



CANFORD

Appointment of Director of Digital

Reference: TANFC | September 2026

ABOUT CANFORD

Founded in 1923 Canford School is set in 250 acres of inspirational parkland on the outskirts of Wimborne in Dorset. The school, which has some 660 boys and girls aged 13-18, is amongst the country's top co-educational boarding schools. Canford has established a commanding reputation built on its excellent academic achievement, breadth of education and a fresh lively approach. The School offers a superb sports and co-curricular programme for pupils, which is seen as amongst the best offering by schools in the private sector and one which parents hugely value.

The Canford school's digital journey has been founded on a Microsoft ecosystem but has evolved in a fragmented way, resulting in a complex and partially disjointed digital infrastructure. This fragmentation presents risks to resilience, security and sustainability, while also placing unnecessary strain on educational and operational capacity.

Our school now stands at a critical inflection point in digital and governance development. There is a clear need for unifying leadership to integrate systems, standardise devices, strengthen digital literacy and establish a coherent, future facing digital vision that serves Canford educational ethos.

This is a newly created role, shaped to reflect both current priorities and the Group's long-term ambition. The Director of Digital will play a central role in guiding how digital strategy is embedded within Canford School and scales thoughtfully across a growing Group of schools.



VISION AND VALUES

When the Reverend Percy Warrington founded Canford in 1923, his aim was to prepare pupils 'to take their place in the battle of life and develop their character in every way.' The Foundation was based on Christian values focused on building a tolerant, caring and compassionate society for all. A century later, those values endure. At Canford we are acutely aware of the need to ensure that, whatever pressures may exist or emerge, our educational offering is dynamic and relevant so Canfordians can survive and thrive in the 21st century.

Canfordians are often commented on as being rounded, grounded individuals, confident without being arrogant, with a real sense of purpose and holding true to the values below when they leave us ready to make their mark on the world.





Canford Vision

“A school community where all are inspired to explore, empowered to express and challenged to excel.”

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

We define excellence as taking many forms and want to inspire our pupils to excel to the very best of their own abilities. Our Mission is to build a community of open-minded people who are motivated to embrace learning in all its forms. Canford is proud of its high-quality teachers who are specialists in their field with a genuine love and enthusiasm for their subject.

We offer A Levels and GCSEs plus the opportunity to take an Extended Project Qualification, worth half an A Level. Exam results are important, and we set the academic bar unashamedly high, with tailored support for every individual pupil.

We go way beyond the confines of the exam curricula as we look to develop enquiring minds through our intellectual enrichment programmes. Academic life is complemented by our vast range of co-curricular options offering pupils opportunities to explore new experiences, develop leadership skills and prepare for life beyond Canford.

On average in the past five years, over 30% of all A Level grades have been at A* and over 65% at A*/A, while at GCSE 78% of all examinations have been graded 9/7 (A*/B).

44

OXBRIDGE OFFERS IN
THE PAST 5 YEARS

80%+

OFFERS EACH YEAR
TO RUSSELL
GROUP/SUNDAY
TIMES TOP 12
UNIVERSITIES

66%

A LEVEL A*/A GRADE
IN 2023

10

PUPILS TO US
UNIVERSITIES IN
PAST 2 YEARS

‘Best co-educational independent school in the South West for 2023 A Level performance.

SUNDAY TIMES PARENT POWER 2024



PASTORAL CARE

Our aim is one of joined up education, where supporting the wellbeing of all pupils goes hand in hand with formal academic and broader education which prepares them for life beyond Canford. Developing the individual within a warm, supportive school community is central to our core values. Fostering the capacity to cope with the demands of 21st century living, while encouraging pupils to understand themselves and develop emotional resilience is what we aim for through our extensive, multi-layered pastoral programme.

All pupils, whether boarding or day, belong to one of ten houses which are the bedrock of their pastoral care. Each house buzzes with a life of its own, but all are very much part of our one school, ten houses ethos. Canford is one of the few remaining UK full boarding schools – there is no weekly or flexi boarding - with day pupils able to take full advantage of all the opportunities afforded by 24/7 boarding school life. We believe this is why Canford is such a strong and supportive community.

The tutor system is a fundamental part of our pastoral care and is based around time dedicated for listening, monitoring, supporting and guiding. Pupils meet tutors regularly and the personal tutor becomes a mentor whose insight and constructive advice are vital so that pupils can make the best use of all their opportunities.

We recognise that often young people prefer to talk to someone their own age about their concerns and our mentoring programme offers mutual support and encouragement on a peer-to-peer basis. Canford welcomes those from a variety of faith backgrounds or none. The spiritual aim of the school is to nurture faith where it exists while arousing curiosity in all pupils towards their spiritual dimension. In addition to both formal and informal chapel services, societies and events, the work of the chaplaincy in our pastoral care is wide ranging.



“The wellbeing of our pupils is at the heart of all we do at Canford. We pride ourselves upon our warm, supportive and inclusive community, large enough to offer a wealth of opportunity to small enough for everyone to be known and valued.”

CO-CURRICULAR

Canford is a school of opportunities. We want pupils to be excited about learning, both through academic challenge and a rich and extensive co-curricular programme which offers a very wide range of options for creativity and self-discovery.

Creativity, problem-solving and critical thinking are essential skills in today's workplace and all the signs are they will be central to the workplace of tomorrow. One of the reasons why Canford is so successful is that we devote significant resources to the development of the whole child as we seek to unlock and build up intellectual, physical, creative and emotional skills and awareness.

We want our pupils to discuss and communicate in fresh, exciting ways. We work continually to weave in opportunities within the demands of the exam-based curriculum, but also through provision of broader opportunities and challenges. Our aim is to produce the very best outcomes for all our pupils not just in term of academic and other achievements but through outstanding personal development opportunities and experiences for each and every Canfordian.

There are over 50 activities students have access to including archery, badminton, beekeeping, CCF, climbing, debating, engineering, kayaking, Ten Tors and volleyball.

20
MUSIC GROUPS AND
ENSEMBLES

40
PUPIL LEADER
ROLES EACH YEAR

1,000+
SPORTS MATCHES
EACH YEAR

50+
CO-CURRICULAR
ACTIVITIES, GROUPS
AND SOCIETIES

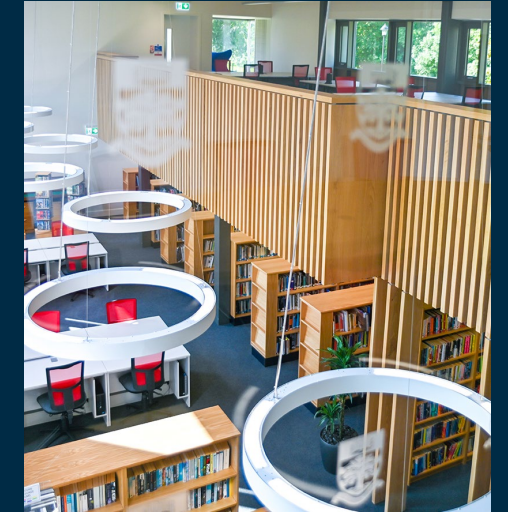


FACILITIES

Canford is located in Dorset, South West England. The campus sits alongside the beautiful River Stour, with easy access to footpaths to neighbouring town, Wimborne, and trailways providing off-road routes to parks and beaches. The schools boasts easy access to the Jurassic Coast, with its miles of coastline and second largest natural harbour in the world, along with stunning countryside and New Forest National Park.

Over the last 5 years, the School has invested almost £20M in new infrastructure, including a new Library and 2 boarding houses. A new 6th Form College will also come online in September 2026 providing a better transition to life beyond the gates and allow the School roll to increase slightly. You can read more about our plans [here](#).

Within the grounds are a boathouse, sports centre, including a 25 metre pool and modern gym facilities, outdoor education centre, climbing wall, 12 grass sports pitches, 2 full sized all weather pitches, 30 tennis courts, a 9 hole golf course and one of the few original Real Tennis courts in the country. The arts benefit from The Layard Theatre, seating nearly 300, the Music School, seating nearly 200, and there is a dedicated Coldstream Gallery space regularly exhibiting the latest pupil and staff art.





High

Expectations

— PROMOTE —

A Commitment
To Excellence

Canfordians are young men and women with extraordinary opportunities. Our hopes and expectations for them are great and we encourage every pupil to strive for excellence in all that they do, both as individuals and in a collective sense. Passing through the school unnoticed is not an option. Our pupils are taught to find their talents and confront their weaknesses.

OUR COMMUNITY

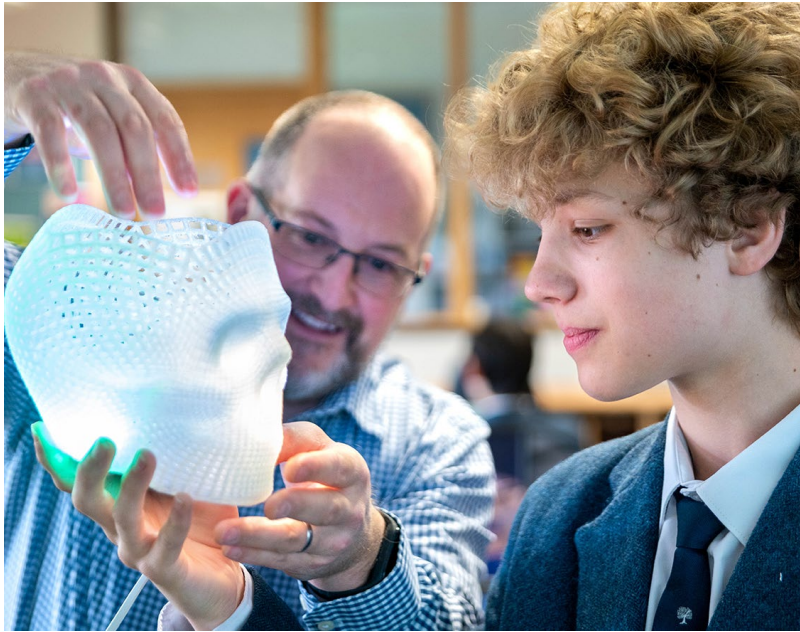
We are proud of our extensive Community Action work, which has been recognised nationally for both its extent and its high-quality outcomes. Partnerships with individuals and groups beyond the school help define Canford's role in the wider world and instil in our pupils a more accurate understanding of wider society, highlighting their social awareness and fostering social responsibility.

Senior pupils work in primary schools and with disabled and disadvantaged groups, liaising with many local institutions. These weekly commitments can be challenging but are very worthwhile.

More ambitious programmes include a link with an inner-city youth project in Southampton and the SHINE national gifted and talented initiative. There are also links with communities in India, Cambodia and Ghana. Taking part in a visit to one of these orphanages or schools can be life changing.

Canford is one of the few independent schools in the country lead sponsoring an Academy school. Involvement with The Bourne Academy in Bournemouth is demonstrative of our commitment to community partnerships.





“

The enthusiasm and attention to detail from the staff have nurtured what started as curiosity for the subject into a real passion

”

“

I can't fault my Canford experience. It has been the best place to help me grow and develop.

”

PURPOSE OF THE ROLE

The Director of Digital will provide strategic vision and operational leadership for digital technology across Canford School and the Group.

This is a senior, high impact role that bridges educational practice, digital innovation and technical infrastructure.

The postholder will lead the development of a coherent, secure and integrated digital ecosystem that supports teaching, learning, pastoral care, safeguarding and operational efficiency.

Technology will be positioned as an enabler of educational excellence, underpinned by robust governance, clarity of purpose and staff confidence. The emphasis of the role is on strategy, leadership and influence, rather than hands on technical delivery.

The Director of Digital is expected to be fully involved in the school and take on a small teaching commitment (no more than 10% of a normal timetable) in order to maintain academic credibility and close engagement with classroom practice.



KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic Leadership and Vision

- Develop, articulate and deliver a coherent digital strategy aligned with Canford's educational vision, values and long-term strategic priorities.
- Lead a proactive, whole-school approach to digital fluency, moving from fragmented tools and practices towards a unified, sustainable and scalable digital environment.
- Establish and chair appropriate Digital Strategy Steering structures, ensuring clear governance, accountability and decision making.
- Define and enforce frameworks for digital governance, including software procurement, data usage and architecture, digital safety and safeguarding, lifecycle planning and value-for-money.
- Lead cultural change across the school, clearly communicating the rationale for digital developments and securing the confidence, engagement and trust of staff, pupils and parents.

Systems Architecture and Integration

- Provide strategic oversight of the school's and group's digital architecture, ensuring effective integration between core systems (including MIS, finance, admissions, learning platforms and communication tools).
- Act as strategic owner of data flow and information architecture, establishing a "single source of truth" and reducing duplication, manual processes and risk.
- Identify, manage and mitigate risks associated with legacy, bespoke systems, prioritising enterprise-grade, well supported solutions over key-person dependencies.
- Work closely with ITC leadership to ensure infrastructure investment, resilience and security align with long-term strategic aims rather than short term fixes.



Teaching, Learning and Innovation

- Champion a skills-first approach to digital learning, overseeing the development and implementation of a cross-curricular digital skills framework.
- Lead the school's strategic approach to Artificial Intelligence, developing clear policies, guidance and staff development that balance innovation with academic integrity and authentic assessment.
- Ensure professional development moves beyond basic training to sustained digital competence and confidence, embedding effective use of core systems into everyday professional practice.
- Promote thoughtful, evidence-informed use of technology that enhances learning, wellbeing and inclusion, rather than distracts from them.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES CONT.

Safeguarding, Compliance and Procurement

- Work closely with pastoral leaders and ICT team to ensure a safe digital environment for pupils, including oversight of Mobile Device Management (MDM), filtering and monitoring systems, safeguarding arrangements across day and boarding contexts.
- Act as the gateway for all digital procurement, ensuring software and platforms meet standards for security, data protection, integration, accessibility and inclusion, safeguarding and long-term sustainability.
- Ensure compliance with relevant data protection, safeguarding and regulatory requirements, maintaining robust audit and assurance processes.

Leadership, line management and governance

- The Director will be a senior leadership role, operating with significant autonomy and influence. Invited to attend SLT or ELT meetings as required.
- The postholder may directly line manage the ICT team, subject to evolving structures, and will provide clear strategic direction for technical delivery.
- The role will have a dotted line relationship with the Senior Deputy Head to manage the working relationship with the Computer Science Department, supporting alignment between curriculum, infrastructure and digital development.
- For Group responsibilities, the Director will be line managed by the CEO.
- For Canford School specific responsibilities, the role will work closely with the Headmaster, with a dotted line to the Senior Deputy for education matters.
- Governance and reporting arrangements will remain deliberately flexible, reflecting the newness of the role and the evolving nature of the group.

No job description can fully cover all aspects of such an appointment and consequently the responsibilities are likely to expand and evolve.





THE PERSON

The successful candidate will be an educational leader with technical fluency. We are looking for someone who understands the classroom environment implicitly but possesses the commercial and technical acumen to manage complex systems and drive organisational change.

It is highly likely that candidates will demonstrate all or most of the following:

Qualifications

- Educated to degree level or equivalent professional experience.
- A further qualification or formal professional development in Leadership, Management, Education or Digital Strategy would be advantageous, but not essential.

Experience and knowledge

- Experience operating at senior leadership level, influencing decision-making and shaping organisational direction.
- Proven leadership of digital strategy and change in a complex, values-led organisation, ideally within education or a similarly mission-driven environment.
- Strategic oversight of enterprise digital ecosystems, including systems integration, data flows and information architecture, with a focus on coherence, sustainability and user experience.
- Demonstrated ability to lead people through change, securing engagement and buy-in across diverse professional groups, including educators, pastoral staff and technical teams.
- Sound understanding of digital education and emerging issues, including AI, digital literacy, assessment integrity and online safety, and their implications for teaching, learning and pupil wellbeing.

Key Skills

- Strategic command of enterprise digital environments (e.g. Microsoft 365, cloud platforms, school MIS), with the ability to operate at architectural and policy level rather than as a technical specialist.
- Ability to translate complex technology into clear, educationally meaningful guidance, enabling confident adoption by non-technical colleagues.
- Strong educational judgement, with a deep understanding of how technology supports teaching, learning and pastoral care, grounded in credible school-based experience.
- Effective prioritisation and resource management, including budgets and suppliers, with a disciplined focus on long-term value and resilience.
- Highly developed influencing and relationship-building skills, able to work credibly across academic, pastoral and operational communities.

Personal Qualities

- Strategic and systems-oriented thinker, able to align digital decisions with educational purpose and long-term institutional goals.
- Calm, credible and collaborative, building trust and confidence across the whole school community.
- Confident and principled decision-maker, willing to enforce governance, standardisation and best practice where required.
- Pragmatic and solutions-focused, favouring simplicity, reliability and sustainability over unnecessary complexity.
- Strong alignment with Canford's ethos and values, with a clear focus on pupil wellbeing and educational excellence.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

Start date: September 2026

A highly attractive remuneration package is offered. The salary offered will depend on skills and experience. We offer a highly competitive DC pension Scheme.

Address: Canford Magna, Wimborne BH21 3AD

Process:

- Longlisted candidates will be notified and will have a virtual interview with Saxton Bampfylde in w/c 23 February
- Round one interviews will take place in w/c 2 March
- Round two interviews will take place in w/c 9 March

Safeguarding:

Canford School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

All successful job applicants will be required to undergo child protection screening.



HOW TO APPLY

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Canford School on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role via www.saxbam.com/appointments using code TANFC. Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form. The cover letter should be no more than two pages and addressed to the Headmaster. You will be required to fill out an application form ahead of your interviews with Canford.

* The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application.

The closing date for applications is noon on Wednesday 18 February.

GDPR personal data notice:

According to GDPR guidelines, Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

KCSIE online checks:

In line with the latest KCSIE guidance, we will conduct a search of online records that are publicly available on shortlisted candidates. These checks are used only to meet the intended purpose of the KCSIE's recommendation in relation to whether an applicant is suitable to work with children and young people. All data will be held in line with data protection regulations.

Diversity and equality:

Canford School is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in all areas of our Community and encourages applications from all suitably qualified candidates.



Saxton Bampfylde

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