

Hills Road Sixth Form College and Hills Education Trust

Appointment of: Principal and CEO

Location: Cambridge



Shape
the
future



Hills Road
Sixth Form College
Cambridge

Welcome from the Chair of Trustees

I am delighted that you have shown an interest in the position of Principal and CEO at Hills Road Sixth Form College. The stepping-down of our current Principal and CEO, Jo Trump, who has been part of the College's community for 16 years and has led the College for the past eight and a half years, provides a unique opportunity for a resourceful and innovative leader to join an organisation renowned for its educational excellence at the forefront of post 16 education.

Leading and developing a high-performing College with a national profile will bring both challenges and opportunities, not least with an expected shift in the demographics of 16 year olds that will potentially see Cambridge and surrounding areas undergoing rapid transformation. You will therefore need to be comfortable with representing and promoting the College to a wide audience and guiding and motivating staff successfully through periods of change. The Board of Trustees will be focusing on candidates who already have substantial management and leadership experience in a college, trust or secondary school with a sixth form, who have a sound understanding of current and potential issues in education and who are able to empathise with young people, their personal challenges and aspirations for the future.

The College is well placed in terms of its educational performance and also enjoys robust financial health, which has allowed for investment in physical and human resources over the past two decades placing us in a strong position to navigate recent funding challenges. We have a well-qualified and knowledgeable staff who are committed to providing the best education to our young people. The College also benefits from an attractive and well-maintained estate in a superb location, with a sports centre and adult education provision. This brings the inherent challenge of such a prime setting: the limited scope for physical expansion, which requires creative thinking in how we accommodate a rising demographic and continue to meet growing demand.

Further details about how to apply are included in this booklet and on our recruitment and College website. We hope that together these will provide you with sufficient information to make an application, which we look forward to receiving by 9.00am on Monday 24th November.

If you would like to speak to us about a prospective application, please contact the College's Human Resources team on 01223 278063 or by e-mail to hr@hillsroad.ac.uk. Our current Principal, Jo Trump, is happy to answer questions for anyone unfamiliar with the College, so do feel free to get in touch via the HR contact details if you would find that helpful. Visits to the College may also be arranged subject to staff availability.

If you are looking for a fresh challenge in a role which will give you the capacity to lead and develop at a strategic level, and have a genuine desire to ensure an exceptional and broad educational experience reflecting the College's values and ethos, you will find 'Hills' an enjoyable, stimulating and rewarding place in which to continue your career.

Jane Sterling
Chair of Trustees

Principal of Hills Road Sixth Form College (and Chief Executive Officer of Hills Education Trust)

Permanent, Full time

There are no set hours of work; in common with other senior post holders the Principal and CEO is expected to work such hours as are reasonable and required to discharge the responsibilities and duties of the post subject to a minimum of 37 hours per week. This will include some evening and weekend working when necessary.

From £115,000 to £135,000, commensurate with experience.

Start date: August 2026

We are seeking a dynamic and experienced professional to bring energy and commitment to the leadership of our thriving College community which plays a leading regional and national role as a Sixth Form College. We teach around 2,970 young people and approximately 2,900 adult learners, and have a dedicated team of approximately 550 staff members working across teaching, support functions, adult education and roles within our Sport and Tennis Centre. This role will be pivotal as we take the College forward to the next level to achieve its strategic objectives following the transition to a new Academy Trust in September 2025. Hills Road Sixth Form College is the sole founding organisation of the new Hills Education Trust. While strategic expansion of the Trust is not currently a priority, there is a great opportunity to establish the next chapter for the College and for the Trust.

You will already be an excellent leader with substantial experience in a College, Trust or Secondary School with substantial 16-19 A-Level provision. You will be a clear strategic thinker with an entrepreneurial mindset and the ability to maximise opportunities for the College and the Trust. You will be a strong communicator with a motivational and collaborative approach, seeking excellence from staff and students with kindness and integrity, and you will have sound financial acumen.

If you think your knowledge, skills and experience match the brief, we want to hear from you. For someone with drive, energy and enthusiasm, the College will provide a stimulating, supportive and exciting environment in which to take forward your career.

We offer a wide range of competitive benefits including a generous pension scheme, free use of the College's gym, tennis courts and sporting facilities, free on-site parking, cycle to work scheme, EV car scheme, eye care vouchers as well as discounts on all our Adult Education courses.

Details and links to the application forms for the above post may be obtained from our website <https://www.hillsroad.ac.uk/about-us/current-vacancies>. The College reserves the right to close the recruitment sooner than stated, therefore you are encouraged to apply early.

Closing date: Monday 24th November 2025 at 9.00am

Interviews: Week commencing 8th December 2025

If you would like more information about the application procedure, please speak to the College's Human Resources department on 01223 247251, or email hr@hillsroad.ac.uk

The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its students and staff and expects all members of the College community, volunteers and visitors to share this commitment. The College actively promotes equality and diversity and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

Information for applicants

Background

Hills Road Sixth Form College is one of the top-performing state Sixth Form Colleges in the country. We offer a forward-thinking, collaborative and supportive working environment, with thoroughly engaged and enthusiastic students and staff.

The Post

The Principal (also the Trust CEO) leads and manages the College to achieve the mission, vision and strategic objectives set by the Board of Trustees.

Organisational Structure

The senior team is called College Strategy Team (CST) and comprises six posts in total:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Vice Principal, Staff and Student Learning
- Vice Principal, Student Progression and Support
- Chief Operating Officer (3.5 days per week)
- Chief Finance Officer

CST meet weekly to discuss a range of strategic and operational issues. Staff briefings take place weekly digitally, and there are regular face to face and online staff meetings.

During the summer term, there is allocated time dedicated to staff development. The post holder is required to attend Trustee meetings throughout the year; these are usually held in the evening and there are circa 12 meetings per year.

Job Description

Principal (and Chief Executive Officer for Hills Education Trust)

Purpose: To lead Hills Road Sixth Form College, the sole founding organisation of the new Hills Education Trust, with vision, integrity and ambition, inspiring excellence across all areas of the College life and shaping the future of post-16 education in Cambridge and beyond.

Appointed by: The Board of Trustees

Reports to: The Board of Trustees

Main Accountabilities

Strategic Leadership

- champion the College's mission and strategic plan, ensuring every staff member is aligned and empowered to contribute through individual, departmental and team objectives
- lead the Trust's development with creativity and foresight, building on Hills Road's legacy of excellence and establishing a strong foundation for future growth
- be a visible ambassador for the College, promoting its values and achievements to local, regional, and national audiences
- inspire staff and students through authentic leadership rooted in kindness, respect, and high standards
- navigate change with confidence, ensuring the College remains resilient, relevant, and forward-thinking, and retains its local, regional and national reputation for excellence in post-16 education
- forge strong partnerships and networks that enhance the College's reputation and open new opportunities to drive continuous improvement for quality assurance including through the annual Self-Assessment Report, the Quality Improvement Plan, preparation for Ofsted inspection and the monitoring of key performance data
- cultivate a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that supports both academic and personal growth, and ongoing engagement and development of, our staff
- ensure full compliance with all regulatory frameworks, safeguarding responsibilities, and governance standards, including the Academy Handbook and the Instrument and Articles of Government

- to ensure that effective procedures are in place to monitor the College's performance in respect of health and safety, safeguarding (including the Prevent strategy), equality and diversity and environmental responsibilities
- proactively manage all strategic and operational risks, maintaining an accurate and up to date risk register, and advising Trustees in a timely manner on emerging challenges and effective responses

Students

- to provide an enjoyable, challenging and stimulating environment where students take individual ownership of their learning, realise their potential and progress successfully to the next stage
- to ensure that the College maintains and develops a curriculum responsive to the needs of the local and wider community while reflecting national needs and priorities
- to ensure that there are effective systems to monitor and record the progress of students and to give appropriate feedback
- to champion student wellbeing and ensure that the College has effective arrangements for the welfare of students and that students feel safe and supported
- to promote high standards of behaviour, responsibility and respect and, when necessary, ensure action is taken to maintain discipline, including the suspension or exclusion of students on disciplinary grounds and the exclusion of students for academic reasons

Staff

- to foster a culture of trust, mutual respect and honesty where staff feel valued and encouraged to develop and achieve
- to ensure the College's staffing structure is agile and future-ready
- to be responsible for the appointment, probation, professional development review, suspension and dismissal of staff, apart from the Governance Professional, within the framework set by the Trustees
- to determine, within the framework set by the Trustees, the pay and conditions of service of staff other than the holders of senior posts and the Governance Professional
- to ensure that the College's employment practices comply with legislation and reflect best practice

Resources

- to act as the College's accounting officer ensuring compliance with relevant accounting and audit requirements and the effective and proper operation of the College's financial and management controls

- to prepare annual estimates of income and expenditure for consideration and approval by the Trust Board for the College and its subsidiary company, Cantabrigian Ltd, the legal name for our Sports and Tennis Centre and the company that manages our Adult Education programme
- to ensure the efficient and effective management of the College's and Cantabrigian's budget and resources within the estimates approved by Trustees
- to ensure robust financial planning information and regular financial management information is provided to Trustees and advise Trustees on a timely basis of risks to the College's financial or reputational status
- to maintain and develop sources of funding including through the effective utilisation of the College's assets, adult education provision and the Hills Road Sports and Tennis Centre
- to develop and implement the College's accommodation and IT strategies consistent with the strategic direction of the College

Academy Trust Leadership

- shape the strategic direction and educational character of Hills Education Trust
- build a cohesive Trust culture rooted in Hills Road's ethos, values and commitment to excellence
- while strategic expansion of the Trust is not an objective in the short term, there will be future opportunities to explore partnerships and growth prospects aligned with the Trust's mission, vision and strategic objectives

Line Management

- Take day-to-day responsibility for the management and appraisal of the work of the:
 - Deputy Principal
 - Vice Principal, Staff and Student Learning
 - Vice Principal, Student Progression and Support
 - Chief Finance Officer
 - Chief Operating Officer
 - Director of Marketing
 - Executive Assistant to the Principal and Vice Principal SSL

Other Duties:

- to play the lead role in all aspects of the life of the College community and to encourage staff and students by setting a positive example including through each of the College's values
- to undertake such other duties as the Chair of the Trust may, from time to time, determine in consultation with the post-holder
- Promote equality of opportunity in accordance with the College's Equality and Diversity Scheme

- Ensure compliance with all College policies and procedures, this includes those where each member of staff has an individual duty to act and for which the College can be held vicariously responsible for the actions of its employees:
 - Equality and diversity
 - Safeguarding the welfare of young people
- Health and safety

Person Specification

Principal (and Chief Executive Officer for Hills Education Trust)

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications and training	• Educated to degree level • Teaching qualification • Evidence of recent and relevant continuing professional development	• Leadership or coaching qualification
Experience	• Proven leadership experience in a college or 11-18 school with substantial 16-19 A level provision • Track record of leading and successfully implementing initiatives across a range of disciplines • Experience of financial management and oversight including strategic financial planning • Experience of managing change • Experience of working effectively with stakeholders and establishing successful relationships with external organisations	• Good experience or clear understanding of both pre- and post-16 environments • Experience as a successful teacher in either a pre- or post-16 setting

In addition, the successful candidate will demonstrate, or have potential to develop, strengths in the following areas. Evidence will be established from the application form, CV, covering letter, references, the interview or a combination of these.

Skills and Ability	• Strategic and innovative thinker with a flair for innovation and improvement • Adaptable, resilient and able to manage change successfully • Ability to balance operational detail with a clear strategic vision • Well organised, able to prioritise and delegate effectively and to develop contingencies to cope with the unforeseen • Solution focused and able to exercise sound judgement • Inspiring communicator with a talent for building strong relationships and inspire trust and confidence in colleagues • Strong project management and planning skills • Ability to oversee financial management and to develop financial strategy • Skilled in data analysis and evidence-based planning • Outstanding communication, negotiating and influencing skills • Confident ambassador for the College, its values and mission
Knowledge	• A deep understanding of current and emerging issues in education, particularly the post-16 sector • Awareness of risks and opportunities in digital and technological advances affecting education • Awareness of funding, policy and demographic trends affecting Sixth Form Colleges
Disposition and approach	• Honest and open with a positive and approachable manner • Reflective, self-aware and emotionally intelligent • Demonstrates personal integrity and emotional resilience • Commitment to collaborative working while also being able to act with decisiveness when needed • Commitment to excellence in all aspects of operational and educational experience at the College • Empathy with post-16 students, their aspirations and the personal challenges facing them • Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of student and staff • Passionate about equality, inclusivity and diversity
Focus on quality	• Passionate about the ethos and values of the College • Detail-oriented and commitment to high standards • Dedicated to delivering quality and value for money in all aspects of the College's work • Commitment to continuous improvement, including willingness to accept and offer constructive feedback through regular appraisal and pursue relevant professional development for self and others

How to Apply

Applicants are asked to do the following:

- complete the online Hills Road Sixth Form College application form (Part 1)
- complete the online equality and diversity monitoring form (Part 2)
- write a supporting statement of application
- supply a brief CV

The online application forms (Parts 1 and 2) are available on the College's webpage for this vacancy. When completing Part 1, you will have the opportunity to upload your CV and provide a Supporting Statement of Application. Once you have submitted Part 1, you should then proceed to Part 2 (Equality and Diversity Monitoring form). All documents should be submitted by 9am on Monday 24th November 2025.

Please note that applications received after the closing date may not be eligible for consideration and we reserve the right to close earlier if sufficient applications have been received.

Interviews will be held during week commencing 8th December 2025.

Hills Road Sixth Form College will base its decision as to whether to invite you for interview solely on the details provided on your application and how well they match the criteria for this post.

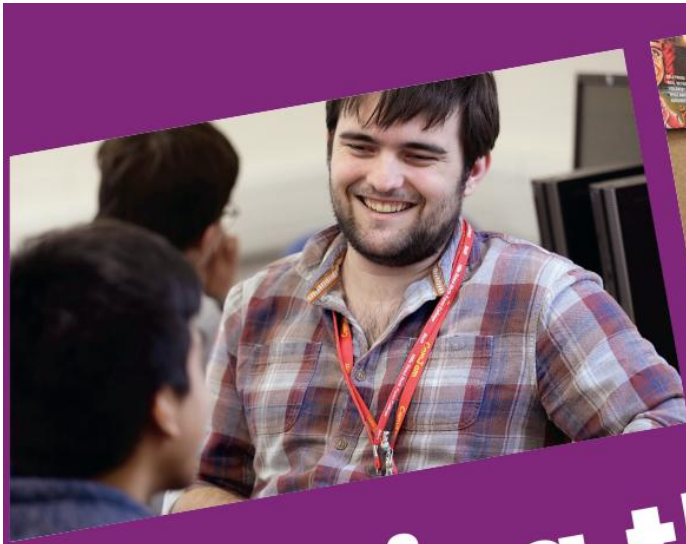
In accordance with Home Office guidance, successful candidates will be required to evidence their right to work in the UK before commencement of employment. The successful candidate therefore must be able to demonstrate their right to work during the recruitment process.

Hills Road Sixth Form College is committed to ensuring equal opportunities in all aspects of employment and selects staff on merit, irrespective of race, religion, sex, disability or age. You are not obliged to complete the equal opportunities monitoring form, but any information given will help us to monitor the effectiveness of our equality and diversity policy.

If you have a disability, you are invited to request any special arrangements you may require for interview, or any adjustments you may anticipate would be needed in your working arrangements, by contacting the Human Resources Team on 01223 278063 (direct line). Further information about accessibility to the site can be found on our website under 'Equality and Diversity/Site Plan' and also from 'AccessAble: www.accessable.co.uk.

Thank you for your interest in this post and in the College. We do hope that you will decide to apply, and we should like to thank you in advance for taking the time and trouble to do so. For more information about working life at the College please go to our website <http://www.hillsroad.ac.uk>

Human Resources



**Shaping the
future through
opportunity,
quality and
achievement**



**Supported
by a caring,
learning
community.**

