and HR best practice.
- Exceptional communication and relationship-building skills.
- A proactive, solutions-focused approach.

The successful candidate will form part of a small, dynamic HR team consisting of a HR Assistant, HR Lead (Recruitment) and Head of HR. The HR department is a busy department which supports our community of over 250 employees as well as volunteers, self-employed service providers and peripatetic teachers.

The role may particularly suit someone looking to develop their career in HR, with aspirations towards more senior roles in the future.

Why join us?

We offer a competitive salary, generous benefits, and the opportunity to make a real impact in a prestigious educational setting. RGS is entering an exciting phase of change and development, and this role presents a great opportunity to make a significant contribution as we navigate and shape the next chapter of our journey.

Job Description: HR Lead (Operations)

Closing Date: 9.00am Monday 02nd February 2026

Contact: Louise Ledger (Head of HR) l.ledger@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk



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THE SCHOOL

In 1525, the Mayor of Newcastle, Thomas Horsley, wrote his will, in which he generously gifted his estate to fund a grammar school. Five centuries later, Horsley's vision lives on in the Royal Grammar School Newcastle's corridors and classrooms, and his philanthropic spirit drives the RGS's commitment to education.

Few schools can claim a 500-year history. Over the years, the RGS, has continued to flourish as the premier independent school in the North East of England and as one of the country's leading schools - consistently topping the regional table for academic excellence.

Today, RGS is a fully co-educational school with over 1,300 students aged 7-18 (Years 3 to 13). Its academically selective places are highly sought after. The school has more than 250 students in the Junior School, which shares the same outstanding site as the Senior School. Its Sixth Form is one of the largest in the independent sector, with more than 340 students.

While RGS prides itself on academic excellence, the school is also known for its emphasis on a holistic education. The school's 'There's More to Life' approach informs its holistic education, which is central to students' success, health and happiness.

RGS is based in the heart of Newcastle, immediately opposite Jesmond Metro station. The school occupies over 30 acres of land and has state-of-the-art facilities, including five brand new art studios, a new library, a modern Sixth Form Centre, a 25m swimming pool, two Sports Halls, a Performing Arts Centre, outdoor football/rugby pitches at Mooracres, an artificial turf pitch for hockey and the former County Cricket Ground.



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Academic Success

RGS is a special place, known and respected throughout the whole country as well as the North East. It's a place where aspirations are high, results are outstanding, and opportunities are endless. Our students go on to study highly selective courses at the most sought-after universities but also leave the school realising that life outside the classroom has been equally beneficial.

In 2023, RGS was named the overall national 'Independent School of the Year' by The Telegraph Group's Independent School Parent Awards. The school was again named North East Independent Secondary School of the Year for Academic Excellence 2025 by The Sunday Times' Parent Power Schools Guide. Most recently, the school was named Independent Senior School of the Year at the TES Awards.

Academically, the school is highly selective. Students are assessed for entry at the key entry points (Y3, Y5, Y7, and a handful at Y9, plus Sixth Form). The biggest entry points are Y3 (60 students), Y7 (c.75 students) and Y12 (c.45 students). Beyond the academics, in Junior School (Y3-6), entry is assessed through activity days, whilst at Y7, students are assessed through online tests and an interaction day. Sixth Form entry is through interview only.

Students sit baseline tests in Y7, Y10, and Y12 – the average GLA CAT score for both the current Y7 and Y12 is 117. We have several students who have the assistance of our dedicated Learning Support Team, which works across Junior and Senior School.



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Co-curricular Activities

At RGS, students can choose from over 170 co-curricular activities, ranging from music, drama, and sports to unique options like e-sports and knitting. All students are encouraged to discover what excites and inspires them.

Sport is also a central part of life at RGS, with students actively participating in a variety of activities including hockey, cricket, and basketball, from early morning until late afternoon. RGS views sport as a fundamental vehicle for students to develop lifelong skills, character, resilience – and, above all, a love for daily movement.

While it may seem tricky to balance schoolwork with so many exciting co-curricular and sporting activities, RGS has found that students actively engaged outside the classroom often perform even better academically. Both programs are designed to help students develop essential life skills, from self-awareness to decision-making and self-organisation.



Pastoral Care

We understand that all of our students are unique and different, and we strive to treat them as individuals, aiming to tailor our care to meet their needs.

That is why pastoral care is another critical cornerstone of RGS's holistic approach. Student well-being is embedded throughout school life, from a dedicated Form Teacher and an allocated Tutor to easy access to the school Medical Team and counsellors who work together to help students reach their full potential.

Our approach to managing and supporting staff is grounded in the same principles that define our pastoral support for students. We believe that fostering a positive, supportive environment for staff not only enhances individual wellbeing but also strengthens our collective ability to deliver exceptional outcomes for our students.

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PURPOSE OF THE ROLE

To provide a professional, proactive HR advisory service across the school, ensuring compliance with employment law, safeguarding requirements, and Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) standards.

The role supports the full employee lifecycle, promotes best HR practice, and ensures regulatory compliance in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) and other statutory guidance.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Reporting to the Head of HR, the HR Lead (Operations) responsibilities will include but are not limited to:

Employee Relations (ER) & Advisory

- Act as the first point of contact for all HR-related queries, providing professional advice and guidance to staff and managers across the school.
- Ensure fair and consistent application of policies.
- Lead and manage complex ER casework (disciplinary, grievance, capability, absence, probation, performance improvement plans) end-to-end: investigation, documentation, hearing preparation, outcomes, and appeals.
- Coach and advise line managers on HR policy, employment law, and best practice.
- Support informal resolution, mediation, and early intervention to reduce formal cases.
- Draft letters, case documentation, settlement agreements (with legal input), and related HR communications.
- Take accurate minutes and prepare HR documentation for meetings and hearings as requested.
- Maintain accurate case records and trackers, report ER trends and risks.
- Lead and manage flexible working requests submitted end-to-end and implement any changes as necessary across systems, employee communications etc.

Performance, Capability & Development

- Support the annual appraisal cycle and probationary reviews; to ensure consistency, fairness, and constructive outcomes.
- Coach managers in objective setting, feedback, and capability management.
- Identify development needs; collaborate with the Senior Leadership Team to deliver targeted training (e.g., people management, conduct, EDI, investigations).
- Track performance action plans and outcomes; report on progress and risks.

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Absence and Leave Management

- Monitor sickness, obtain required paperwork, and advise managers on absence management.
- Complete return to work procedures, meetings, and paperwork as appropriate, if required.
- Review sickness patterns, as appropriate, and prepare and present absence management data and reports as required.
- Apply the school's absence management policy and notify managers when key triggers are reached and/or concerns rise.
- Conduct Maternity/Paternity and general health risk assessments and follow up on any actions relating to Health and Safety, Payroll or employee wellbeing.
- Ensure maternity/paternity/adoption/ shared parental leave arrangements are effectively administered and actioned in line with current legislation and in conjunction with Payroll.
- Manage the referral process to the school's occupational health service provider liaising with occupational health and medical professionals regarding employee referrals and follow up action in line with the schools' policies and procedures such as drafting phased return to work plans.

Pastoral Support (Staff)

- Act as a trusted and professional point of contact for staff seeking pastoral support, offering guidance on wellbeing, workplace concerns, and difficult personal circumstances where these impact work.
- Provide empathetic, confidential advice to staff whilst maintaining appropriate professional boundaries and signposting to external support services where necessary.
- Support staff experiencing ill health, stress, or challenging life events, working in partnership with line managers, Occupational Health, and external services to facilitate reasonable adjustments and phased returns where appropriate.
- Contribute to a positive and supportive working culture, promoting staff wellbeing and psychological safety.
- Advise managers on handling sensitive wellbeing and pastoral matters with compassion and consistency.

Policy, Compliance & Governance

- Support the Head of HR in the review, drafting, and implementation of HR policies and procedures (relating to employment, Staff Code, pay, leave, flexible working, whistleblowing, data protection).
- Ensure compliance with UK employment law, GDPR, KCSIE (Keeping Children Safe in Education), ISI requirements, and any relevant regulatory frameworks.
- Support the Head of HR to update policies to reflect legislative changes and communicate updates effectively.
- Assist in conducting policy training and guidance sessions for managers and staff.
- Support the HR Lead (Recruitment) with external inspections/audits/data collection.

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Data & Reporting

- Maintain accurate HR records in line with GDPR.
- Contribute to HR data integrity and maintain accurate employee records across HR systems.
- Produce high-quality HR analytics (e.g., turnover, absence, ER caseload, diversity statistics KPIs) for SLT, governors, and the Head of HR.
- Drive process improvements through automation and standardisation; document workflows and guidance.

Line Management of the HR Assistant

- Provide day to day supervision, guidance, and support to the HR Assistant to ensure high quality delivery of HR services.
- Oversee the HR Assistant's workload, setting priorities and reallocating tasks where needed to meet deadlines.
- Conduct regular 1:1s, objective-setting, and appraisal reviews to support personal and professional development.
- Offer coaching, feedback, and mentoring to help build HR knowledge, skills, and confidence.
- Ensure the HR Assistant follows internal policies, processes, and data-handling standards.
- Monitor accuracy and timeliness of administrative tasks such as, recruitment coordination, and HR record management.
- Support the HR Assistant in resolving routine HR queries, escalating more complex issues where appropriate.
- Identify training needs and create development opportunities to enhance the HR Assistant's experience.
- Foster a positive, inclusive, and collaborative working environment that encourages continuous improvement.

Payroll Liaison

- Support the Head of HR and HR Team in preparing and submitting accurate payroll data to the Finance department.
- Provide guidance on pay, allowances, overtime, and incremental progression.
- Liaise with Payroll to ensure accurate and timely processing; resolve discrepancies.
- Contribute to job evaluation and benchmarking where necessary.
- In conjunction with the Head of HR and Finance Department, support with the preparation and issue letters to teaching and operational staff detailing all salary changes.
- Ensure maternity/paternity/adoption leave arrangements are effectively administered and actioned in line with current legislation and in conjunction with Payroll.
- Liaise with Payroll and Head of HR regarding leavers and completion of exit interviews.



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Staff Wellbeing, EDI & Culture

- Support wellbeing programmes, stress risk assessments, and proactive absence support.
- Champion Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion initiatives and ensure inclusive practices through recruitment, policies, and development programmes.
- Partner with our Head of Wellbeing and representative staff groups to feedback and co-design improvements to promote wellbeing and engagement.

Change Management & Projects

- Contribute to organisational change (e.g., restructures, role redesign, TUPE if applicable), ensuring legal compliance and best practice consultation.
- Take the lead on reviewing and updating existing contractual arrangements.
- Manage assigned HR projects: systems upgrades, process audits, manager toolkits, handbook refreshes.
- Prepare business cases and briefings; track project milestones, risks, and outcomes
- Work with the Salary Review Committee and Head of HR **on the** creation of an operational staff salary policy and new operational staff salary structure.

Stakeholder Management & Communication

- Build strong, credible relationships with SLT, line managers, unions/representative bodies governing board, and external advisers as appropriate.
- Provide clear, empathetic, and professional guidance; draft internal comms and briefing notes.
- Represent HR in committees or working groups as required.

Other

- Offer support to the HR Lead (Recruitment) at peak recruitment times and key events in the school calendar (i.e. support with recruitment, induction activities, staff training and drafting of staff contacts and offer letters).
- Collaboratively create and deliver HR presentations for new staff.
- Work collaboratively with the HR Assistant and HR Lead (Recruitment) and Head of HR to deliver the HR objectives of the school.
- Provide general absence cover within the HR department, and a willingness to support wider HR projects.
- Contribute to a positive and professional HR service across the school.
- Any other reasonable duties as required.

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PERSON SPECIFICATION

Qualifications (Essential)

- CIPD Level 5 (or equivalent) in HR.
- Strong working knowledge of UK employment law and HR practice.

Qualifications (Desirable)

- CIPD Level 7 or working towards.
- Safer recruitment training; investigation training.
- Child protection training
- Training in data protection/GDPR; coaching/mediation; project/change management.
- Understanding of ISI inspection frameworks and KCSIE requirements.

Experience (Essential)

- Significant HR advisory experience in a complex, multi-stakeholder organisation.
- Proven track record in managing ER casework end-to-end, including complex cases.
- Policy development and implementation; training managers; HR reporting/analytics.
- Working with senior leaders and influencing outcomes.

Experience (Desirable)

- Education sector experience, ideally independent schools or regulated environment.
- Payroll liaison and benefits administration.
- Experience of working with HR Systems such as HR Pro, iSams, Sage.

Skills & Attributes

- Excellent advisory, coaching, and relationship-building skills.
- Strong judgement, discretion, and resilience; able to handle sensitive matters.
- High attention to detail with strong written/verbal communication.
- Analytical capability; comfortable with HR metrics and presenting insights.
- Excellent IT skills, including Office 365 programs (Word, Excel, Forms, SharePoint, PowerPoint and Outlook)
- Highly organised; able to prioritise and deliver to deadlines in a dynamic environment.
- Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, EDI, and the school's values.
- Commitment to continued learning, taking responsibility for own CPD.

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PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Friendly, approachable and honest.
- The ability to build and maintain strong positive relationships with stakeholders in a professional and approachable manner.
- An understanding of the need for sensitivity and confidentiality in dealing with personal data.
- A willingness to be flexible and adapt to new circumstances, requirements, and technologies.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- The ability to work as a member of a team, or as an individual with minimal supervision.
- The ability to prioritise workload and produce accurate work to tight timescales.
- The ability to multi-task and work to achieve tight and ever-changing deadlines and to always remain professional.
- Be a self-motivator, problem solver and be able to use initiative in the role to overcome challenges.
- A positive, proactive and forward-thinking manner, with a 'can do' attitude.
- A commitment to supporting the successful education and development of young people in an independent school.



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LIVING IN THE NORTH EAST

Whilst the North East is beloved and popular with so many, we know that not everyone will have had first-hand experience of it, so this is a short introduction to a city and region which we love, and believe you will too. Newcastle is a medium-sized city with an historic centre and a vibrant life of its own. There's culture and arts in the form of the award-winning BALTIC Art Gallery and The Glass House, alongside several theatres that attract national touring productions. There's music from classical to club and we are home to the Royal Northern Sinfonia. There's also a growing food culture with some fantastic restaurants.

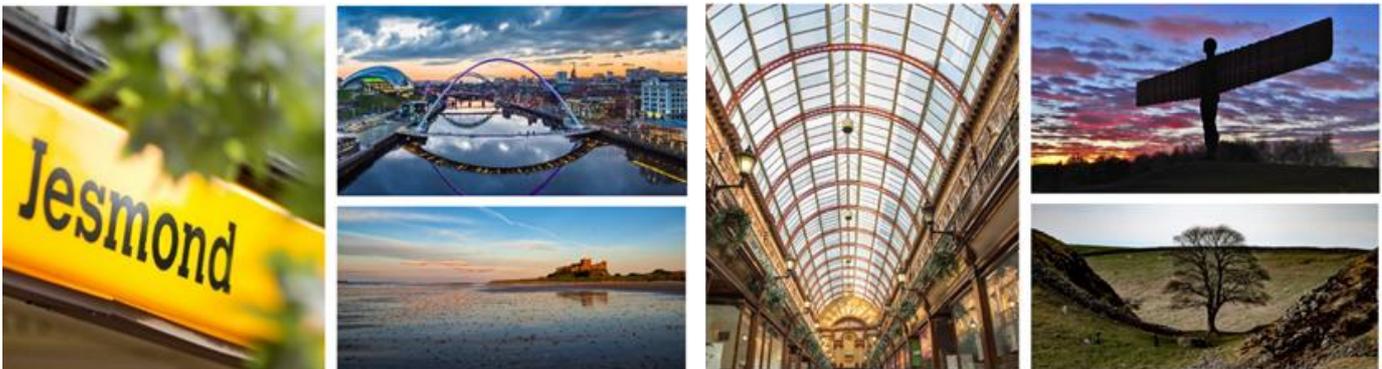
If you like sport then there's certainly no shortage of top-class entertainment: from Premier League football being played at St James' Park and EFL at the Stadium of Light to first class cricket at Durham (a mere half hour away), and great rugby at the Falcons, not to mention basketball and even ice hockey, and then there is the annual Great North Run. The North East has also produced some of the country's finest athletes in track and field and there are clubs aplenty to get involved with, most famously in Gateshead.

The coast and the hills are minutes away from the city centre. By car you can be in the middle of nowhere in 45 minutes, the Scottish Borders is only an hour away and the Lake District an hour and a half. The coast is served by the Metro (our version of the Tube), but some of the country's best beaches are up the road in Northumberland, less than 40 minutes by car. There's mountain biking, road cycling, climbing, and endless hill walks in stunning countryside. There are green spaces all over the city too, with plenty of parks for children and dogs alike to run around.

There are three local teaching hospitals, two universities in the city with another three close by. Some pioneering medical work goes on at the RVI, Great North Children's Hospital and the Freeman Hospital.

History abounds with more castles than you could count and sites of interest for almost every period of English (and border) history. Add that to a proud, independently minded, and very friendly local population and we have most things you could want.

There are excellent primary schools in the region and city as well as some good secondary schools too, but staff do get a discount at the RGS. There are also a number of good competitor independent schools as well.



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MAIN TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Start Date:

- As soon as possible following completion of the School's Safer Recruitment checks.

Line Management:

- The post will report to the Head of HR and sit within the School Operational Team.

Contract Type:

- All year round
- This is a permanent role with the school.

Training:

- The successful candidate will also be expected to work the mandatory safeguarding training day in September each year, which is compulsory for all staff. Payment for this day has been incorporated into the annual salary.



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Special Events:

- The successful candidate may also be required to work limited special events in school (e.g. RGS Day) with advance notice being given by the school.

Working Pattern:

- Normal core working hours for the role will be 37.5 hours per week, 8.30am – 4.30pm (7.5 hours per day).

Salary:

- In the region of £40k- £45k gross per annum (Full Time Equivalent, all year round). Salary offered will reflect the skill and experience of the candidate and will be assigned to the nearest point on the RGS Operational support scale.
- RGS staff salaries are reviewed on 1st August each year.

Holidays:

- 31 days + bank holidays for all year-round staff.

Policies:

- The employee will be required to comply with a range of RGS policies, in particular, those regarding Data protection, use of ICT facilities, Child Protection, Staff Code and Health and Safety, a copy of which will be made available.





WHAT WE OFFER

- During term-time, staff are provided with a free lunch, if on site.
- For non-teaching staff we offer a support staff pension scheme, The Aviva Pension Trust for Independent Schools (APTIS). On receipt of a 6% employee contribution the school makes an employer contribution of 10%. There is also the option of a 3% employee and 5% employer contribution if preferred. This scheme is administered via Salary Exchange (also known as Salary Sacrifice) for those who are eligible. You can opt out of the Salary Exchange arrangement whilst remaining in the pension scheme. Further details of the scheme and salary exchange will be provided on appointment.
- Membership to life assurance scheme through Aviva which pays out 5x annual salary in the event of death in service.
- The employee will become eligible for sick pay under the RGS Support Staff Sick Pay Scheme after a qualifying period. Details of the scheme will be provided on appointment.
- The school offers an optional healthcare plan for all staff which includes optical, dental and physio cover, access to telephone GP consultations and a host of other benefits (terms and conditions apply). Further information will be available to the employee once in post.



- As with all RGS employees, the employee will be encouraged to become involved in the wider life of the RGS community.
- It is the school's policy is to allow all eligible members of staff to educate their children at the school at concessionary rates, subject to their children meeting the academic entry requirements and subject to a place being available.

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- Ongoing educational support and development of all staff with the provision of external and internal training courses, and our middle leaders training program for existing and aspiring managers.
- We offer an interest free travel loan for a corporate Metro travel pass after a qualifying period. Further information will be available upon starting in post.
- We offer a Bike to Work scheme for qualifying members of staff. Terms and conditions apply. Details will be shared upon starting.
- Opportunity to see free school productions in the Miller Theatre located in our Performing Arts Centre.



- Access to our onsite confidential counselling service.
- We offer access to the school medical team (1 doctor and 2 nurses) for triage medical advice and free flu vaccinations.
- Free use of a well-equipped gym, fitness suite and swimming pool at permitted times.
- Supportive and friendly community.
- Invitation to join staff clubs and wellbeing activities during term-time.
- Staff social events throughout the year.
- Access to the school's library service and a wide range of reading materials.



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HOW TO APPLY

Candidates are advised to read the 'Information for Applicants' with particular care before applying.

Enquiries about this post should be made in the first instance to Louise Ledger (Head of HR) or the HR team in the first instance. For an informal chat about the post, contact Louise Ledger on 0191 281 5711.

Please visit www.rgs.newcastle.sch.uk/join-us/work-with-us to access our application form and further information for applicants.

To apply for this post please submit the following to jobs@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk by the closing date.

1. A covering letter and
2. A fully completed RGS application form.

Note: You must complete the application form, even if you want to also attach a CV.

The closing date for this role is 9.00am Monday 02nd February 2026

Interviews will be held shortly after the closing date. We will hope to make the appointment as soon as possible following interview, offering the post and gaining acceptance.

Reasonable travel expenses will be considered to attend an interview if candidates live outside the local area. This is normally up to a maximum contribution of £100 on provision of receipts. If your expenses will be significantly higher than £100 and an overnight stay is required, please note all expenses will need to be booked and approved in advance. If you plan to claim expenses, please contact the Head's Secretary, Sandra Ellis S.Ellis@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk in advance of your interview, who will talk you through the policy and advise on eligibility for reimbursement.

Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment

RGS is committed to the safeguarding of children and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers and those working in school to share this commitment. The school applies the Government's Keeping Children Safe in Education Safer Recruitment procedures to all candidates including appropriate pre-interview checks on shortlisted candidates and pre-employment checks pending any offer. More information regarding the checks can be found in our Information for Applicants [here](#), and '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)' (September 2025)

Equal Opportunities

We are looking to appoint staff from a wide variety of backgrounds. Not just because it is the right thing to do but because at the RGS we recognise that those different experiences provide fresh perspectives, opportunities to challenge existing beliefs and provide opportunities to act as excellent role models for our diverse student body. We are committed to creating an inclusive and diverse school culture and our staff are at the heart of this. We are proud to be an equal opportunities employer, and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment regardless of neurodivergence, age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and marriage and civil partnerships.

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We strive to achieve a diverse workforce, fully representative of our pluralistic society and the ethnic make-up of the student population in the UK. People of colour are under-represented on our staff team. We are keen to attract applicants from a diverse pool of candidates and determined to be a fully inclusive employer, and a great workplace for people of Black, Asian, and ethnic minority heritage as well as White heritage.

We encourage all candidates to complete an 'equal opportunities' form with your application. This will be sent directly to the HR team for monitoring purposes.

CONTACT DETAILS

Royal Grammar School, Eskdale Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 4DX

Tel: 0191 281 5711

General enquiries: communications@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk

www.rgs.newcastle.sch.uk



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