



PENNTHORPE
NURSERY PRE-PREP PREP

Hurst

Appointment of **Head of Finance & Operations**
Candidate information



Head of Finance & Operations

Job Title: Head of Finance & Operations (HFO)

Responsible To: The Governors of Pennthorpe

Reporting Line: Head of School, Pennthorpe and Group Chief Financial Officer

Management Responsibility for: Office Administrator and Estates Team

Salary: c. £55,000 p.a.

Working Hours: 8.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday

Role overview

Purpose of the role

The Head of Finance and Operations (HFO) takes day-to-day responsibility for the school's financial systems, financial reporting and regulatory compliance, working closely with and reporting to the Group CFO, as well as for the facilities, buildings and estates.

The HFO reports to the Head and the Group CFO and is a key member of the school's Senior Leadership Team, acting as Company Secretary and Clerk to the Governors and working alongside the Head and Group CFO in advising the Governors on financial and operational matters.

As part of the Hurst Family of Schools, Pennthorpe benefits from being part of a wider group providing

oversight, strategic leadership and operational guidance and support.

Benefits

- Membership of the School's contributory pension scheme.
- Free dining and refreshment facilities during term time.
- Extensive professional development programmes, together with career opportunities across the Hurst Family of Schools.
- Employee Assistance Programme.
- Free on-site parking.



Welcome

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.

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



Hurst Family of Schools

About 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.



Key Responsibilities

Financial Management

- **Financial control & strategy:** Manage day-to-day financial operations, support the Group CFO on regulatory compliance, financial systems, and long-term financial strategy/risk assessment.
- **Budgeting & forecasting:** Prepare multi-year forecasts, annual income/expenditure estimates, and departmental budgets in consultation with the Head and senior leadership.
- **Reporting & accounts:** Produce monthly management accounts, statutory/internal reports, SOFA and balance sheets (per charities SORP), and coordinate audits.
- **Cash & payables management:** Control cash flow and working capital, manage accounts payable, payment runs, invoice authorisation, and bad debt recovery.
- **Advisory functions:** Seek advice on investments, taxation (including VAT), insurance, charitable status implications, and fee/salary matters supporting the Head and Group CFO.
- **Regulatory & stakeholder liaison:** Complete returns to HMRC, Charities Commission, ISC, Companies House, and local authorities; support relationships with bankers, auditors, and solicitors.
- **Fee & funding administration:** Manage Early Years Funding, parent billing and direct debits, EHCP billing coordination, credit control, and third-party/hirer invoicing.
- **Expenditure administration:** Oversee purchase orders, invoice processing and payment, supplier statement checks, VAT returns, petty cash, and credit card/supplier account reconciliation.
- **HR & payroll administration:** Manage staff changes, safeguarding checks (KCSiE), Single Central Register, PAYE/NIC/pension reconciliation, and salary payments via the payroll bureau.
- **Compliance & policy:** Complete annual DfE, Early Years, and ISC censuses, and hold responsibility for all financial and operational policies.



Estates Management

- Line management of the Estates team in conjunction with the Hurst Estates Manager, ensuring the efficient running of the school site and facilities, and compliance with Health and Safety legislation.
- Oversee building management, maintenance, compliance and day to day upkeep of all buildings, as well as grounds maintenance and security of people, buildings and property.
- Oversee capital development projects.
- Log all energy meter reads with the appropriate online energy supplier and reconcile invoices when they arrive.
- Act as the point of contact for all fire evacuations and lockdown practices.
- Chair the school's internal Health & Safety committee each term.
- Ensure termly Health & Safety checklists are sent out to all staff and dealt with appropriately.

Catering

- Oversee the outsourced catering services contract, ensuring the KPIs are continually delivered.

ICT and Infrastructure Management

- Work with the IT department to coordinate development, installation and maintenance of appropriate IT & telecommunications infrastructure.
- Work with the Head and the IT department to ensure IT development is in line with the school development plan and budget.
- Ensure that adequate levels of IT support and cybersecurity protection and incident response are maintained at all times.

Legal and Compliance

- Provide and procure legal advice for the Head and the Governors on all relevant matters such as employment contracts and property law.
- Liaise with solicitors to address legal issues and bring these to the attention of the Governors.

- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures are fully compliant with current data legislation.
- The Head of Finance and Operations is the person responsible for data compliance.

Clerk to the Governors

- Act as Clerk to the Governors and secretary to various committees and trusts.
- Prepare and issue agendas, minutes and other documents related to Governor' Meetings.
- Attend all Governor Meetings as requested, including all sub-committee meetings.
- Prepare any other papers requested by the Governors to inform their decision making on matters such as annual fee increases.
- Monitor developments in legislation affecting the conduct of charities and private companies and their liability to tax, and draw to the attention of the Governors any that may affect the School.
- Arrange the induction, training and processing of the appointment of new Governors.

Person Specification

The following criteria will be used in shortlisting and selection. Candidates should address each essential criterion in their application.

CRITERION	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Qualifications		
Part-qualified accounting qualification, or qualified by experience		✓
Skills, Experience and Knowledge		
Experience working within the Education sector		✓
Strong financial management experience	✓	
Effective working capital management	✓	
Strategic leadership experience	✓	
Strong inter-personal skills, energy and flexibility	✓	
Good team player ready to work as a member of the Senior Leadership Team	✓	
Demonstrate essential personal qualities which include absolute integrity, professionalism, impartiality and discretion	✓	
Detail focused with clear and concise written communications	✓	
Strong IT skills including advanced Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Outlook), databases and AI	✓	
Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal	✓	
Ability to maintain the highest level of discretion in managing and dealing with confidential and sensitive matters	✓	

Person Specification

The following criteria will be used in shortlisting and selection. Candidates should address each essential criterion in their application.

CRITERION	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Personal Attributes		
An ability to juggle multiple tasks with a sense of humour and calmness	✓	
Welcoming and friendly	✓	
Well-presented, conscientious and reliable	✓	
Able to display sensitivity, diplomacy and tact when dealing with internal and external stakeholders of all levels	✓	
Constantly seek ways to streamline and increase efficiencies in policies, procedures and processes	✓	
A calm and confident manner even in times of high pressure	✓	
Integrity, honesty and reliability	✓	
High levels of motivation, resilience and energy	✓	
Confidentiality, discretion, tact and empathy	✓	
Emotional resilience and professional approach	✓	
Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with colleagues, pupils and parents.	✓	



Apply

The application process

Prospective candidates are invited to make contact to discuss the role. Please contact Darren Carpenter, Group CFO, at darren.carpenter@hppc.co.uk.

Interested candidates should fill in and submit an online Application Form at:
www.pennthorpe.com/forms/application-form

This application form includes uploading a covering letter.

The closing date for applications is:
Sunday 19th July 2026

Interviews will be held the week commencing
Monday 20th July 2026

Safeguarding and equal opportunities

Pennthorpe, and the Hurst Family of Schools, are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of employment will be subject to an enhanced DBS disclosure, the receipt of satisfactory references, the pre-employment medical questionnaire, relevant original ID documentation and examination certificates. The Trust understands that a robust, fair and transparent recruitment and selection policy plays a central role in achieving this aim.

Pennthorpe

Church Street, Rudgwick, West Sussex, RH12 3HJ

Hurst College

College Lane, Hurstpierpoint, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9JS



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