

Hills Road Sixth Form College

Appointment of: Head of Department: Sociology

Location: Cambridge



Shape
the
future



Hills Road
Sixth Form College
Cambridge



Welcome from the Principal and CEO Designate



Thank you for your interest in Hills Road Sixth Form College and in this post. I hope that the information in this booklet will help you to decide whether this role and our college might be the right next step for you. I sincerely hope it is!

As I prepare to take up the role of Principal in September, this marks an important moment in the College's continuing journey. Hills Road enjoys a strong national reputation and has led Sixth Form College performance tables for many years. But we are not complacent. In an ever-changing world, excellence is a moving target and we are ambitious - for our students, for our staff and for the future of post-16 education. We respond thoughtfully, continually reflecting and evolving to ensure that what we offer remains exceptional.

Working in a Sixth Form College brings distinctive rewards, not least the privilege of engaging with bright young minds who challenge, question and inspire. It is an intellectually rigorous environment grounded in collaboration and shared purpose. Everyone here has a role to play in helping every young person who comes through our doors to realise their potential – sometimes in ways they may never previously have been able to imagine.

I am fortunate enough to know first-hand the transformative impact that Hills Road has on our students and, as a former student, I am deeply committed to ensuring that it continues to flourish as a centre of academic excellence where kindness and integrity remain at the heart of everything we do.

We recognise that staff wellbeing is fundamental to student success and we pride ourselves on being consultative. In response to colleague feedback, we have introduced a two-week October half term and redesigned professional development. Staff consistently speak of the strength of our community. Our core values – Diversity, Kindness, Integrity, Respect, Community and Excellence – are not slogans, but lived commitments that shape how we work, how we lead and how we support one another. Hills Road is ambitious, yet humane; high-performing, yet deeply caring.

I hope I have been able to give you a flavour of Hills Road. If you would welcome an informal conversation about the role or about the College more broadly, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Finally, thank you for considering our college and for the commitment that an application entails. Whatever the outcome, I wish you every success in your future career.

With very best wishes,
Ali Kirkman
(Vice Principal – Staff and Student Learning)

Head of Department - Sociology

Permanent, Part-time (min. 0.8) or Full-time

Up to £60,705, depending on qualifications and experience

An exciting opportunity has arisen for an innovative and enthusiastic leader of learning to lead our successful Sociology department from September 2026. Come and help us shape the future!

The person appointed will be highly organised, driven, and open to innovation and new ways of working. They will be capable of teaching to a high academic standard, will be strongly committed to the learning and well-being of young people, and will be able to demonstrate and/or develop excellent leadership skills.

Recently rated 'outstanding' again, Hills Road Sixth Form College continues to enjoy a strong national reputation for excellence in education. In part, this is because we continually review and refine our practice to enhance the experiences of our students and staff. We also appreciate that academic success requires a happy, healthy and caring community, and our coaching culture ensures that the wellbeing of our students and staff is at the heart of all we do.

If you are excited by the opportunity to work in a team committed to the very best standards of education at a Sixth Form College where you can inspire highly motivated students to engage with your subject passions at an advanced level, we would love to hear from you.

We offer a wide range of competitive benefits including a generous pension scheme, free use of the college sporting facilities, free on-site parking, cycle to work scheme, as well as discounts on all our Adult Education courses.

Closing date: Monday 13th April at 9.00am

Interviews: Monday 20th April 2026

Details and an application form for the above post may be obtained from our website www.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

The Post

The College is seeking to make a permanent, full-time (or substantially part-time) appointment of Head of Sociology to begin on Thursday 20th August 2026. This is an excellent opportunity for a well-qualified and innovative Sociology specialist to lead this extremely successful department in the next stage of its development.

The person appointed will be capable of teaching to a high academic standard, will be strongly committed to the learning and well-being of young people, and will be able to demonstrate and/or develop excellent leadership skills. As this is an A level specialist college, this role would suit those looking to really hone their post-16 teaching and learning craft, and to support others to do the same.

Organised, driven, and open to innovation and new ways of working, the successful candidate may be an existing Head of Department looking for a new or stretching challenge or an established Sociology teacher looking to take the next step in their career.

Dependent on experience, the post will be paid at RA7 (£6,993) rising incrementally, subject to satisfactory annual review, to RA9 (£8,991) per annum). This would mean, for example, that a teacher at the top of the pay scale (Point 9) would receive a salary of Point 9 plus RA7, which equates to £58,707. This would rise by annual increments to £60,705 (RA9). Appointment to points (1-9) on the teaching scale is dependent on qualifications and teaching experience to date.

There are 25 teaching periods (each of 65 minutes) in the College week. Of the 20 teaching periods, Heads of Department have a teaching commitment of 16 periods and 4 periods of time remission for departmental management. In the first year in post as a new Head of Department, the post holder will be given an additional one period of time remission to support their induction into the new role. Therefore, for 2026-27, the teaching commitment for this new Head of Department role will be 15 periods for FT, 12 periods at 0.8.

The department is supported by a Curriculum Director, who is also a Head of Department, who provides ongoing support and advice through a fortnightly meeting (initially weekly for a new Head of Department).

The Department

The Sociology Department is an energetic and supportive team.

The department, which currently comprises two full time and two part time teachers, is highly experienced and collaborative. We share resources and ideas, as well as a passion for our subjects and for the development of young people. All teaching and learning resources are shared and available on the student and staff SharePoint sites. To facilitate communication and decision-making, regular subject meetings are held.

Students

There are currently approximately 300 students in the department. They are generally extremely well-motivated and able, with the vast majority progressing to higher education courses. The teaching is rewarded by the rapid development and achievements of our students, who readily acknowledge the high level of support they receive from their teachers. There are four taught periods of 65 minutes per week in both year 12 and 13, and it is expected that three to five hours of independent work will be completed each week, usually as homework set by the teachers.

Courses Offered

For A level, we currently teach to the AQA specification (7192).

	Exam Board	Number of sets in Year 12	Number of sets in Year 13
Sociology	AQA	7	6

Examination Results

A level results in Sociology are typically very strong with the 2025 exam series being no exception as follows:

	% A*-B grades	% A-C grades	% A-E grades
Sociology	79%	97%	100%

Accommodation and Resources

The department currently occupies 3 teaching rooms in one of the largest teaching buildings and has a shared staff base room. All teaching rooms are equipped with computers and interactive digital screens. All staff are issued with a college laptop with digital inking capability.

Hills Road Sixth College operates a Bring Your Own Device approach with all students bringing their own laptops and devices that support digital inking to work on in the classroom. As such, most of our departmental and college resources are digital and, as a college, we strive to equip our young people with the digital literacy they need for the next step in their life.

Extra-curricular Activities and Enrichment opportunities

Students have the opportunity to enter national Sociology competitions, and the department organises an external speaker each term related to the course. There have also been a variety of trips, including university visits and debates during the Cambridge Festival.

I hope that we have been able to provide a flavour of the department through the details in this booklet. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries that I can help with regarding any details of the post or person specification. My email contact details are below.

I should like to thank you in advance for your interest in this post. We have an enthusiastic and committed team of Chemistry teachers, and we hope very much that you will be interested in joining us and working with them.

I look forward to receiving your application.

Sammi Efford
Curriculum Director

sefford@hillsroad.ac.uk

Job Description

Head of Department

Purpose: Within the context of the College's Strategic Plan, to lead and be responsible for curriculum planning and implementation within the department, to represent the interests of the department within the College, and to participate in whole-College developments.

Reports to: Curriculum Director

Main Accountabilities:

Curriculum Planning and Development

- To provide a range of courses suited to the abilities and aspirations of all students within the department
- To develop good teaching and learning practices to enable all students to grow in independence and achieve their academic and personal potential
- To lead members of the department in identifying key curriculum aims and objectives and to initiate action and change, where appropriate

Liaison and Progression

- To support the successful progression of full-time students from their previous school
- To contribute to the provision of subject-related careers/further/higher education advice
- To provide information about, and to promote, the department's courses in collaboration with the Director of Marketing and Admissions
- To develop links with colleagues in post-16 centres and in partner schools
- To develop links with the wider community, where appropriate
- To participate in the interviewing of prospective students as reasonably required

Managing People and Communication

- To plan, and contribute to, the recruitment of staff in accordance with College procedures
- To take responsibility for the induction of new members of staff in accordance with College procedures during their six-month Probationary Period
- To ensure that all staff for whom the post holder is responsible receive adequate support and training for their role including undertaking staff appraisals and dealing with performance issues if needed
- To communicate effectively College and departmental procedures and policies to all members of the department
- To promote and explain departmental issues to other audiences e.g. Parents, Governors, Staff, Prospective Students

- To promote equality of opportunity in accordance with the College's Equality and Diversity Statement
- To be willing to be trained in coaching skills for leadership, and to deploy a coaching heartset and mindset in all communications with staff and students
- To comply 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 children
 - health and safety
- To deploy departmental staff appropriately and to plan departmental timetabling and room allocation
- To plan and organise the work of technical and support staff, where appropriate
- To manage the placement of student teachers, where appropriate
- To promote collaborative and effective teamwork within the department

Managing other Resources

- To manage the finances of the department
- To advise on the provision of appropriate departmental facilities and accommodation
- To manage departmental resources, including ICT, Library and Open Learning resources
- To advise the Director of Estates and Facilities of the maintenance needs of the department

Quality Assurance

- To monitor student performance data and take appropriate action
- To plan and maintain appropriate record-keeping procedures, including the provision of a subject Progress Review for each student and the use of Mark Book
- To ensure the implementation of appropriate Quality Assurance procedures in collaboration with the relevant Curriculum Director and the Deputy Principal

Accountabilities that relate to all staff at the College:

- Demonstrate behaviour and values consistent with the person specification for this role

Person Specification for Head of Department: Sociology

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications, training and experience	<p>A good honours degree in Sociology or closely related subjects</p> <p>Relevant teaching qualification</p> <p>Experience of teaching A level Sociology</p> <p>Extensive and proven experience of enabling students to achieve their full potential</p> <p>Evidence of an appetite for relevant CPD</p> <p>High levels of competence in the use of IT</p>	<p>Experience of leading on teaching and learning initiatives</p> <p>Experience of leading a team to achieve effective outcomes</p> <p>A good understanding of current developments in post-16 education</p>

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.

Classroom teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver lively, energetic and well-planned classroom teaching • Employ strong subject knowledge in facilitating students' learning and progress • Develop and use effective and varied resources in support of students' learning, including digital resources • Focus clearly on maximising student potential and encourage high levels of attainment by all students • Demonstrate strong and positive commitment to individual students • Apply creativity to contribute to the on-going development of schemes of work
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Leadership of Teaching & Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and effective strategies for developing teaching and learning within the team • Supportive approaches to developing own and colleagues' teaching and learning • Enthusiastic engagement with staff and students in the development of teaching and learning
Managing & Developing People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptable management approach • Effective delegation • Promoting a sense of enjoyment and optimism within the department • Inspiring trust • Commitment to collaborative teamwork • Good diplomacy and negotiating skills • Flexibility and imagination • Commitment to equality of opportunity • Encouraging staff development • People-centred in approach
Organisation & Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective running of meetings • Meeting deadlines • Clear and thorough organisation • Excellent communication and listening skills, including coaching skills • Representing the department and the College in a positive light
Problem-solving & decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective prioritising • Demonstrating initiative • Creating effective solutions to problems • Responding flexibly and positively to changing contexts

Focus on quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring departmental progress and taking corrective action when necessary • Commitment to continuous improvement
Professional Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a positive contribution to the wider life and ethos of the college • Develop effective professional relationships with colleagues, knowing how and when to draw on advice and specialist support • Deploy support staff effectively where required • Take responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues • Communicate effectively with parents/carers with regard to students' achievements and well-being
Personal & Professional Conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat students with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position • Have regard for the need to safeguard students' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions • Show tolerance of and respect for the rights of others • Support fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs • Ensure that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit students' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law

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 (no more than 1,000 words)
- supply a brief CV

The online application forms ([Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)) are available at the links above, and 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 13th April 2026**.

Please note that applications received after the closing date may not be eligible for consideration. If Human Resources have not contacted you by Friday 17th April, then unfortunately your application has not been successful.

Interviews will be held on Monday 20th April 2026.

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
and learning
community.**

