

Residential Housemistress

Job Description



**Queen Margaret's
School for Girls**

Escrick Park, York

Queen Margaret's

Established in 1901, QM is an independent boarding and day school for girls aged 11-18. You will find us in glorious parkland about six miles south of York. But we are much more than our surroundings, we are more than a school:

We're a home from home,
A family of learning and belonging,
In a truly inspirational setting.

We are somewhere each and every girl can thrive,
Where they'll be happy and healthy,
Grow their knowledge, skills and confidence,
And make friends for life.

Somewhere that's the bedrock for success,
Opens up opportunities and possibilities,
Inspires them to forge their own future,
And gets them ready for life, whatever their calling.

We nurture girls to fulfil their ambitions,
To realise their potential,
To become the best women they can be,
And give them an amazing start in life.

Girls do so much better in single-sex education and here we see our pupils engaging enthusiastically in a range of activities - academic, sport, extracurricular and social. No airs and graces, no frills or make-up, just girls getting stuck in, and having fun while they do it. They achieve academically (outstandingly so), they come from a variety of backgrounds and, with an increasing emphasis on the level of support available, we are proud to continue making a QM education possible for an increasingly diverse range of girls. Our girls have homes in York, Ripon, Thirsk, Newcastle upon Tyne, Inverness, Hong Kong, Madrid, Frankfurt and Bangkok. Many girls board, not because they have to, but because they want to. The girls are the focus of life at QM and are at the heart of everything we do. It's this focus and an individualistic approach that allows our girls to carve their own path, and flourish as formidable, independent women.

Because of that, beyond the specific requirements of the job explained below, we are looking for staff with personality and the ability to support and encourage girls. You put your heart and soul into developing your practice and improving on what you do. You will know the value of boarding school life. A team player, you are likely to want to spend time with colleagues and enjoy getting to know them and involvement in the boarding community.

Working at QM

We are an equal opportunities employer and actively seek applications from candidates of all genders and all backgrounds. We employ around 170 staff, with over 90 teachers, and the majority of staff live within 30-45 minutes of the school including York, Hull, Leeds and Harrogate. Staff involved in boarding live on site. We operate our own salary scale and all staff contribute to a pension scheme. During term time (in normal times) meals are provided when you are on duty.

Working in a boarding school is an experience like no other. The sense of community is very strong and the opportunity to get to know both girls and staff is more apparent than would be the case in a day school. There are lessons on a Saturday morning and our term dates are shorter than schools in the state sector, although we adhere wherever possible to the half term dates of the local authorities in order to support our staff with children of school age.

Most girls stay at school after their lessons finish each day, either because they are boarders or because they are involved in activities. There are a variety of enrichment activities and clubs on offer including horse riding, squash and tennis coaching plus clubs as diverse as debating, fashion, philosophy and swimming. We have extensive sports facilities and all girls play hockey, lacrosse, netball and rounders as well as an array of other sports. Day girls are able to stay until 19:30.

Boarding at QM

There is flexibility in our boarding offering, many girls board on a full time basis, others for as little as one day a week. Boarding houses are arranged 'horizontally' (by year group) but balanced with the wish to support as much cross-year integration as possible. In September 2024 this will comprise five houses, with Years I and II, and III and IV boarding together, and Years V to Upper VI will live in individual year groups. Our aim is to provide a happy home-from-home environment where boundaries are established and girls can flourish. Although initially appointed to one of these houses, house staff periodically may be required to move to a different house to meet the needs of the girls and the school. Residential Housemistresses live in flats within their boarding houses and operate under the leadership of their Housemistress and the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

Job Description

Housemistress

The Housemistress is one of the most influential people in the lives of the girls in their boarding house. She is the key point of formal and informal contact for parents and takes responsibility for the happiness, welfare and discipline of the girls in her house. The Housemistress is 'parent', mentor, conscience and guide. The Housemistress works alongside the Senior Tutor for the Year Group in her house. The Senior Tutor leads a team of Tutors and takes responsibility for progress, achievement and formal reporting to parents on those matters and provides a link between the academic and pastoral life of the school.

As a Housemistress you act in loco parentis to the girls in your boarding house and are accountable to the Head via the Deputy Head (Pastoral). You work within a Pastoral team and liaise with its members as well as with Academic, Medical and Administrative departments. You implement all relevant aspects of school policy as formulated by the Head. You will be supported by Assistant Housemistresses, who will deputise for you during your time off, and who will help you with all aspects of the running of the boarding house, and in some cases by Graduate Assistants.

Your direct responsibilities will include:

- acting in loco parentis and accepting responsibility for the pastoral, general health, hygiene, eating and sleeping habits, behaviour and appearance of the girls in your house
- being aware of, implementing and maintaining the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools for Welfare and Pastoral Care of the girls in your house
- being thoroughly conversant with the school policies and procedures and the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe In Education, ensuring that all members of your boarding staff are aware of these policies, particularly those relating to Safeguarding, Countering Bullying, Fire, Health and Safety
- ensuring all fire routines and exits are known and understood and procedures regularly practised
- ensuring that all health and safety policies are complied with
- ensuring that the school's policies in connection with the storage and administration of medication are complied with
- under the guidance of the Senior Tutor and Tutors, sharing responsibility for the girls' academic progress and enrichment opportunities and participation
- managing the girls' daily routine according to school guidelines
- supporting girls in their development of a sense of responsibility, organisation and leadership
- sharing responsibility with other resident staff for the safety and behaviour of girls

- organising appropriate activities, entertainments, excursions and social events
- writing reports on each girl in your house as required in the reporting schedule
- acting as a direct link at all times between parents and the school
- providing the Head and all other appropriate pastoral, medical and academic colleagues with all relevant information about individual girls
- liaise with and act under the direction of the Admissions Department in the delivery of successful taster visits and other exercises to market the school
- liaising with the Health and Wellbeing Centre concerning routine and special dietary requirements
- work with the Deputy Head (Pastoral), Bursar and Estate Manager (via appropriate channels) in respect of repairs, and any necessary replacements of the fabric, decoration and property of the boarding house
- liaising with the Housekeeping Department and providing feedback to the Housekeeping Manager on the performance of domestic staff in house
- completing annual appraisals of Assistant Housemistresses in your house
- taking responsibility for the organisation, administration and operation of the house
- keeping individual records on each girl, and ensuring that copies of all significant correspondence and contact are lodged with the Head
- organising standard arrangements, including ensuring the School Administrator has sufficient timely information to arrange travel for Leave Out weekends, half term and end of term
- administering year group finances and budgets as delegated by the Bursar
- keeping a log of girls' pocket money
- attending regular meetings with the Pastoral Team and other staff, and advising on matters of general policy
- returning to school after holidays and Leave Out weekends before the girls and remaining at school until their departure at the end of each session or the date agreed with the Head
- sleeping in the appointed accommodation whilst on duty
- being available to girls most evenings and weekends
- being contactable during full term, even when off site
- supporting as many school functions as possible, including attendance at Chapel and vertical House meetings
- performing other duties for the benefit of the girls in the school as directed by the Head
- being aware of the school's Plan of Day, term dates and calendar entries, as detailed on the school website and in ISAMS. Refer to the regular up-dates and be aware of the implications of these for girls in her house
- performing any other tasks that the Head may reasonably assign to a Housemistress from time-to-time.

Person Specification

The post holder must:

- hold suitable qualifications for the role as advertised
- be an excellent listener and committed team member
- lead by example and demonstrate authority, respect and trustworthiness
- have good writing, proof-reading, telephone and IT skills
- have exceptionally high standards of discipline and integrity
- be aware of the importance of Child Protection and Safeguarding of young people
- be prepared to undergo appropriate training as requested
- support the ethos of a full boarding school and broad education
- have a clear sympathy with the advantages of single-sex education
- be able to promote academic excellence and individual creativity
- be able to exercise total discretion and uphold confidentiality, when appropriate
- be inspired by challenges and seek to set individual targets
- have energy, drive, enthusiasm and a positive manner
- be able to use email, databases and information management systems
- organise and run events in school and off site
- have an awareness of ISI inspection criteria

- be willing to undergo further formal training for first aid, fire safety, safeguarding and boarding inspection.

Most importantly, the Housemistress must be compassionate and dynamic. They must get to know each girl and their family personally and create a supportive environment to enable each girl to aim high and exceed her expectations in a confident and polite manner.

This job requires stamina and resilience. The working hours during term time are inevitably long and tiring, but, ultimately, immensely rewarding. The Housemistress must have a natural, happy demeanour, be passionate about working with young people and hold their safety, wellbeing and progress above all other considerations.

Terms and Conditions

The following particulars do not form any part of an offer of employment. Terms and conditions, which will incorporate the Staff Handbook, will be set out in a letter of appointment.

1. Appointment

The Housemistress is appointed by the Head subject to the checks and enquiries set out in the school's Recruitment Policy. The appointee will be required to complete a confidential medical questionnaire (and medical examination where applicable), the costs of which will be met by the school.

2. Line Management

The Housemistress reports to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) via the Housemistress in charge of the boarding house to which she is allocated from time to time.

3. Committees

The Housemistress shall attend all meetings that are required to give updates on girls in their care. Staff briefings and boarding meetings are held to discuss operational matters and the Housemistress may be asked to represent their team from time to time on other school committees to help formulate policy.

4. Professional Development and Appraisal

The Housemistress shall participate fully in the school's professional review process and seek opportunities to progress their development as a member of the pastoral team through training, observation and discussion.

5. Probationary Period

This appointment shall be subject to a probationary period of one complete academic term during which the appointment may be terminated by the school on one month's notice. This period may be extended by notice in writing given before the expiry of the initial period.

6. Safeguarding

The Housemistress shall be fully aware of best practice relating to Safe Recruitment and Child Protection and will understand the school's Safeguarding and Countering Bullying Policies. They should be aware of how to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead and not hesitate in communicating concerns regarding Child Welfare as appropriate.

7. Marketing

The Housemistress, like all other members of staff, is responsible for the marketing of the school through their contact with girls, parents, visitors and outside organisations and through the conduct and contributions they and any girls in their care make whether in or outside school. It is hoped that the Housemistress will offer ideas regarding the marketing of QM.

8. Enrichment and Activities

The Housemistress should have an interest in and willingness to support all school activities and should discuss with the Deputy Head opportunities to enhance the school's programme of events.

9. ISI Preparations

The Housemistress shall help the school prepare for inspection by reviewing and updating documents, as requested.

10. Working Hours

This is a full time role in a busy boarding school, in which girls require around-the-clock support. In conjunction with the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and fellow Housemistresses, the appointee shall receive a

period of consolidated time off of 48 hours per week to be taken between Sunday evening and Friday morning (except in exceptional circumstances). In addition, the appointee will be entitled to two hours downtime per day plus an additional four hours per week to be taken as appropriate to the needs of each boarding house. The Housemistress should expect to be on first-call overnight on up to five nights per week depending upon the rota. The Housemistress may be called upon during school holiday time to help meet girls arriving at airports to escort them back to school.

11. Holiday Entitlement

The Housemistress shall be entitled to the statutory minimum holiday entitlement (currently 28 days) which is to be taken during the school holidays. In addition, and subject to all duties being fulfilled and responsibilities being met to the satisfaction of the Head and Deputy Head (Pastoral), including opening and closing the boarding houses and attendance at induction sessions INSET and other Training Days, as required, the appointee will not normally be required to work during school holidays.

12. Request for Absence

The Housemistress shall make any requests for absence during term time in writing (letter or email) to the Deputy Head (Pastoral), who will make consistent and transparent judgements based upon the best interest of the girls and the school. Sufficient notice must be given.

13. Salary and Pension

Queen Margaret's has its own competitive salary scale. The salary for this post will reflect the responsibility attached to the role and is £35,000 per annum. The salary will be paid in monthly instalments in arrears from the agreed date of appointment and is inclusive of holiday pay; no overtime is paid and days off in lieu of work are not applicable. The appointee will be enrolled in QM's own staff pension scheme, which is a contributory money purchase scheme (6% employee and 8.4% employer), or the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) or such other scheme that operates for teachers if appropriate.

14. Notice Period

Subject to the provisions of item 5 above in relation to the probationary period the appointee is required to give the school one complete term's notice (to be served whilst the school is in session) of his/her intention to leave this post. The school can terminate the contract of employment on one month's notice during the probationary period and on one term's notice thereafter.

15. Meals

Food and refreshments are provided during term time during the hours of duties.

16. Accommodation

Accommodation is provided within the school for the purposes of fulfilment of duties, subject to the terms of a special license agreement. Accommodation shall only be provided whilst the appointee is in the role as described and may change from time-to-time for operational reasons. Permission to remain in residence during school holidays is granted at the discretion of the Bursar.

17. School Fees Remission

At the discretion of the Head, an appropriate school fees remission package is available for the daughter(s) of the Housemistress, during their time at Queen Margaret's.

18. The school's Family Leave Policy which sets out its policy on maternity, adoption, paternity, shared parental and bereavement leave is available in its current form on the school's VLE.

19. The school's Staff Discipline Policy which sets out details of the school's disciplinary and grievance rules and procedures is available in its current form on the school's VLE.

20. All employees of Queen Margaret's are responsible for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young persons and must adhere to and ensure compliance with the school's Safeguarding Policy. If in the course of carrying out the duties of this post, the post holder becomes aware of any actual or potential risks to the safety or welfare of children in the school, this must be reported to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and Head.

How to Apply

All applicants must complete the school's official application form, available via this link to our website <https://queenmargarets.com/careers>, providing a full career history and names and contact details for two referees. Completed application forms should be returned to: recruitment@queenmargarets.com.

Queen Margaret's is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young persons and candidates must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure & Barring Service and will be asked to bring certain documents to interview to confirm their identity.

Candidates should be aware that, in compliance with statutory guidance, as part of the shortlisting process the school will consider carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school might want to explore with the applicant at interview.

Only applications from female applicants will be considered. This is a genuine occupational requirement in accordance with Schedule 9 Part 1 of the Equality Act