

Part of the **Hurst** Family of Schools

PENNTHORPE
NURSERY PRE-PREP PREP

Head of Forest School

Candidate Pack



Welcome

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN THE ROLE OF **HEAD OF FOREST SCHOOL** AT PENNTHORPE

We are delighted that you are considering joining Pennthorpe and becoming part of the community that makes our school such a special place to learn, work, and grow. At Pennthorpe, we believe childhood should be cherished and education inspiring. Our aim is to give every child a joyful, ambitious, and nurturing journey—one that builds confidence, curiosity, kindness, and resilience. We want pupils to leave us not only with strong academic foundations, but with the character and compassion to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Excellence here is defined by more than outcomes; it lives in the warmth of relationships, the vibrancy of classrooms, and the genuine care shown for others. Our staff bring energy, expertise, and a deep commitment to ensuring every child is known, valued, and inspired.

To join our team is to embrace school life wholeheartedly. We look for colleagues who bring enthusiasm, warmth, and a sense of fun, and who understand the privilege of helping children flourish. Pennthorpe is a place where everybody is somebody, and where teamwork, high expectations, and genuine care sit at the heart of school life.

I am immensely proud of our school and the people who make it such a rewarding place to work. If you would like to visit or discuss the role informally, please contact Lauren Manvell (recruitment@pennthorpe.com | 01403 822391). When you are ready, applications can be submitted via our online form.

Thank you for considering Pennthorpe. We appreciate the time invested in your application, and each one will be reviewed with care. I look forward to hearing from you.

Mr Jon Marler
Head of School

About Pennthorpe

Pennthorpe is a thriving, happy, and purposeful school where children are at the heart of everything we do. It is a special community shaped by wonderful pupils, dedicated staff, and supportive families. We believe childhood should be joyful, nurturing, and full of opportunity, and we seek professionals who share this belief and want to make a meaningful difference in young lives.

We are a school with a strong sense of family. Every child is known, valued, and supported, and relationships sit at the centre of our culture. Kindness, openness, and respect underpin daily life, creating an environment where children feel safe, confident, and ready to learn. Staff work in a collaborative, caring environment where high expectations sit comfortably alongside warmth, humour, and mutual respect.

Pennthorpe offers a broad and enriching education that celebrates individuality and recognises that success looks different for every child. Small class sizes, excellent pastoral care, and creative, responsive teaching help pupils develop confidence, curiosity, resilience, and independence. Staff are encouraged to innovate, reflect, and contribute ideas that shape provision across the school.

Our curriculum is rich and varied, including Forest School, sport, swimming, the arts, trips, and a lively programme of clubs and enrichment. We believe every child is unique and brilliant, and we design learning that nurtures their strengths and character. Care sits at the heart of our ethos, with every child choosing a trusted adult Champion, and our motto, "Born not for ourselves alone," guiding daily life.

Pennthorpe is proud to be part of the Hurst Family of Schools, offering staff access to shared expertise, excellent professional development, and clear pathways for progression, while maintaining our distinctive identity.

This is a school full of warmth, energy, and optimism, where staff feel valued, trusted, and supported to grow.



Our Aims

- To inspire all pupils with the ambition to discover and achieve excellence
- To stimulate and nurture all pupils on a uniquely personal journey of self-development
- To build a community and develop relationships that make a positive difference
- To invest in the future of our children.

Pennthorpe – Part of the Hurst Family of Schools

From the beginning of the Spring Term 2026, Pennthorpe became part of the Hurst family of schools through an exciting new partnership with Hurstpierpoint College. This development marked a significant and positive step for our community, strengthening our long-term future while honouring everything that makes Pennthorpe distinctive.

Pennthorpe and Hurst share deeply aligned values, a child-centred ethos, and a commitment to exceptional education. Becoming “Pennthorpe – Part of the Hurst Family of Schools” allows us to remain the warm, nurturing school we have always been, while benefiting from the experience, stability, and opportunities that come from being part of a larger, well-established group.

Our pupils and staff gain from enhanced collaboration, increased stability in a changing educational landscape, and the strategic strength of working alongside a respected partner. At the same time, Pennthorpe continues to operate with its own Board of Governors and retain responsibility for its safeguarding, performance, and strategy, ensuring continuity and protecting our unique identity.

For those joining our team, this is an exciting moment to be part of Pennthorpe’s evolution, combining the spirit, ambition, and close-knit community of our school with the wider opportunities and support offered by Hurst.



Why Join Us?

I LOVE WORKING AT PENNTHORPE; IT IS SUCH A TIGHT-KNIT COMMUNITY WITH A SUPPORTIVE AND DEDICATED STAFF, WHO VALUE THE EDUCATION AND GROWTH OF EACH INDIVIDUAL CHILD, WHILST GIVING THEM INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITIES TO THRIVE. IT REALLY IS A WONDERFUL PLACE TO WORK.

Charlotte Gallina Breese, Year 3 Teacher



PENNTHORPE IS MORE THAN JUST A WORKPLACE, ITS A VIBRANT, NURTURING COMMUNITY WITH AN OUTSTANDING PASSION FOR EDUCATION. WHETHER YOU ARE INSPIRING YOUNG MINDS IN THE CLASSROOM OR SUPPORTING THE SCHOOL'S WIDER MISSION, YOU WILL BE PART OF A TEAM THAT CELEBRATES CREATIVITY, COLLABORATION AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING.

Jessica Doodes, Head of Marketing & Communications



HAVING BEEN AT PENNTHORPE FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS, I CAN HONESTLY SAY THAT WORKING ALONGSIDE SUCH TALENTED AND PASSIONATE INDIVIDUALS TRULY FEELS LIKE A PRIVILEGE. THERE IS A REAL SENSE OF CAMARADERIE WITHIN THE TEAM, AND THE CHILDREN ARE GENUINELY AT THE HEART OF EVERYTHING WE DO.

Wendy Stanbridge, Teaching Assistant



The Benefits

There are many reasons to join Pennthorpe, including:

- Great autonomy to focus on things that make the biggest difference, and to enable all to bring their own personality and character to the workplace
- Friendly and supportive team and a busy staff social calendar
- Staff wellbeing opportunities including dedicated staff wellbeing initiatives as well as an annual Whole School Wellbeing Week
- An allocated mentor to help with all queries and concerns
- Support for working parents
- Professional development opportunities
- Numerous career progression opportunities
- Personal Accident cover, including dental
- Contributory stakeholder pension scheme
- School lunches, cooked on-site, are provided to all staff during term time
- Secure on-site parking



Head of Forest School



This role requires a practitioner who is reflective, adaptable, and deeply passionate about outdoor learning and child development. You will bring a strong understanding of how children learn through exploration, alongside the creativity and professionalism required to deliver a high-quality Forest School programme. You will be organised, resourceful, and committed to ensuring that every pupil—regardless of age, ability, or starting point—feels supported, challenged, and inspired through their connection with the natural environment.

To lead Forest School at Pennthorpe is to embrace a culture rooted in curiosity, resilience, and meaningful, hands-on learning. You will play a central role in shaping and delivering a progressive programme from Nursery to Year 8, fostering independence, confidence, and a spirit of adventure in all pupils. You will work collaboratively with colleagues, embedding outdoor learning across the curriculum and contributing to the wider life of the school. You will bring energy, warmth, and a proactive approach, creating an environment in which pupils feel safe to take risks, explore, and grow.

The ideal candidate will be an enthusiastic, skilled, and thoughtful Forest School leader with a strong commitment to outdoor education and environmental sustainability. You will be confident in planning and delivering engaging sessions that promote curiosity, teamwork, and problem-solving, while maintaining the highest standards of safety and care. You will demonstrate high expectations for both behaviour and participation, balanced with a nurturing approach that supports pupils' wellbeing and personal development.

In this role, you will be responsible for leading and developing Forest School provision across the school, ensuring a coherent and impactful pupil experience. You will value collaboration, supporting colleagues to integrate outdoor learning into their practice, and contributing to the ongoing development of this key area. You will also actively engage with the wider life of the school, demonstrating a clear commitment to Pennthorpe's values and helping to create an environment in which every child can thrive.



Role Overview

We are seeking an enthusiastic and experienced Head of Forest School to lead and develop our outdoor learning provision.

This is a vital role in supporting pupils' personal development, where confidence, resilience, independence, and a connection to the natural world are nurtured through meaningful, hands-on experiences. The successful candidate will design and deliver a progressive Forest School programme, promote outdoor learning across the curriculum, and ensure a safe, engaging, and inspiring environment in which all pupils can thrive.

Curriculum, Teaching & Learning

- Plan and deliver engaging, high-quality Forest School sessions across all age groups
- Create a safe, inclusive, and stimulating outdoor learning environment
- Foster independence, resilience, and confidence through child-led exploration
- Develop pupils' problem-solving and teamwork skills through practical activities
- Encourage curiosity, creativity, and a sense of adventure
- Promote respect for the natural world and environmental awareness
- Differentiate activities to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND
- Support pupils in taking managed risks and building self-confidence
- Maintain high expectations for behaviour and engagement during sessions
- Ensure safe and appropriate use of tools, equipment, and natural resources
- Adapt plans in response to weather, conditions, and pupil needs
- Monitor and record pupil engagement and development where appropriate



Person Specification

- Level 3 Forest School Leader qualification (essential)
- Experience delivering Forest School or outdoor learning programmes
- Experience working with children across a range of ages (Nursery–Year 8 desirable)
- Strong understanding of outdoor learning and child development
- Ability to inspire and engage pupils in practical, hands-on learning
- Excellent organisational and planning skills
- Confidence in risk assessment and safe outdoor practice
- Knowledge of safeguarding and health and safety procedures
- Passionate about outdoor education and environmental sustainability
- Enthusiastic, proactive, and creative
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills
- Flexible and adaptable approach
- Commitment to the wellbeing and development of all pupils

This overview outlines the key responsibilities of the role, and candidates are encouraged to download the full job description from our website for a comprehensive understanding of the post. As Penwithorpe continues to grow and develop, the responsibilities of this role may be reviewed periodically to support both the evolving needs of the school and the post-holder's ongoing professional development.



How to Apply

If you are ready to take the next step and apply to become part of our inspirational team, please submit your application using our electronic Application Form (<https://www.pennthorpe.com/application-form/>) which includes uploading a covering letter by the application deadline.

- Contract: 1 day per week, term time only
- Start Date: September 2026
- Application Deadline: Tuesday 23rd June, 2026
- Interview Date: Week commencing 22nd June, 2026
- Responsible to: Head of School
- Salary: Dependent on experience



Equal Opportunities

Pennthorpe is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes diversity. We would love applications from appropriately qualified persons regardless of gender, marital status, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, religion, disability or age.

Safeguarding

Pennthorpe is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

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