



GEORGE  
WATSON'S  
— COLLEGE —

# Head of Development

Candidate Pack July 2025

LHH

# Contents

Welcome from Lisa Kerr	03
Advertisement	05
About Us	06
The Role	07
The Person	09
Team Structure	11
Conditions & Remuneration	12
How to Apply	13





# Welcome from Lisa Kerr, Principal, George Watson's College

George Watson's is a school with a proud history,  
a vibrant present and ambitious plans for the future.

## Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Head of Development at George Watson's College.

This is a pivotal appointment for us - one that will help shape the future of our school and the life chances of the young people we serve. We are looking for someone who is hungry for success. Someone with the drive, energy and emotional intelligence to inspire donors and stakeholders to join us in delivering transformational change.

George Watson's is a school with a proud history, a vibrant present and ambitious plans for the future. Our philanthropic income already enables a growing number of talented young people to benefit from a Watson's education through our Transforming Lives bursary programme. But we want to do more - and that's where you come in.

You don't need to come from an educational or independent school background - we're open-minded. What matters most is that you understand what 'great' looks like in donor engagement and major gift fundraising.

You'll be a natural influencer and a persuasive communicator, capable of building meaningful relationships at all levels, from alumni to high-net-worth individuals and corporate partners.

You'll also be a collaborative leader, confident working within a school environment and alongside a Principal, leadership team and Governing Council who are fully invested in the power of development to deliver impact.

This is a rare opportunity to make your mark in a role with genuine strategic importance. If you're excited by the chance to work in a values-led environment, where your skills can help change lives and shape futures, we would love to hear from you.

Warmest regards,

**Lisa Kerr**  
Principal  
George Watson's College





# Advertisement

## George Watson's College, Head of Development

**Location** – Edinburgh

**Salary** – £50,000-60,000 with opportunities for enhancement

Are you an ambitious fundraising professional ready to lead transformational change?

George Watson's College is seeking a driven and strategic Head of Development to lead our fundraising activities, shape the major donor programme and play a key role in enabling more young people to benefit from a Watson's education through our Foundation Places programme.

This is a unique opportunity to join one of Europe's leading independent schools at a pivotal moment in our philanthropic journey. You will work closely with our Principal, Lisa Kerr, and Director of Development, Karen Goodman, to unlock new opportunities, engage high-value supporters, and inspire a culture of giving across our community.

We are looking for someone hungry for success - an influencer and persuader who knows what 'great' looks like in fundraising. You may not come from the independent education sector, and that's fine - what matters most is your ability to lead conversations, build lasting relationships and secure major gifts that will change lives.

You'll bring proven experience of donor engagement and campaign delivery, a collaborative leadership style and the confidence to thrive in a fast-paced, outward-facing role. In return, you'll be part of a values-led organisation with a clear mission: to widen access to one of the best educations in the country.

This role offers challenge and opportunity in equal measure - and the chance to make a lasting impact on generations to come.

To apply for the post, please send a tailored CV and covering letter to [ScotlandExecutive@LHH.com](mailto:ScotlandExecutive@LHH.com) by midnight **Sunday 27 July**. Please note that the covering letter should be no more than two pages of A4 and should summarise your relevant skills and experience and motivations for applying for this role.

If you would like a confidential, informal discussion about the role then please contact Fizza Islam, LHH on **+44 (0)141 220 6460** or email the above address.





# About Us

As a charitable organisation, we are deeply committed to widening access to the exceptional education we provide.

George Watson's College is the largest single-campus school in Europe and is known for its rich heritage, academic excellence, and strong sense of community. Founded in 1741 and located in the heart of Edinburgh, the school educates around 2,300 pupils aged 3 to 18 across its Nursery, Junior and Senior Schools. Our motto *Ex Corde Caritas* – 'Love from the Heart' – sits at the centre of all that we do, reflecting our commitment to nurturing not just academic success, but also kindness, integrity and a strong sense of service in every pupil.

We are proud of our long-standing traditions, but equally forward-looking in our outlook. Our school community thrives on innovation, inclusivity and ambition. We aim to prepare young people not only to succeed in the modern world, but to make a meaningful contribution to it.

As a charitable organisation, we are deeply committed to widening access to the exceptional education we provide. Our Foundation Places programme, supported by philanthropic giving, provides life-changing bursaries to talented young people who would not otherwise have the opportunity to attend Watson's.

We believe that the strength of our community lies in its diversity, and we are continually working to make our school as accessible and inclusive as possible. At Watson's, we are fortunate to have an engaged and supportive alumni community, many of whom feel a lifelong connection to the school. Our excellent Development and Alumni team plays a key role in nurturing those relationships, growing philanthropic income and supporting the school's strategic ambitions. The new Head of Development will be central to this work, leading on major gift fundraising and helping to deliver transformational change for current and future generations of Watsonians.

## Our Mission

George Watson's College exists to provide a world-class education for children and young people from Preschool to S6. We encourage our pupils to develop a love of real learning through an inspiring curriculum and extensive and inclusive Enrichment programmes. George Watson's College is an extraordinary school community full of outstanding young people and members of staff. We have excellent buildings and fantastic **facilities** but it is the people who make our school what it is and who enable us to be as successful as we are.



## Our Values

At Watson's we share a simple set of core values which we try to ensure runs through everything we do.

- **Aim High:** We are ambitious for ourselves and others, always seeking to be the best we can be as individuals and as a school.
- **Join In:** We are inclusive in what we do and how we do it, we want our pupils to feel confident in taking part and contributing in all aspects of school life and we play an active part in the life of our wider **community**.
- **Respect All:** Everyone is different and we celebrate that difference in everyone, respecting them and the unique contribution that they will make to our world.
- **Be Kind:** Our Motto is *Ex Corde Caritas* "Love from the Heart" and we aspire to live up to that motto every day.

# The Role

**Manage a significant portfolio of major donors, and secure large gifts in line with the department plan.**

## Job Purpose

This senior role will work with the Director on shaping the Development Department strategy and plans. They will lead the Development Office team on a day-to-day basis, managing a personal portfolio of donors and prospects, and playing a leading role in shaping and delivering successful multi-channel fundraising campaigns and stakeholder engagement strategies.

## Key Responsibilities Fundraising

- With the Director, be the school's lead fundraiser in securing major and mid-level gifts.
- Deliver a diverse range of campaigns (mail, phone, digital, giving days) that achieve annual fundraising targets and increase year-on-year response rates
- Oversee a programme of corporate engagement, including sponsorship and applications to trusts and foundations
- Develop the school's legacy giving programme to increase donations from this key area
- Manage a significant portfolio of major donors, and secure large gifts in line with the department plan.
- Support other 'askers' within the school, including the Principal, senior staff and Governors, to enable their successful management of prospects.

- Delivering all tasks in support of the above including donor research, the production of materials and follow up as required.

## Donor Cultivation and Stewardship

- Develop meaningful donor journeys and engagement touch points that grow participation year-on-year
- Deliver high-quality stewardship to increase donor retention
- Engage senior leaders, staff, parents and volunteers in cultivation activity to embed a 'one school' approach to philanthropy.

## Stakeholder Engagement

- Plan and oversee the delivery of a programme of events to increase giving - particularly regular giving - and volunteering
- Develop a three-year stakeholder engagement strategy - underpinned by robust reporting, impact and review processes - that takes stakeholders on a journey from awareness to commitment
- Support the development of a School wide alumni relations strategy
- Oversee the production of a range of communications including an annual magazine, donor reports, multi-channel appeal collateral, and social media and web content.



## Systems, Processes and Reporting

- Oversee management of the Raiser's Edge CRM, ensuring systems and processes are robust and compliant with all relevant regulations
- Manage all financial systems including budgets, gift processing and treasury functions
- Oversee and ensure data compliance (e.g. GDPR)
- Lead on a research strategy that builds a robust prospect pipeline
- Provide robust analysis and reporting, ensuring individuals and the wider team are delivering against core objectives and exceeding KPIs.

## Team Leadership

- Line management of the development team
- Recruitment and line management of any temporary fundraising staff, as required
- Ensuring all team members are led and supported in line with School policies and practice including objective setting, appraisal, training and development.

## Other Duties

- Support the work of the Development Office and colleagues across the School by undertaking other duties as specified by the Director, if required
- The role will require regular out of hours working at events and meetings.
- Regular UK and occasional international travel is required.

# The Role

**Responsible for developing strategies and plans for own areas of work, ensuring that direct reports have clear objectives.**

## **Areas of Focus**

### **Key Contacts and Working Relationships:**

- Build and maintain effective relationships with donors to secure gifts in support of the school.
- Build and maintain effective relationships with a wide range of internal and external individuals and stakeholder groups to embed a 'one school' approach to philanthropy
- Join sector networks to learn from others and remain up-to-date with sector changes and new legislation
- Member of School project groups
- Represent the School at relevant external meetings and events.
- Manage and prioritise own area of work and that of others
- Through 1:1s ensure direct reports understand their roles and personal objectives

### **Problem Solving and Decision Making:**

- Resolve routine problems from a wider range of individuals and stakeholder groups, by analysing requirements and using own knowledge and expertise to find solutions. In particular this will relate to individuals making personal donations; issues relating to the successful delivery of events and other department activity; and complaints from individuals relating to GDPR and use of personal data held of the Development Office stakeholder database. In some circumstances issues may be escalated to the Director or colleagues.

### **Planning and Organising:**

- Ensure the smooth and effective running of Development operations, ensuring agreed departmental budgets are adhered to
- Responsible for developing strategies and plans for own areas of work, ensuring that direct reports have clear objectives, that allow the monitoring and tracking of achievements against overall goals
- Play a leading role in the department's annual planning, including reviewing budget resources and outlining how these align to planned activity
- Direct line management for five permanent staff and any temporary staff employed to deliver telephone fundraising campaigns or for data processing work

### **Resources and Requirements:**

- Direct line management for five permanent staff and any temporary staff employed to deliver telephone fundraising campaigns or for data processing work





# The Person

## Person Specification

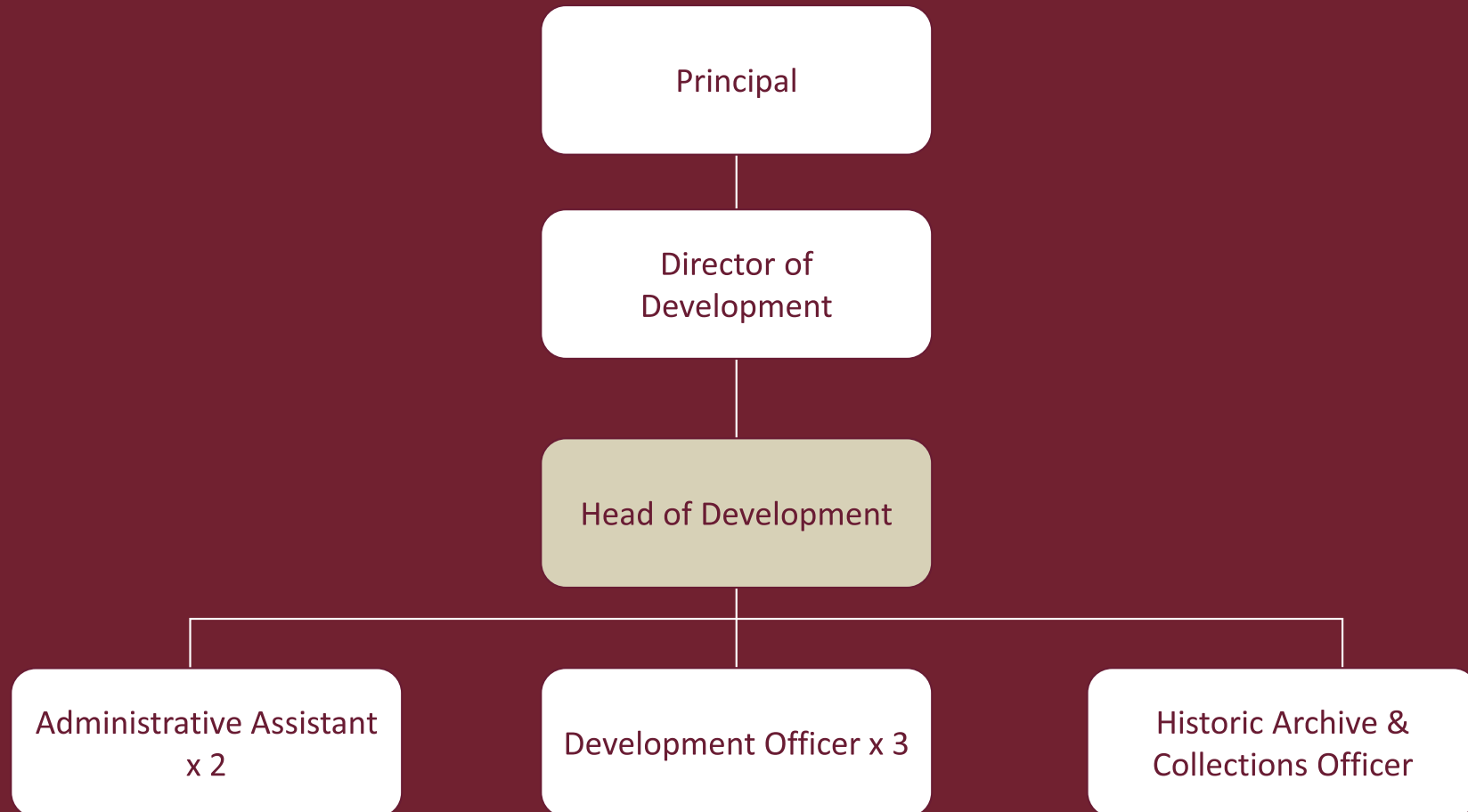
- Proven track record in fundraising, which should include evidence of securing gifts over £100k where you have developed the case for support or funding proposal
- Confident face-to-face fundraiser, as well as experience of applying to trusts and foundations, and mail/ phone campaigns
- Degree qualified or similar
- In-depth knowledge of Raiser's Edge or similar CRM database, including setting protocols and developing training and user manuals
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills (verbal and written)
- Good planning and organisation skills
- Excellent leadership skills
- Good team working skills – collaborative in approach
- Must work responsively and flexibly to meet the demands of the role
- Sound decision and judgement making ability
- High levels of attention to detail and accuracy
- Diplomatic, discreet and demonstrates high integrity
- A willingness to become involved with the Watsonian community outside normal working hours, which will include travel outside Edinburgh
- Experience of managing a team







# Team Structure



# Conditions & Remuneration

Automatic enrolment in the contributory support staff defined contribution pension scheme.

## Salary

£50,000-60,000 with opportunities for enhancement

## Place of Work

Edinburgh

## Other Benefit

- Automatic enrolment in the contributory support staff defined contribution pension scheme
- Reduced school fees at George Watson's College for children of staff
- Membership of the Galleon Club (the school's fitness club)
- Access to a range of other benefits and discounts is available through our Employee Benefits Platform

## Timescales

Closing date for applications:  
Sunday 27 July 2025 at midnight

Interviews with George Watson's College:  
Friday 22 August 2025





# How to Apply

If you would like a confidential, informal discussion about the role then please contact LHH on +44 (0)141 220 6460.

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George Watson's College is committed to equality of opportunity and to no discrimination on the grounds of race, religion or belief, age, sex, marital or civil partnership status, disability, sexual orientation, transgender status, pregnancy or maternity.

An Accessibility Strategy and associated policies deliver the commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion set out in the school's Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Statement of Intent.

Beneath these policies there are a range of detailed policies and guidance on various aspects of practice as it relates to pupils, staff and the wider community. We are therefore constantly reviewing our approach to ensuring equality and diversity in our applications and would be pleased if you could complete an Equalities Monitoring Form.

## **Equalities Monitoring Form - George Watson's College**

Should you require any modifications or wish to speak with a member of our team to discuss any particular circumstances, please email the above address.



**LHH Recruitment is Scotland's leading Executive Search team.  
We connect Scotland's top businesses with exceptional candidates –  
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