



TONBRIDGE
SCHOOL

HEAD OF BIOLOGY

From SEPTEMBER 2026



THE DEPARTMENT AND POST

The Governors of Tonbridge School would like to appoint a **Head of Biology**. The ideal candidate will have studied Biology (or a closely related subject) to degree level, and will be capable of teaching to A level and Oxbridge entry. This is an exciting opportunity for an experienced teacher or current Head of Biology, who is looking to develop their skills and experience, working in a department with outstanding, facilities, widely renowned for the excellence of its provision. The successful candidate will demonstrate a commitment to academic excellence and a passion for teaching the subject to a very high standard across the entire 13-18 age range, as well as supporting and taking part in the wider life of the faculty and School.

The Biology department has seven teaching staff and two technicians, within the larger Science faculty. The department occupies the first floor of the award-winning Barton Science Centre, completed in 2019. There are four, spacious, modern, teaching laboratories (one double size), three classrooms, a cosy library and a large, dedicated prep room, all arranged around the spectacular central atrium. The department is superbly resourced, especially for microscopy, molecular biology and conservation. The senior technician is an expert in electron microscopy and the department acts as a regional hub for the Hitachi Hi-Tech Science Outreach Program, hosting a Hitachi TM4000+ SEM. The school has extensive grounds, including diverse habitats such as historic orchards, areas of woodland, wetland, streams and ponds.

All students study Pearson Edexcel IGCSE 9-1 in Years 9&10, with approximately 10% electing to switch to Double Award in Year 11. In the 6th Form, students study Cambridge International A level Biology (9700), delivered in linear format with terminal assessment in Year 13. Results are outstanding and numbers for A level are strong and increasing. More than half of A level Biology students read Biology related degrees, with record offers for Oxbridge and Medicine in the 2024 application cycle. The successful candidate will contribute to the diverse and vibrant super-curricular programme that underpins this success. There are, currently, societies for Medicine, Natural History and Nutrition, a Biochemistry extension group, Conservation group, outreach to local Primary Schools and ad hoc independent projects. Every year boys enjoy success in national competitions, including the Biology Challenge and Olympiads, and internal competitions such as our Hamilton Prize for independent study in evolutionary ecology. The department recently enjoyed 'Dinovember', a boy-led palaeontology festival with dinosaur-themed displays, speakers and competitions. Recent overseas trips have included wildlife conservation in South Africa (2023) and coral reef ecology in Egypt (2024, to be repeated in 2026). In addition, the Science faculty hosts an annual International Student Science Conference and an annual Technician's Convention, to which many of the faculty contribute.

Teachers at Tonbridge take advantage of professional development opportunities to expand their knowledge and skill set. They embrace developments and innovations in teaching, work transparently, and are open to feedback and co-operation. They demonstrate ICT competence and willingness to use new technologies. In dealing with colleagues and students, teachers enjoy warm relationships and display a positive attitude and a good sense of humour.

Please contact the Head of Biology, Bill Burnett at: william.burnett@tonbridge-school.org for more information or an informal conversation about the role.



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Head of Biology
Primary Line of Report	Head of Science
Secondary Line of Report	Deputy Head Academic and ultimately the Headmaster
Main Purpose	Heads of Department are responsible, through the Deputy Head Academic, to the Headmaster for the efficient running and management of the Department.

They should attend all meetings of the Head of Department cluster meetings and liaise with the Deputy Head Academic concerning policymaking, general academic issues, staffing problems and requirements, classroom needs and the development of resources, etc. They should also liaise with the Director of Learning and Academic Enrichment regarding teaching and learning issues and the Second Master regarding professional development of staff in their department.

Within this wide brief there are several major areas of responsibility including Health and Safety, and many specific tasks. Appropriate delegation of some of these functions to experienced departmental colleagues is permissible and to be encouraged, but the Head of Department has ultimate responsibility for them. They include the following:

Management of Pupils: Heads of Department should:

- Ensure that organisational information is communicated clearly and effectively to pupils (e.g. information about examination courses, coursework requirements and deadlines, examination dates).
- Monitor the progress and performance of pupils in their department (e.g. through discussions with Housemasters and colleagues, internal reporting system, internal examinations, block tests, etc).
- Ensure that departmental policy on behaviour and discipline is consistent with, and upholds, school practice.
- Produce set lists when appropriate and monitor setting arrangements over the year.
- Ensure that preps within the department are set and marked regularly, and in accordance with school and departmental policy.
- Explain and monitor as necessary departmental use of all school systems of encouragement and sanction, e.g. Commendations, Distinctions, subject prizes, departmental and school detentions.
- Collect information on university courses in their subject areas and offer advice and guidance to pupils applying for appropriate university courses.
- In consultation with the Deputy Head Academic, Director of Learning and Academic Enrichment and those members of CR in charge of Oxbridge oversee Oxbridge applications from the department and the provision of Oxbridge teaching.
- Ensure that pupils and staff in their department are aware of the School's policies and practices that specifically mention Heads of Department such as fire drill, complaints procedure, cheating at coursework, etc.

Management of Staff: Heads of Department should:

- Hold regular departmental meetings. These meetings should be used to update staff on curriculum and administrative details including changes of School policy and decisions taken at the Academic Group meetings, to exchange ideas and develop departmental policy, and to discuss and develop teaching practices and methods. Minutes of meetings should be taken and uploaded to Sharepoint as soon as possible after the meeting. These minutes are thus circulated to the Headmaster's PA, Deputy Head Academic, Director of Learning and Academic Enrichment, Second Master and members of the department.
- Help in the development of staff in their department. This would include the induction and monitoring of any new members of the department; appraisal of staff within the department; encouraging staff to attend external CPD training courses as necessary and appropriate; organising lesson observation of, and by, colleagues, both within the department and occasionally in other departments; encouraging continued training of all members of the department in the use of ICT in teaching. The Director of Learning & Academic Enrichment and/or the Second Master are available for advice in these matters.

- Organise the departmental timetable ensuring a fair, balanced and appropriate allocation of teaching sets within the department.
- Ensure that they have fully familiarised themselves with the School's Health & Safety policy with regard to their department. They are required to take responsibility for implementing all Health & Safety requirements in their department as set out in that policy, particularly with regard to the identification of Health & Safety hazards, fire procedures and risk assessments'.
- Ensure that they have familiarised themselves with School's Staff Wellbeing policy.
- Maintain the School's expectations around staff attendance and availability at all times.

Curriculum issues: Heads of Department should:

- Establish and monitor programmes of study, producing schemes of work appropriate to each year group. Cross-curricular issues, including ICT, PHSEE and Study Skills, should be clearly indicated within the schemes of work.
- Establish appropriate examination specifications.
- Keep abreast of, and disseminate, national developments in the evolution of specifications, the curriculum and pedagogy.
- Maintain and promote an interest in their subject, for example by membership of subject associations.
- Ensure that departmental curricular aims are in line with whole School curricular aims.

Administration issues: Heads of Department should:

- Ensure the efficient administration of all paperwork and correspondence connected with their subject, including the documentation required for inspection, and develop and maintain a working knowledge of the School's IT&D Administration system.
- Produce and update a departmental handbook annually, together with any other curriculum documentation requested by the Deputy Head Academic.
- Write an annual report early in the academic year on the results of external examinations for the Headmaster and Deputy Head Academic.
- Carry out any necessary health and safety risk assessments.
- Organise the setting and marking of all internal examinations in their subject as appropriate, including Common Entrance, Tonbridge Scholarship at 13+ and L6th entry tests.
- In liaison with the Examinations Officers and Deputy Head Academic deal with the paperwork connected with external examinations (entries, predictions, coursework, results and remarks).

Co-curricular Activities (including Games)

- All members of teaching staff contribute to the co-curricular life of the School. Your co-curricular involvement will be agreed with the Deputy Head Co-Curricular with a huge range of sporting and cultural activities taking place throughout the week across Tonbridge's many fantastic facilities. No specified commitment is required other than an expectation of involvement at an appropriate level. Training is often available.

Pastoral (Tutoring)

- Teachers can expect to be a Tutor to a year group within a House. Tutors are allocated to Houses by the Second Master in consultation with the Deputy Head Pastoral. Details of what is involved are given in the Pastoral and Tutor handbook.

Other Duties

- "Duty teams": being a member on a rotating basis of a team of five staff who carry out various supervisory duties as specified by the Second Master; including, for example, supervising the road crossing outside the Avenue Entrance at 8.25am, or supervising the Orchard Centre Café during morning break, etc.
- Participating in the Novi Visit just after the end of the Lent Term, unless engaged in other School activities at this time.
- Other duties that the Headmaster or senior colleagues might reasonably request.

Confidentiality

The successful candidate must maintain the confidentiality of information regarding the School, its staff and its business. Information must not be communicated to other persons in or outside the School except in the recognised course of their duties.

Child Protection

The post-holder's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young persons for whom he or she is responsible, or with whom he or she comes into contact will be to adhere to and always ensure compliance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. If in the course of carrying out the duties of the post the post-holder becomes aware of any actual or potential risks to the safety or welfare of children in the School he or she must report their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or to the Headmaster.

Remuneration and Benefits

- The Tonbridge Salary scale is highly competitive (approximately £38k-£75.5k) with new members starting at the point on the salary scale which is appropriate to their experience.
- Accommodation may be available if eligible, with properties allocated according to need. Relocation support may also be available. Successful candidates who are required to relocate to the area and purchase their own property may be eligible for a Living Out Allowance (LOA).
- The School strongly encourages staff to attend CPD and provides a large budget to facilitate this.
- Pension Scheme: currently TPS for teaching staff. An alternative Defined Contribution Scheme is also available.
- Private medical insurance for the postholder
- Subsidised Sports Centre membership (staff rates) including use of gym, squash and tennis courts, and a swimming pool.
- Cycle to Work scheme.
- Subsidised EM Forster Theatre tickets (selected performances).
- School lunch and refreshments are provided during term-time where this would form part of your working day.
- Staff fee remission.
- Membership of the School Library.
- Confidential counselling service.
- Staff car parking.

Tonbridge has an outstanding record of developing staff and promoting good practice. If you are excited about teaching, you should consider this opportunity. Professional development is regular, supported and actively encouraged. Outside the classroom you will support one of the seven boarding or five day Houses, working with the boys in a different environment.

Opportunities will also be available to engage with the School's extensive trips programme during the holidays, both in the UK, Europe and further afield.

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Tonbridge School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to any post, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

APPLICATION PROCESS

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Full details and an application pack may be found at

<https://www.tonbridge-school.co.uk/jobs>

Applications forms should be accompanied by a short letter of application, a current curriculum vitae, and the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of three referees.

Apply via our online application form or, send your completed application form and accompanying documents to:

hrdept@tonbridge-school.org

01732 365555

Closing Date: Monday 19 January at 12 noon

Interviews: From Tuesday 20 January

We reserve the right to interview and appoint prior to the closing date for applications, so early applications are encouraged.

A willingness to take part in the wider life of a boarding school is expected and candidates are asked to give an indication of their interests in their letter of application.

The selection process will typically involve

- Teaching a lesson.
- A tour of the School.
- Lunch in a boarding or day house.
- Interviews with the Headmaster, the Second Master, and the Deputy Head Academic and Head of Science.

If circumstances dictate, these interviews may be conducted virtually.

For information about the Senior Team, please visit:

<https://www.tonbridge-school.co.uk/about/senior-team>



