ST JOHN'S SCHOOL
A MERCHANT TAYLORS' SCHOOL

Application Pack: Head Groundsman

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the role of **Head Groundsman** at St John's School. We are seeking a skilled, reliable and proactive Head Groundsman to lead the maintenance, safety and presentation of our extensive school grounds. This is a fantastic opportunity to take ownership for leading the team to continually improve the presentation of the site and to ensure the boys are able to use the grounds to their fullest potential.

You will lead a team of 2 grounds assistants to take responsibility for ensuring that all outdoor areas - including sports pitches, gardens, lawns, play areas and pathways – are maintained to a high standard throughout the year. Duties will include grounds maintenance, horticultural work, seasonal planning, pitch preparation and marking, machinery operation and upkeep, and supporting the wider Estates Team with school events and operational needs. Experience in sports groundskeeping is essential, along with relevant qualifications.

This is a full-time, permanent, year-round role (52 weeks). Salary is £35,000 to £40,000, dependent upon experience. The package includes on-site parking and a generous employer pension contribution. Subsidised on-site accommodation is available. The hours of work are from 8.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday.School Overview and What We Offer

St John's is an independent boys' Pre-Prep and Preparatory School for pupils aged three to eleven years, with approximately 250 boys on roll. Founded in 1920, the school is owned by the Merchant Taylors' Educational Trust and is situated on a beautiful 35-acre site in Northwood, Middlesex, offering an exceptional environment for teaching, learning, and outdoor activity.

As a school, we are committed to the development of the whole child—intellectually, morally, socially, and physically.

What We Offer

- 25 days holiday plus bank holidays
- Subsidised accommodation on site
- A supportive, collegial, and well-resourced working environment
- The opportunity to take pride in maintaining extensive, attractive grounds used daily by pupils
- Training and professional development opportunities
- A generous pension package

- On-site parking
- The chance to play a key role in the smooth operation of a thriving school community

The Role: Heads Groundsman

Reports to: Bursar

Job Purpose

- To lead and manage the upkeep, presentation, and development of the school grounds and external spaces.
- To ensure that all outdoor areas, including sports pitches, play areas, gardens, and pathways, are safe, well-maintained, and prepared to a high standard for pupils aged 3–11.
- To contribute to the efficient running of the school estate by overseeing maintenance schedules, grounds projects, and daily operational tasks.
- To work collaboratively with the Support Teams and wider school staff to support the school's activities, events, and long-term site development.

Key Responsibilities

Objectives

- To maintain high-quality grounds and outdoor facilities that enhance the learning and recreational environment of St John's School.
- To ensure all outdoor areas are safe, compliant, and fit for use throughout the year.
- To lead and oversee the Grounds Team and coordinate external contractors when required.
- To support the school's operational needs, including events, seasonal activities, and site management.

Principal Areas of Responsibility

- Overseeing the daily maintenance, presentation, and safety of all school grounds, including sports pitches, lawns, gardens, pathways, and play areas.
- Leading and managing grounds staff, including delegating tasks, planning workloads, and supporting professional development.

- Preparing and maintaining sports pitches, artificial surfaces, and outdoor activity areas to ensure they are safe and ready for use.
- Carrying out routine horticultural tasks such as mowing, planting, pruning, weeding, hedge-cutting, and irrigation.
- Conducting regular safety checks on playground equipment, outdoor structures, trees, and boundary areas, reporting hazards as required.
- Managing grounds maintenance schedules, seasonal plans, and annual site development projects.
- Operating and maintaining grounds machinery, tools, vehicles, and irrigation systems in line with health and safety standards.
- Overseeing the maintenance and management of the school minibuses.
- Coordinating with contractors for specialist works, including tree surgery, line marking, pest control, or pitch maintenance.
- Supporting school events (e.g., Sports Day, fêtes, performances) with set-up, transport, and logistics.
- Ensuring all grounds-related risk assessments, records, and compliance documentation are kept up to date.
- Maintaining environmentally responsible grounds practices, including recycling, waste management, and sustainable planting.
- Responding promptly to weather-related challenges such as snow clearance, ice control, drainage issues, and storm damage.

Person Specification

Qualifications and Training

- Relevant horticultural or grounds maintenance qualification (e.g., NVQ Level 2/3 in Horticulture, Sports Turf, or equivalent).
- Training or certification in the safe use of grounds machinery (e.g., strimmers, mowers, tractors).
- PA1/PA6 pesticide application certification (desirable).
- Evidence of ongoing professional development.

Experience

- Significant groundskeeping or horticultural experience, ideally within a school, sports club, or large estate.

- Experience maintaining sports pitches and outdoor play areas.
- Experience supervising staff or coordinating contractors.
- Experience with machinery maintenance and safe operation.

Knowledge and Skills

- Strong understanding of grounds maintenance, horticulture, and turf care.
- Ability to plan and prioritise workloads across seasons and deadlines.
- Practical knowledge of health and safety, risk assessment, and compliance requirements.
- Ability to maintain machinery and equipment safely and effectively.
- Good communication skills and the ability to work collaboratively with school staff and external providers.
- Basic ICT skills for record-keeping, scheduling, and communication.

Personal Qualities

- Hard-working, reliable, and committed to maintaining a high-quality environment for pupils.
- Proactive, self-motivated, and able to work independently or as part of a team.
- Practical, solution-focused, and able to respond calmly to unexpected challenges (e.g., weather or urgent repairs).
- Positive, approachable, and aligned with the values and professionalism of St John's School.
- Physically fit and able to carry out manual outdoor work in all weather conditions.

Suitability to Work with Children

- A strong commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Ability to maintain professional boundaries with pupils at all times.
- Emotional resilience when working in a busy school environment.

Additional Requirements

- Enhanced DBS clearance and satisfactory references.
- Commitment to upholding the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Willingness to work flexibly, including occasional evenings or weekends to support school events or respond to site needs.
- Current chainsaw qualification would be desirable.

- Ability and willingness to drive the School minibuses would be desirable.
- Experience leading a team would be desirable.

How to Apply

To apply for this position in confidence, please submit the following documents:

1. A completed application form
2. A covering letter outlining your suitability and enthusiasm for the role
3. A completed equal opportunities monitoring form

Documents and full details can be found on our website: https://www.st-johns.org.uk/about-us/staff-vacancies/.

Closing Date: **9am** on **Friday 4th December 2026**

Interviews: **W/c 7th December 2026**

Start Date: **ASAP**

Applications should be addressed to headsea@st-johns.org.uk

Contact and Visits

We warmly welcome potential applicants to visit the school or arrange a conversation before applying. For enquiries or to arrange a visit, please contact headsea@st-johns.org.uk.