

Dartford Grammar School for Girls



General Information for Candidates 2023-2024



Working together to achieve academic excellence and personal potential

All staff, Trustees and members of the Local Governing Body make the education of the students their first concern, and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. All staff, Trustees and members of the Local Governing Body act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive professional relationships; and work with parents/carers and other members of the community in the best interests of the students.

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Welcome to Dartford Grammar School for Girls

Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in Dartford Grammar School for Girls. I am very pleased to provide you with information about the school.

Dartford Grammar School for Girls is a heavily oversubscribed, selective school with an excellent academic record. Our vision for all members of our school community is ***“Working together to achieve academic excellence and personal potential”***. We have very high standards in all areas of school life and expect our students to strive for their own personal excellence in everything they do. As a community our principal values are ***Respect, Responsibility, Excellence, Dedication*** and ***Creativity***. Together we share the same high expectations and ambitious aspirations whilst recognising and celebrating our differences as individuals.

Following our Ofsted Outstanding judgement in all categories in June 2016, we are delighted that Ofsted confirmed that the school continues to be Outstanding in October 2021. As Headteacher, I have very ambitious plans for our school and am fully committed to ensuring that we provide excellent opportunities and maximise life chances for all children and young people, regardless of their background.



In June 2017 we became an academy and established our own multi-academy trust, The Areté Trust. We are currently the only school in the Trust but we are very excited by the future opportunities for all members of our community, as we will be the lead school in The Areté Trust.

Specific details relating to this vacancy are available separately. We very much look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

Sharon Pritchard
Headteacher

A selection of quotes from new members of staff

"The impression I have had in my first few weeks at Dartford Grammar Girls is that of the students. I simply cannot believe how attentive and hard-working they are. The degree of students going above and beyond is simply staggering. The frequent in depth questions they ask show how adept they are at thinking hard! Next would be the staff - Wow! What a fantastic community of people. I joined during a covid lockdown and so were remote learning. I have never felt so supported by such a broad selection of departments, from teacher colleagues of the same/different subject discipline, to department leads, heads of year and SLT. I wasn't just left to work things out on my own through trial and error, rather guided through the paths I need to take to ensure continuity with what the school is doing. Love it already and I've hardly stepped a foot into the school over my first month (due to national covid lockdown)."

"This is a school where the values stated are truly felt throughout."

"This is a school where students are keen to be challenged and motivated to succeed. They truly appreciate the work their teachers do, and this is reflected in the excellent attendance, attitude to learning and results they achieve. "

"As a new member of staff I have been fully welcomed to the school both by teaching and support staff, as well as by students. Dartford Grammar School for Girls is a fantastic school to work in, both on a subject and pastoral level and I feel privileged to be given the opportunity to work with such dedicated and aspirational students."

"I am finding it a privilege to teach students with such bright and enquiring minds. The quality of their written work is often astonishing. Students ask high level questions in lessons which makes teaching them an exciting and intellectually stimulating experience. Furthermore, there is a culture of respect by students towards the teaching staff which makes DGGS a very pleasant school to teach in."

"Polite and hardworking students, friendly and approachable staff and a nice 'community' atmosphere".

A selection of quotes from long-time employees

"I can only describe this school as a very unique place to work. The students come from a range of backgrounds and locations which bring a dynamic spark to teaching. Everyone is committed to bringing out the best in these students and staff work cohesively as a team. Staff are valued, development and career aspirations are supported and importance is given to individual wellbeing. I value greatly the support offered to me; it has helped shape my development and growth as both a teacher and leader.."

"I have felt very-well supported at DGGs. The students make teaching a pleasure, and colleagues quickly became friends. I have been able to grow and develop in my professional capacity here, and feel like our contributions are valued and recognised."

"I enjoy my time working at DGGs, the staff are friendly and approachable. The students are a delight to be around, they are polite and well behaved. It's a very safe environment to work in and I am very happy here."

"Having worked at DGGs for more than 20 years, I am happy to say that it has become my second home. I have always felt supported, have made great friends for life, have travelled the world, have seen many of our students succeed in their 'after school' life."

"I have worked at Dartford Grammar School for Girls for over 20 years and I honestly would not want to work anywhere else. The students are fantastic and staff so very supportive and dedicated to their role. Teaching here is thoroughly rewarding and enjoyable."

Working together to achieve academic excellence and personal potential

"The professional and caring culture at DGGs is what keeps me here. I've made many long standing friendships and the pupils are delightful; they are hard working, ambitious and friendly. I really can't imagine teaching at another school. So much has changed in the 17 years I have been here, but my enjoyment of the job has not."

"I have found DGGs to be an incredibly supportive and nurturing place to work where I am given the professional freedom to teach my subject in the way that best suits the remarkable students who attend the school. Their insightfulness and curiosity makes teaching them a real privilege and joy. It is a school that genuinely has the best interests of the students and staff at its very core and as such is constantly striving to develop in light of this."

"I love the fact that students are extremely responsive to anything you do for them. They challenge you intellectually in lessons and are always keen to learn from you. There is a fantastic atmosphere in the staffroom and you really feel like you are part of a very strong team. The support staff are incredible and will help you with anything you need, going well beyond expectations."

"The main reason why I have remained at DGGs for such a long time is the students. I find the students so willing to learn and keen to absorb as much subject knowledge as they can. In addition, the majority of the students are keen to push themselves to be the very best that they can be, sometimes hanging off every word in case they miss something. The students are polite to staff and seem to be kind to each other. As a result, I, as a teacher, work in a calm and cooperative working environment every day. Another reason for remaining at DGGs for so long is the staff. My colleagues are a hardworking and friendly group of people to work alongside. Moreover, the senior leadership team has always been completely supportive and willing to listen so that I feel valued as a member of the school community".

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School Vision Statement, Values and Aims

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of The Areté Trust is **Excellence** and **Virtue**. The Trust's name is from the Greek word *arête* meaning "excellence of any kind" and also signifying "moral virtue".

We believe that all young people have the potential to succeed and make a positive and lasting contribution to society. We believe in the power of **Working Together**.

VALUES

The principal values of our Trust are:

- **Honesty**
- **Respect**
- **Courage**
- **Kindness**
- **Determination**

AIMS

The Areté Trust exists to **provide opportunities and maximise life chances** for all children and young people, **regardless of their background**.

We therefore aim to:

- Promote and instil a sense of social responsibility and have a lasting positive impact on the communities with which we work
- Work together to achieve the highest standards and continual improvement and development of all schools in the Trust

We aim to do this through:

1. **Driven, determined and courageous leadership** at all levels based on clear vision and precise strategy, relentlessly implemented with strong accountability
2. **Traditional values** and **high expectations** of conduct and standards of work
3. An **academic curriculum** with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy, to prepare young people with the knowledge and skills essential for lifelong success
4. Our distinctive, innovative and high-challenge approach to Teaching & Learning: our **High Impact Teaching Strategies**
5. An emphasis on **growth and development** to ensure exceptional pastoral care, high quality professional learning and development for staff

School Development Plan 2021-2026

To be a centre of excellence for teaching, learning and leadership

To raise aspirations and maximise life chances for all students, from all backgrounds

5 YEAR OBJECTIVES

1. DGGS is the first choice girls' grammar school in the area for Year 7 entry
2. DGGS is the leading A Level provider in the area
3. All achievement measures at GCSE and A level indicate excellent student progress
4. DGGS is a working and learning environment that excites, challenges, motivates and supports us all
5. Teaching and learning are at the heart of all our work
6. DGGS is a culturally rich and diverse community which respects, understands and celebrates our differences within an ethos of shared values
7. There are significant areas of expertise in which to "lead the field"
8. DGGS is a leader of collaborative partnerships with other school(s) in the local area and undertakes important work with and support of, other secondary schools and primary schools, including schools experiencing challenges
9. DGGS has a lead role in teacher training and staff development within the local and wider community
10. DGGS continues to be financially secure and improves facilities and resources to support the provision of outstanding education

Staff Training and Development

We take staff training and professional development very seriously. The school runs a bespoke and dynamic programme of Continuing Professional Development based on current research. Alongside compulsory whole-staff training and subject specific sessions, there is an additional opt-in series of CPD sessions which focus on different aspects of teaching and learning, leadership and management and strategies to support specific groups of students. This opt-in series caters for staff at different stages in their career, and is regularly reviewed and adapted.



We are keen to actively support both teaching and support staff to further progress their career, if they would like to. This includes identifying training and development opportunities through our Appraisal process, and mentoring to prepare colleagues for promotion, including within the school.

We have links with many Initial Teacher Training agencies and have an excellent induction programme for Early Careers Teachers.

The school will ensure that an appropriate induction programme is available to all new staff and this will be developed following a discussion between the individual and their line manager.

"I thoroughly enjoy teaching at DGGS. The students are eager to learn, very responsive to work with and the parents/carers are very supportive. The staff team are excellent and there is a real buzz about the school. There is brilliant support for career progression within the school. I started at the school as an NQT and have experienced different roles since being at the school, including Deputy Head of Key Stage, Joint Head of Department and I am currently enjoying the challenging role of Head of Year. I would very much recommend working at DGGS".



Working together to achieve academic excellence and personal potential

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Working at Dartford Grammar School for Girls – Teaching Staff

The Areté Trust Board of Trustees, the Headteacher and the DGGs Governors are committed to recruiting and retaining the highest quality teachers and support staff, and promoting a fair workload to support a healthy work-life balance.

Teachers working at DGGs can therefore expect the following:

1. Commitment to adhering to the School teachers' pay and conditions document
2. Financial support towards Benenden healthcare
3. A supportive and collaborative environment, with opportunities for colleagues to work together to provide feedback and ideas to support team and whole school development
4. Access to high quality professional development, with financial support available to fund personal professional development, e.g. a Masters
5. No graded lesson observations
6. Use of “no marking” feedback approaches encouraged, e.g. comparative judgement and whole class feedback
7. Curriculum Area marking policies clarify what will and will not, be marked
8. The Senior Leadership Team will regularly review deadlines and timings of meetings, and seek to reduce all admin/paperwork to the minimum
9. The Senior Leadership Team will undertake a workload impact assessment for all policy and procedure changes
10. All teachers will have the opportunity to apply for the equivalent of 2 days of “home-working” during the academic year (6.5 hours)*
11. Teachers can leave school at the start of period 5 to continue working at home if they are not teaching and not needed in school – this must be agreed on the day by the Headteacher
12. Emails will not be sent between 5:30pm and 7:30am on weekdays (and no emails at weekends)

**no impact on lessons, pro-rata for part-time colleagues. Two registration periods per year may be included, if required, providing that it can be covered and activities are set for the form group.*

Working at Dartford Grammar School for Girls – Support Staff

The Areté Trust Board of Trustees, the Headteacher and the DGGs Governors are committed to recruiting and retaining the highest quality teachers and support staff, and promoting a fair workload to support a healthy work-life balance.

Support staff working at DGGs can therefore expect the following:

1. Commitment to adhering to the Local Government National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service (Blue Book)
2. Financial support towards Benenden healthcare
3. A supportive and collaborative environment, with opportunities for colleagues to work together to provide feedback and ideas to support team and whole school development
4. Access to high quality professional development, with financial support available to fund personal professional development, e.g. a Masters
5. The Senior Leadership Team will undertake a workload impact assessment for all policy and procedure changes
6. All support staff will have the opportunity to access either the flexitime system or an ad hoc time off in lieu (TOIL) procedure
7. Emails will not be sent outside core working hours



Health and Safety message

Dartford Grammar School for Girls ensures that we adhere to all health and safety guidance to protect colleagues, students and visitors to the school.

Confidentiality Statement

At Dartford Grammar School for Girls, respect for employees' confidentiality has a very high priority within the school. It is of great importance that all staff are treated with the utmost respect and courtesy and can, at all times, be sure confidentiality is embedded in how we function.

Benenden Healthcare

The school has partnered with Benenden Healthcare to provide a low cost alternative to private medical insurance for employees at Dartford Grammar School for Girls at a subsidised rate. The normal cost direct from Benenden is £12.90 per month. If you join through the school then we will pay £6.00 per month, with the remainder deducted from your payslip before other deductions are made, making it tax efficient. Employees can join and leave the scheme with one month's notice.

Staff facilities at Dartford Grammar School for Girls



In addition to the staff room and quiet work area, the following facilities can be used by all staff when available:

Fitness Suite

The Fitness Suite is being refurbished. It is located on the second floor of the main Sports Hall.

Swimming Pool

Staff have access to the school's swimming pool.



Shower room

Staff have access to a shower room should they wish to use it for, example when cycling to work or making use of any of the available sports facilities; this is located in the Finance block.



Café

In addition to the school canteen, staff can make use of the café located in the Sixth Form Centre, where a variety of hot and cold drinks and food can be purchased.

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) are

Anne Mason, Sharon Pritchard, Rebekah Kidd and Sarah Longley

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Staff are given a copy of the relevant section from “Keeping Children Safe in Education” September 2023

Working Together to Safeguard Children March 2018 (Updated July 2023)

Any incident that has implications for Safeguarding or Child Protection should be discussed with the DSL. It is negligent for a member of staff not to report a concern and could result in disciplinary action taken subsequently. The school will follow the procedures laid down in the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Procedures (www.kscb.org.uk).

If allegations are made against a member of staff immediate consultation is required with the KCC Area Children's Adviser (Child Protection). This consultation must take place prior to any form of investigation being undertaken by the school. The school will work with outside agencies, including the Police, Social Services and School's Personnel Service, as required.

Categories of abuse:

All staff in school should be aware of the definitions and signs and symptoms of abuse. There are four categories of abuse : (definitions are found in Appendix 1 of the full policy).

- **Physical, Emotional, Neglect and/or Sexual**

Staff should be vigilant for:

- any sign of unusual or distressed behaviour
- changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where the student withdraws into themselves
- nervousness/watchfulness
- sudden under-achievement/lack of concentration

- inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- attention-seeking behaviour
- persistent tiredness
- running away/stealing/lying
- any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- any injuries which have not received medical attention
- instances where injured children are kept away from school without reasonable information
- reluctance to change for P.E., Drama or Dance
- any signs of neglect
- age-inappropriate sexual behaviour

***The role of the school in situations where there are child protection concerns is
NOT to investigate but to recognise and refer.***

If you have good reason to suspect abuse is taking place, you should:

- NOT make any attempt at cross-questioning the student, or where physical abuse is concerned, undress them
- make notes (using the student's own words) using the school Safeguarding Incident/Concern form.
- discuss the matter immediately with the DSL (or the Headteacher)
- the Safeguarding Incident/Concern Form should be completed electronically, password protected and saved by the author. The form should then be sent to the DSL and the password should be sent in the next email. Once the DSL has acknowledged receipt, the original author should delete the email and original, completed safeguarding form

If a student tells you they have been abused, you should:

- listen to what they have to say. Do NOT promise confidentiality - what they are telling you must be passed on;
- guard against any visible sign of distress/repugnance if the disclosure is a shock to you;
- adopt a supportive and listening role and talk quietly with the student in a quiet interruption-free place;
- guard against any cross-questioning or, where physical abuse is concerned, asking them to undress;
- offer reassurance (remember they may fear the implications of "telling" or may be under threats of reprisals);
- explain the follow up procedure – what happens next
- make notes using the students exact words and phrases, using the school Safeguarding Incident/Concern form. This must be sent to the DSL (see above).
- Discuss the matter immediately with the DSL (or the Headteacher).

The DSL will follow the County Guidelines on child abuse. Where appropriate, a referral or consultation will be made to the KCC Education Safeguarding Unit. It is vital that detailed notes are kept of all communication, including telephone calls and conversations.

Action Summary

- LISTEN to what the student has to say;
- REPORT all suspicions IMMEDIATELY to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or the Headteacher);
- RECORD in detail the circumstances and the action taken;
- REMEMBER speed is essential;
- REMEMBER child abuse occurs in families from all classes, cultures, and religions.

Staff training

- All staff will receive training on Safeguarding and Child Protection annually as part of the ongoing school CPD programme. This will be delivered by the DSL. A register of staff attending will be made and all staff will receive a certificate of attendance. This training is compulsory for all staff.
- The Designated Safeguarding Leads will receive updated Safeguarding and Child Protection training every year if virtual or two years.
- New staff will receive initial training on school safeguarding procedures as part of their Induction.
- It is a requirement for all staff to read and understand the relevant sections from “Keeping Children Safe in Education” 2023. A paper copy will be provided for all staff

Role of the Governing Body

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Governor is Janice Brooke. She will play a part in evaluating the full policy on an annual basis.

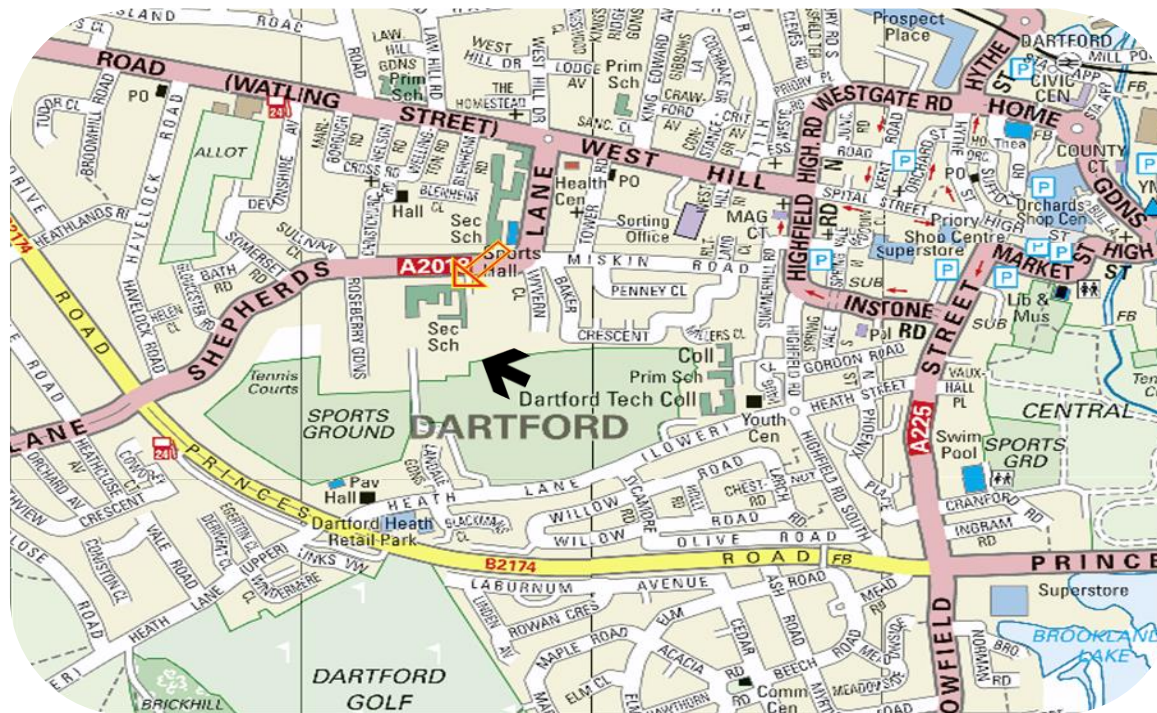
In the absence of the availability of the DSL to discuss an immediate and urgent concern, advice should be sought direct from the Children’s Safeguards Team by an alternative senior member of staff.

Please read and refer to the full policy in the Staff Handbook 2023-2024

Useful Information

Location

The school is located close to the A2 and is positioned between two local railway stations – Crayford and Dartford. It is within easy access of Dartford town centre and Bluewater shopping centre. Travelling on foot would take 25-30 minutes from Crayford railway station and 20-25 minutes from Dartford railway station. Travelling by car from the Dartford Crossing would take approximately 10 minutes and 5 minutes from the A2 Dartford Heath junction (with no traffic).



Dartford Grammar School for Girls is easily accessible by public transport, for updates on train and bus services, please use the links below:

- [National Rail Service Updates](#)
- [Arriva Bus Service Updates](#)
- For all other bus services and live travel news [please click here](#)

Application and Appointment Process

Please complete an application form (CVs are not accepted).

The school ensures that training is provided for all those involved in the recruitment and selection of staff and that it is appropriate to their role.

Applications should be sent by post, addressed to Sharon Pritchard, Headteacher, or emailed to Lorraine Dance, Headteacher's PA / HR Manager (LAD@dartfordgrammargirls.org.uk).

Prospective applicants are very welcome to visit the school. If you would like to arrange a visit, please contact Lorraine Dance at LAD@dartfordgrammargirls.org.uk or by telephone on extension 237.

