GORDONSTOUN
Japan

Assistant Head – Pastoral and Designated Safeguarding Lead

Gordonstoun, founded in 1934, is a philosophy of education in action. The extraordinary education we provide gives students the confidence to achieve the impossible. Gordonstoun's motto – "Plus est en vous" – is the ethos at our core – we hope you will be keen to bring your passion to this incredible staff body.

Reporting to: Deputy Head

Salary: Competitive salary based on experience

Location: Wakayama, Japan

Contract: 3-year fixed-term contract

Working hours: Working hours will generally follow the School's term dates, with duties and availability determined by the School's published schedule. The role will include some evening and weekend commitments and may require responses to safeguarding concerns outside normal hours.

Purpose of the Role

The Assistant Head will act as the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead, providing strategic and operational leadership for safeguarding and child protection across Gordonstoun Japan, promoting a culture in which students feel safe, listened to, valued and supported.

The postholder will champion Gordonstoun's educational ethos, support staff to recognise and respond effectively to concerns, and work closely with pastoral, academic and boarding colleagues to safeguard students and promote their wellbeing.

Key Responsibilities

1. Safeguarding Leadership & Development

- Lead the development, implementation and regular review of the School's safeguarding and child protection policies, procedures and systems, in line with applicable requirements and the School's policies and standards.
- Promote a strong, proactive safeguarding culture in which the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.
- Advise senior leaders on safeguarding priorities, emerging risks and improvements, contributing to whole-school planning and review.
- Oversee safeguarding arrangements relating to online safety, digital communication and emerging risks to students.
- Ensure safeguarding arrangements are appropriate for the School's boarding and international context.

2. Child Protection & Case Management

- Provide a clear and accessible point of contact for staff reporting safeguarding or child protection concerns.
- Oversee the timely assessment, recording, escalation and management of safeguarding concerns, including referrals to relevant external agencies where required.
- Coordinate appropriate support and protection plans for students, working with relevant colleagues and external professionals.
- Maintain secure, accurate and confidential safeguarding records, with appropriate information sharing and follow-up.
- Ensure urgent concerns are addressed promptly and that appropriate arrangements exist for safeguarding cover and escalation.
- Act as the School's lead professional for safeguarding and child protection concerns, taking responsibility for co-ordinating responses, referrals and appropriate escalation, including matters requiring the attention of the Founding Principal.

3. Student Wellbeing & Pastoral Collaboration

- Work closely with Houseparents, pastoral colleagues, academic staff and healthcare professionals to identify and respond to students' welfare needs.
- Support a coordinated approach to student wellbeing, including appropriate review meetings, actions and follow-up.
- Promote students' confidence to raise concerns and ensure their views are heard and considered.
- Provide guidance on professional boundaries, appropriate conduct and responding sensitively to students from diverse backgrounds.

4. Staff Training, Guidance & Safeguarding Practice

- Coordinate safeguarding induction, refresher training and ongoing awareness for staff, ensuring training records are maintained.
- Provide advice and support to colleagues on recognising concerns, reporting procedures and appropriate safeguarding responses.
- Promote consistent safeguarding practice across teaching, boarding, co-curricular and support activities.
- Identify lessons from safeguarding incidents and reviews, and implement appropriate improvements.

5. Safer Recruitment & Organisational Safeguarding

- Work with recruitment and HR colleagues to support safer recruitment procedures, including appropriate safeguarding checks, references and induction.
- Contribute to safeguarding risk assessments and arrangements for trips, activities, visitors and external providers, as appropriate.
- Support clear procedures for handling allegations or concerns about adults working with students, ensuring appropriate escalation and independent oversight.
- Keep up to date with relevant safeguarding developments and advise on changes to School practice.

6. Communication & External Partnerships

- Maintain effective and sensitive communication with students, parents or guardians and relevant colleagues, respecting confidentiality and safeguarding requirements.
- Build appropriate working relationships with relevant child protection, healthcare and other external agencies in Japan.
- Provide proportionate safeguarding reports and updates to the Founding Principal and relevant School leadership or governance arrangements.

7. Collaboration & Wider School Life

- Work constructively with academic, pastoral, boarding and senior colleagues to advance the School's priorities.
- Champion Gordonstoun's commitment to education beyond the classroom and contribute to the wider life of the School as appropriate.

8. Additional Responsibilities

- Carry out other reasonable duties from time to time in support of the School, consistent with the nature of the role.

Key Outcomes (Success Measures)

- A strong safeguarding culture in which students feel safe, heard and supported.
- Clear, effective safeguarding policies, reporting systems and responses to concerns.
- Well-trained and confident staff who understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Effective collaboration with families, School colleagues and relevant external agencies.
- A culture of continuous review and improvement in safeguarding practice.

Person Specification - Essential

Experience

- Substantial experience of safeguarding and child protection practice in a school or comparable setting.
- Experience of managing complex student welfare or child protection concerns, including appropriate escalation and multi-agency working.
- Experience of leading safeguarding improvements, procedures or staff training.
- Experience of working collaboratively with senior leaders, staff and families to support young people.

Education and Qualifications

- Relevant degree or professional qualification, or equivalent experience in education, safeguarding, social care or a related field.
- Relevant safeguarding and child protection training, with willingness to undertake further training required for the role.

Skills

- Excellent communication, interpersonal and listening skills, with the ability to handle sensitive matters with empathy and discretion.
- Sound professional judgement, confidence and resilience when responding to complex or urgent safeguarding concerns.
- Strong knowledge of safeguarding principles, reporting procedures, professional boundaries and appropriate information sharing.
- Ability to lead, influence and support colleagues in developing a consistent safeguarding culture.
- Strong organisational, analytical and record-keeping skills, with attention to detail and confidentiality.
- Cultural awareness and sensitivity to the needs of students from diverse backgrounds.
- A genuine commitment to protecting children and promoting their wellbeing, dignity and personal development.

Person Specification – Desirable

- Experience of safeguarding in an international or boarding school.
- Experience as a designated safeguarding lead, child protection lead or equivalent senior safeguarding role.
- Experience of working with external agencies and safeguarding systems in Japan.

Safeguarding

Gordonstoun Japan is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All appointments are subject to satisfactory safeguarding and background checks, including appropriate criminal record and reference checks.