

Job Description



Job Title: Executive Assistant to the Principal

Department: Principal's Office

Line Manager: Principal

Job Purpose:

The Executive Assistant is responsible for, but duties are not limited to:

- Providing a comprehensive and confidential secretarial service to the Principal
- Managing the Strategic Work stream Tracker to determine the work priorities of the Principal
- Providing strategic counsel and critical analysis to aid the Principal's decision making
- Working with others to organise high profile events (internal and external) on behalf of the Principal
- Acting as an ambassador for the Principal's office, promoting George Watson's College and enhancing and protecting its reputation.

Main Responsibilities:

1	<p>To provide Executive Assistant support to the Principal, which includes:</p> <p>Liaison between Principal and members of staff, external stakeholders, members of the Governing Council and the Merchant Company Education Board including the Master of the Royal Merchant Company of Edinburgh.</p> <p>Assisting the Principal with strategic planning, including the monitoring and maintenance of the Strategic Tracker.</p> <p>Supporting the Principal with project work as required, e.g. undertaking research, arranging meetings, liaising between interested parties.</p> <p>Conducting horizon scanning to search for policy decisions or developments which could impact/influence the School and the Principal's work/priorities. This involves systematic research into the business of Scottish Government, SCIS, news items, publications (TES, HMC/SCIS information, Scottish Government policy documentation, BSA Newsletter).</p> <p>Prepare drafts of speeches and presentations, content for inclusion in key School publications, e.g. The Annual Report, prepare the Principal's report to Governing Council and (with the Bursar) the Merchant Company Education Board.</p>	25%
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	<p>Is a member of the Critical Incident Management and Response Team. Is responsible for recording, monitoring, advising on and declaring instances of Regulated Lobbying with Politicians and Scottish Government officials.</p> <p>Liaising with and co-ordinating the duties of the Senior Office Bearers (School Captains, Deputy School Captains and Heads of Sixth Year) in their ambassadorial roles supporting the Principal.</p> <p>Maintaining a close liaison with the Development Office concerning all aspects of the Principal's work on fundraising and alumni engagement.</p>	
2	<p>To provide highly efficient and effective executive secretarial support to the Principal, which includes:</p> <p>Anticipating the daily/weekly needs of the Principal and ensuring they have what is needed, (e.g. prepares preparatory papers, organises travel, meeting arrangements, catering).</p> <p>Extensive diary management, including arranging high profile meetings with VIP's, Key Stakeholders and Decision Makers across the sector.</p> <p>Writing correspondence on behalf of the Principal on a wide range of issues. Preparation of correspondence for Principal's signature, e.g. resignation/retiral acknowledgements. Responding to invitations on behalf of the Principal and organise personal invitations to the Principal's guests to School functions, usually in cooperation with the Development Office.</p> <p>Providing technical expertise for a variety of software programmes and</p> <p>Managing incoming email and post, prioritising by strategic importance, sending timeous acknowledgements and responding on behalf of the Principal.</p> <p>Meeting visitors in an ambassadorial capacity on behalf of the Office of the Principal whilst ensuring all logistical and organisational requirements enable meetings to be as streamlined and productive as possible.</p> <p>Providing information for preparation of speeches (e.g. leavers/retirals).</p> <p>Organising the Principal's Christmas Card list (in co-operation with the Development Office) and plans the signing of the cards around the Principal's other priorities.</p> <p>Organising the Principal's annual letter to Leavers.</p> <p>Providing advice on protocol for visits and formal events, arrange table plans as required.</p> <p>Managing the process for staff sabbaticals.</p>	20%

3	<p>To provide executive level secretariat support to a range of internal meetings and committees, which includes but is not limited to:</p> <p>Principal's weekly Leadership Team (weekly), Governing Council Liaison Committee (termly), Community Liaison Group (termly), bi-annual joint meetings of the Primary and Senior Liaison Groups, , ICE (Information and Consultation of Employees Committee) (termly), OASP (Oversight, Advisory and Support Panel).</p> <p>Provide executive level secretariat support and administrative oversight of external meetings which the Principal chairs and attends which includes but is not limited to:</p> <p>Heads of Edinburgh's Independent Schools Group (termly), Watson's Education Forum (bi-annual), Chief Executive and Executive Director of Communities and Families at the City of Edinburgh Council (termly).</p> <p>To keep an archive of documents relating to the Principal's duties, collecting, storing and processing them in accordance with the School's Privacy Policies.</p>	20%
4	<p>Principal's and School Events</p> <p>To plan and lead the organisation of a variety of high profile events on behalf of the Principal, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The bi-annual Watson's Education Forum, a gathering of Education leaders from across Scotland with special guest speakers ● Annual Caritas Lecture: leading a cross College event team to ensure logistics are planned effectively e.g. arranging speaker, payment, accommodation, PR/Communication, ticketing, programme, AV, Catering, table plans etc. Organised in association with the Development Office. ● Bi-annual meetings of the Curators of the Stewart Lockhart Collection in association with the Archivist ● Selection process for international scholarships and Exchanges including the Arthur Hunter Graduate Fellowships, the Murray and Sanson Travel Awards and the Wynberg, Jhongsiao and Don Mercer exchanges (in collaboration with the appropriate Senior School Staff) ● Annual visit of His Majesty's Schools Inspector ● Principal's procession party for the annual Remembrance Service ● Twilight Talks (monthly), includes promotion to parents and managing attendance ● Meetings with the Master and Treasurer of the Royal Company of Merchants of the City of Edinburgh <p>Leads the organisation of ad hoc events such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Mandarin Chinese Summit ● The International Schools Conference ● Visits of visiting other heads, diplomats, politicians etc 	20%

	<p>Liaise with the Principal regarding events to be held at the Principal's House, staff wedding gifts and gifts for babies born to staff and their partners.</p> <p>Attend events where the Principal may require support, (e.g. Open Morning)</p>	
5	<p>Key Stakeholder Liaison</p> <p>Build and maintain close relationships on behalf of the Principal with key stakeholders (internal and external). These relationships are critical to the delivery of strategic priorities and in influencing external stakeholders and include, (but not an exhaustive list):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● External organisations with which the School is associated ● The Office of the Lord Provost of Edinburgh ● Staff and members of the Royal Company of Merchants of the City of Edinburgh, and especially with the Master, as Chairman of the Merchant Company Education Board and the Treasurer ● Director of SCIS ● The Registrar of Independent Schools ● General Secretary and Office Bearers of HMC ● MSPs/Cabinet Secretary and Ministers/Cross-Party Committees ● Community Groups ● University Vice - Chancellors/Principals/Heads of Departments ● International Schools ● Parents ● Ministers of Religion of all denominations and faiths ● Legators/Donors 	10%
6	<p>To assist the Principal in his line management of the Principal's Leadership Team and indirect management of all members of staff, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planning and organising the annual review process for the Principal's Leadership Team and for the Principal himself ● Organising welcome meetings with new staff and weekly "Keep in Touch" meetings with members of the Principal's Leadership Team (and others with whom regular meetings are required) ● Planning and organising the Principal's input into the Annual Staff Dinner for Retirees, liaising as necessary with the Staff Social Committee and Human Resources ● Preparing drafts of staff references as required by the Principal ● Working with Human Resources to make arrangements for interviews for staff appointments for which the Principal is directly responsible. 	5%
<p>Key Contacts and Working Relationships:</p>		
<p>This role has many significant key contacts both internal and external which are critical for getting the job done.</p> <p><u>Internal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Principal, daily discussion on all aspects of the Principal's priorities and daily schedule ● Principal's Leadership Team, daily contact to update on priorities, seek input into plans and proposals, seek information to support the Principal's work priorities 		

- Deputy Heads (Junior and Senior School), weekly contact regarding advice and guidance on issues, coordination of events, handling complaints/reputational risk
- Development Office, daily contact with regards event planning, donor meetings)
- ICE Committee, regarding meeting arrangements, setting agendas, paper submissions
- Senior Office Bearers, weekly contact to arrange their ambassadorial duties/tours/speeches
- Governing Council: Chair and Members, contacts weekly regarding general support and advice to the Principal, arrangement of meetings.
- Members of the Royal Company of Merchants of the City of Edinburgh, and especially with the Master as Chairman of the Merchant Company Education Board and the Treasurer to arrange quarterly meetings and discuss event attendance
- Watsonian Club President, monthly dialogue regarding events and ad hoc updates with Principal

External Contacts:

As described in the Key Stakeholder Liaison section, the role holder is required to maintain contacts with a wide range of external contacts, to promote the School, to seek their input into strategic priorities, to maintain the Principal's networks and as part of their horizon scanning and research into key developments in the sector and wider political landscape that could potentially impact/influence the direction of the College.

Planning and Organising:

The Strategic Governance documents, i.e. Our Future, the Annual Plan and Strategic Tracker are monitored and managed by the role holder. These key documents drive the priorities of the Principal and ultimately his daily schedule. The role holder anticipates the next steps from the Strategic Tracker and this drives their workload.

The Principal delegates tasks to the role holder.

The role holder uses the annual school event cycle to forward plan and organise resources for events, e.g. room bookings, cross college teams, catering, AV support etc.

The role holder is expected to plan and organise their own time and diary. The tasks are varied and significant in number.

The role holder requires to plan in the short, medium and long term.

Problem Solving and Decision Making:

Due to the high volume of contact and routinely time-sensitive nature of the role it is essential that the role holder prioritises workload.

Multiple requests for Principal's time - role holder assesses Principal's work priorities, availability, risk/urgency of the issue and where necessary moves less important diary appointments to accommodate the need.

Organising meetings with multiple external high profile people, manages diary conflicts, communicates with multiple agency PA's/teams to source potential availability.

Resources and Requirements:

The role holder is responsible for ensuring that the Principal's diary is manageable, that it delivers the head space required for him to fulfil his duties and that people who request to see the Principal are scheduled according to the assessment of their needs/priorities of the Principal.

The role holder has no direct line management responsibilities.

Knowledge, Skills and Experience:**Essential:**

- Discretion, personal integrity, decisiveness and the ability to work with utmost confidentiality
- Extremely high standards of written English
- An expert-level communicator and negotiator who can build and maintain positive relationships with a wide range of colleagues, and be able to converse with a variety of stakeholders internal and external to the school.
- Near flawless accuracy and attention to detail
- High level of competence in the use of Microsoft Office (Word, Outlook, Excel, PowerPoint or Google Suite) and the willingness and ability to be trained in the use of the more specialist systems used by the School.
- Comfortable working to very tight deadlines
- Is self-motivated, resourceful, persistent, tactful, diplomatic, and empathetic.
- Comfortable working both autonomously and as part of a team
- Has experience of managing projects and/or large scale event organisation
- Is proactive and analytical with the ability to link various work streams to corporate objectives
- High levels of flexibility, initiative, organisational ability and common sense
- Able to work independently and collaboratively and take ownership of challenges whilst proposing and delivering solutions
- Experience of working at Executive Assistant level or supporting board level managers
- Discretion, personal integrity and the ability to work with the utmost confidentiality.

Desirable:

- Education to degree level
- Strategic planning and multi-tasking
- Emotional intelligence including appropriate and measured response to individual behaviour and temperament
- Thrives in challenging and demanding situations
- Consistent self-evaluation leading to progressive improvement of service to the Principal
- Experience of handling conflict
- A well-developed sense of humour
- A good rapport with children and young people
- An interest in the education sector and the political and social context within which the School operates
- Driving licence