



PEMBROKE
HOUSE

Brief for the appointment of
HEAD

Prepositions
PREP SCHOOL RECRUITMENT

Every child matters, every moment counts.



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Welcome, from the Chair of Council

Founded in 1927, Pembroke House is one of the leading independent boarding Prep Schools on the African Continent.

As Chair of Council at Pembroke House, it is my great privilege to introduce a preparatory school unlike any other. For almost a century, Pembroke has stood as a distinctive British-curriculum boarding school in the heart of Kenya - an environment where childhood is protected, curiosity is encouraged, and character is shaped.

We are now seeking an exceptional Head to guide our community into its next chapter.

This is a role for a leader who recognises the profound importance of childhood, who values character as deeply as academic achievement, and who understands the transformative power of a truly all-round education.

Our next Head will join a school with strong foundations: a well-earned reputation, a deeply relational culture, and a clear, confident sense of identity. Pembroke is a place where learning is dynamic, where children are allowed to be children, and where the development of character and values guides all that we do.

With the support of an outstanding staff body and a committed Council, the new Head will have the opportunity to build on these strengths - honouring the school's unique ethos while shaping a forward-looking strategy for the years ahead.

Thank you for considering this opportunity. I trust the following brief conveys the character of our school and the aspirations we hold for its future.

Thomas Wright



The School

Pembroke House is one of Kenya's most established preparatory schools, founded in 1927 and now approaching its centenary.

The school occupies a 140-acre campus in Gilgil at 2,000 metres above sea level, providing a temperate climate and an environment well suited to academic study, sport, and outdoor learning.

It offers a British preparatory education to a diverse and international community, preparing pupils for senior schools in Kenya, the UK, South Africa, and beyond. The school's ethos emphasises independence, decision-making and personal responsibility.

Pupils are encouraged to develop confidence through structured challenge, guided risk-taking, and meaningful leadership opportunities.

The school's values - compassion, courage, curiosity, integrity, resilience, and a spirit of adventure - are embedded in daily practice and reflected in the strong relational culture that characterises the community.

Staff know pupils well, communication with families is clear and consistent, and pastoral and academic systems ensure that each child receives individual attention.

Pembroke's long history, stable governance and clear identity provide a strong foundation for future development, supported by a committed parent body and a governing Council with deep local engagement.



The Facilities

The school benefits from a substantial and well-maintained site. Its 140-acre campus includes academic buildings, specialist teaching spaces, extensive sports facilities, boarding houses and dedicated areas for early childhood education. The scale of the site allows for a breadth of provision that is unusual for a preparatory school.

Academic facilities include specialist rooms for Science, Art, Music, Drama, STEAM, Digital Learning and Languages, as well as the Coach House - the school's Learning Support department. The Pre-Prep occupies its own purpose-designed area, with classrooms, gardens and outdoor learning spaces tailored to early childhood development. The Forest School area is a significant asset, enabling structured outdoor learning throughout the year.

A major development currently underway is the construction of a new Pre-Prep building, which will significantly enhance provision for younger pupils and form part of a wider campus development strategy. Further building projects are planned as part of the school's centenary vision, supported by the Pembroke House Foundation.





Map of PEMBROKE HOUSE

1. HM Office
2. Library
3. The Chapel
4. Staff Room
5. Pre-Prep
6. Coach House
7. Mackie House
8. Scholer House
9. Junior Block
10. Dining Room
11. Theatre
12. STEAM Centre
13. Art Room
14. Music School
15. Martlet Café
16. Sports Hall / Squash Courts
17. Swimming Pool
18. Railway Bridge
19. Opies Pavilion (Simon's Shed)
20. The Old Pavilion
21. Stables
22. Adventure Learning
23. Shackland
24. Pre-Prep Shackland
25. Staff Shack
26. Housing
27. Foundation Flats
28. Gap Flats
29. Head's Hub / Uniform Shop



Academics

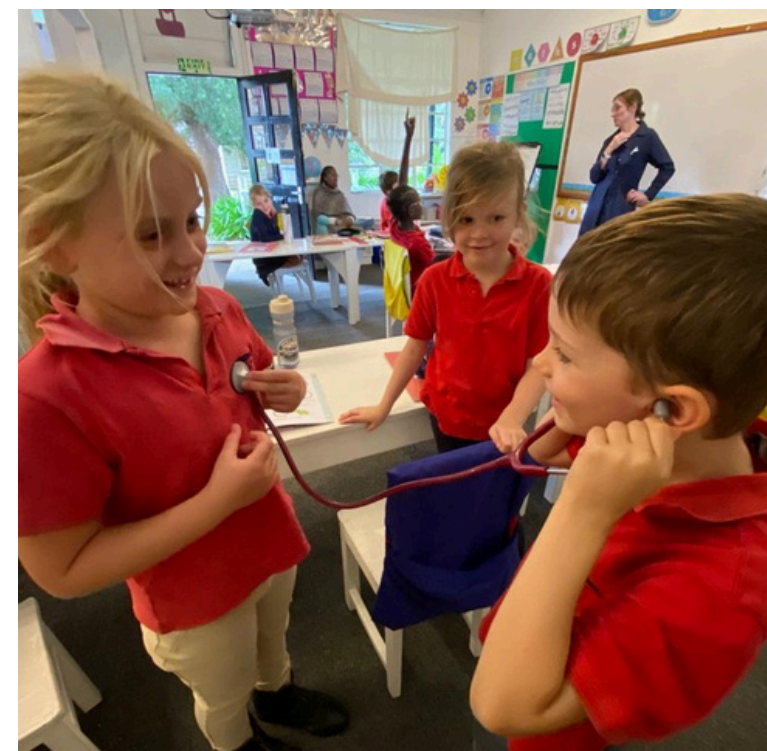
Pembroke House delivers a broad and ambitious academic programme based on the British National Curriculum. The school aims to develop strong foundations in literacy, numeracy and critical thinking, supported by specialist teaching and small class sizes.

Pre-Prep

The Pre-Prep comprises Mini-Martlets (6 months – 2 years), Pre-Nursery, Nursery and Reception. The curriculum follows the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework, with a focus on communication, language, early literacy and numeracy. Learning is play-based and exploratory. The Forest School programme is a distinctive feature, enabling children to develop problem-solving, collaboration and resilience through structured outdoor learning.

Prep

The Prep School offers a rigorous and well-structured academic programme. From Year 3 onwards, pupils are taught by subject specialists across a broad curriculum that includes English, Mathematics, Science, Geography, History, Kenyan History, French, Kiswahili, Latin, TPR, PSHE, STEAM and Digital Learning. The curriculum is designed to develop intellectual curiosity, analytical thinking and strong study habits. Setting in core subjects allows teaching to be tailored to individual needs. Teaching Assistants support learning in key areas, enabling targeted intervention, reinforcement and extension within the classroom. Academic routines are well-established: prep is completed before supper Monday to Thursday, ensuring that academic expectations are balanced with extra-curricular opportunities.





Academic outcomes are consistently strong. In 2024, pupils achieved 141 A*/A grades at CE and 12 scholarships were won. The school has a strong track record of preparing pupils for leading senior schools in Kenya and internationally.

Learning Support

The Coach House provides a dedicated space for learning support, staffed by specialist teachers and supported by TAs who work within classrooms to reinforce learning. The school supports a wide range of learning needs and works closely with external professionals, including educational psychologists and therapists. Provision is proactive, well-resourced and integrated into the wider academic structure.



Boarding and Pastoral Care

Boarding is central to the Pembroke experience and a major strength of the school. The school currently offers full, weekly and flexi-boarding, providing families with a range of options to suit their needs. Boarding is structured, well-supervised and designed to promote independence, organisation and social development.

Scholes House and Mackie House provide a stable and supportive environment. Houseparents and tutors know the children well, and routines are clear and consistent.

Evenings include supervised prep, shared meals, activities and time outdoors. Weekends offer a varied programme, including camping, hiking, creative projects and use of the school's extensive grounds.

Pastoral care is robust and well-organised. The pastoral structure includes form tutors, houseparents, the Head of Pastoral and Safeguarding (DSL), the safeguarding team, the school nurses and a counsellor. The school places strong emphasis on communication, proactive support and the development of positive relationships.

Safeguarding procedures are clear, well-embedded and regularly reviewed.





Co-Curricular Provision

Pembroke offers a wide and well-established co-curricular programme that supports the development of character and confidence. Sport is a major strength of the school and a defining feature of its identity. Pupils participate in rugby, hockey, netball, cricket, football, swimming, athletics, tennis, squash, golf, horse riding and cross-country. The school competes regularly in inter-school fixtures and maintains high coaching standards.

The scope of the sports facilities allows for a high level of participation and performance across all age groups. The creative arts are equally strong. Music is well-resourced, with choirs, ensembles and instrumental tuition forming part of the school's provision. Drama is embedded in the curriculum and co-curricular life, with regular productions and a strong LAMDA programme that maintains a 100% pass rate. Art is taught in specialist studios, enabling pupils to work across a

range of media. Trips and expeditions are a significant part of the school's educational offering. Pupils take part in a wide range of educational visits, including conservation projects, historical sites and outdoor adventure centres. The Year 8 expedition to Mount Kenya is a notable highlight: pupils climb to Point Lenana in their penultimate term, marking a significant personal and collective achievement. Other trips include the Year 7 visit to the Maasai Mara, the Year 6 trip to Kisumu, and excursions to wildlife conservancies and Karebe Gold Mine.



Governance and Leadership

Pembroke House is governed by a Council responsible for strategic oversight, financial sustainability, safeguarding and the preservation of the school's ethos. Several members of Council live near the school, enabling regular engagement with school life and close support for the leadership team. The Council comprises individuals with expertise in education, finance, law, marketing, business and community leadership. It works closely with the Head to set strategic priorities and ensure high standards across all areas of school life. The Senior Leadership Team consists of the Head, Deputy Head Operations, Deputy Head Academic, Head of Pastoral and Safeguarding (DSL) and the Bursar. The team provides clear operational leadership and is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school, the quality of teaching and learning, and the wellbeing of pupils and staff.



The Foundation

The Pembroke House Foundation plays a central role in supporting the school's long-term development and financial sustainability. Its remit includes funding major infrastructure projects, supporting bursaries and scholarships, and leading sustainability initiatives that protect the school's extensive natural environment.

As the school approaches its centenary, the Foundation has launched a significant fundraising effort to secure the next phase of Pembroke's development. The centenary campaign is raising KSh 100 million, with funds directed towards a series of strategic capital projects. These include the construction of the new Pre-Prep building and further planned developments that will strengthen the school's facilities across academics, sport, boarding and the arts.

The Foundation's work reflects the school's commitment to stewardship, widening access and ensuring that Pembroke remains one of the leading preparatory schools in East Africa for the next hundred years.





WHAT PARENTS SAY:

“The main reason I went with Pembroke... is its promise to give my children the space to be children - a school that is formal, yes, but where being a child comes before the rehearsed, institutionalised forms that schools have become.”

WHAT INSPECTORS SAY:

“Pupils collaborate naturally and effectively. They enjoy solving problems and working towards shared goals. They are excellent decision-makers, supported by an environment that encourages independence and reflection.”
(ISI, 2023)



The Role

Pembroke House is at an important moment in its development, and the next Head will play a central role in guiding how the school grows while staying true to its character. A key part of the role is to continue shaping the school's culture so that its values are evident in daily life and in the way the community learns and works together.

Alongside this, the Head will work closely with the Council to set a clear strategic direction for the years ahead, ensuring that plans are well-considered, communicated with confidence and understood across the school.

The Head will also be responsible for keeping the ethos and values of Pembroke at the heart of decision-making, helping staff, families and the wider community feel connected to the school's purpose and ambitions. This requires a thoughtful reading of the wider educational, political and market landscape, and an ability to adjust priorities so that the school remains resilient, responsive and well-positioned.

The role calls for a steady commitment to further improvement. The Head will be expected to identify opportunities for the school to evolve - always with respect for its traditions - and to bring forward recommendations that strengthen its quality and long-term sustainability.



Leadership & Management

Pembroke's next Head will be expected to lead with clarity and steadiness, guiding a strong Senior Leadership Team and setting a tone of ambition and professionalism across the school. They will play a central role in bringing talented colleagues into the community and ensuring that staff feel supported, motivated and able to do their best work.

They will foster a collaborative and trusting culture, encouraging senior colleagues to lead confidently across academic, pastoral and co-curricular areas. Supporting staff development will be a consistent priority, with the Head ensuring that colleagues have the guidance and opportunities they need to grow.

The role also requires close attention to the school's pastoral landscape and an informed understanding of developments in education and the expectations of senior schools in Kenya, the UK, South Africa and elsewhere. This awareness will help shape decisions about curriculum and policy.

Alongside this, the Head will oversee a fair and purposeful performance culture that helps colleagues progress and ensures the school continues to operate with the utmost professionalism.





Educational Leadership

Pembroke House expects its next Head to uphold a culture where the welfare of pupils and staff is the foundation of every decision. They will ensure that the school remains a place where teaching is of the highest quality and where learning feels purposeful, engaging and well supported.

Alongside this, the Head will encourage an environment that is open to new ideas and confident in taking well-judged decisions, helping the school to remain fresh, relevant and forward-looking.

Pastoral care will sit at the heart of the role. The Head will guide clear, thoughtful policies that promote wellbeing and help pupils grow in confidence, judgement and character. They will also oversee a rich co-curricular programme that broadens experience and offers meaningful opportunities across sport, the arts and outdoor learning.

The Head will keep a close eye on developments in technology and AI, exploring their potential to enhance teaching and learning in ways that align with the school's values. They will also ensure that Pembroke remains well-prepared for inspection, maintaining the exceptional standards for which the school is known.



Financial Management

The Head will take a central role in ensuring that the school's resources are aligned with its ambitions. Working closely with the Bursar, Finance Committee and the wider Council, they will shape budgets that reflect current and projected pupil numbers and the educational priorities of the school, giving Council clear insight into future needs and opportunities. They will contribute to strategic financial planning that keeps the school on a secure footing and supports thoughtful, long-term development.

Capital planning will form an important part of the role. The Head will help determine how major investments are prioritised so that they advance the school's wider vision.

Alongside this, they will ensure that financial resources are deployed wisely across the school, enabling the highest quality teaching and learning.

A well-run school depends on strong operational systems, and the Head will oversee an administrative and support structure that is efficient, responsive and focused on improving the experience of pupils and staff. This includes ensuring that the school continues to meet all regulatory requirements.



Community

The Head will play a key role in strengthening the school's outward-facing relationships, protecting and maintaining its exceptional reputation at all times. They will oversee clear, effective marketing and admissions strategies, working closely with colleagues to ensure that families experience a warm and responsive journey into the school.

Visible leadership will matter: the Head will be present at all school events, engaging with parents, and be known across the community as someone who understands the school and represents it with confidence.

A strong understanding of senior-school pathways will be essential. The Head will maintain close relationships with senior schools nationally and internationally, ensuring that families receive informed, thoughtful guidance as they navigate the transition. This includes keeping abreast of admissions processes, scholarship and bursary applications and parental expectations so that all are well-prepared and well-supported.

The role also involves nurturing Pembroke's wider relationships. The Head will engage with local organisations, ensuring that the school contributes meaningfully to the life of the community and that pupils benefit from those connections. Alongside this, they will help strengthen the school's profile and identity, ensuring that Pembroke continues to be recognised for its outstanding character, quality and values.

A final strand of the role is to support the development of a coherent approach to fundraising and external engagement, building relationships with those who wish to invest in the school's future and ensuring that conversations with donors feel authentic, purposeful and aligned with the school's long-term aims.





Governance

Pembroke House expects its next Head to uphold the highest standards of governance and to ensure that the school operates safely, responsibly and in full compliance with all regulatory requirements. The Head will work within the established governance structure to make sure that safeguarding, health and safety and safe recruitment are consistently prioritised and embedded in daily practice.

A strong, open relationship with Council will be essential. The Head will keep Council well informed, reporting regularly on progress against strategic priorities and ensuring that they have the clarity and context needed to make sound decisions. This includes working closely with the Chair to provide timely, accurate information and thoughtful professional advice.

The role also requires a sensitive approach to change. The Head will introduce any developments with care, recognising the interdependence of the people, systems and culture at Pembroke, ensuring that decisions strengthen rather than unsettle the school's community and ethos.



The Person

Pembroke House is looking for a Head who can lead the school into its next chapter with clarity, warmth, and purpose. The community is united in its desire for a leader who can bring strategic coherence - someone able to articulate a clear, ambitious plan for the future and guide the school through confident, proactive development. This requires a leader who can balance vision with sensitivity, ensuring that progress strengthens the school's distinctive ethos.

At the heart of the role is a deep commitment to children. Pupils hope for a Head who is kind, fair modern, and approachable; parents and staff want someone who places children's lived experience at the centre of every decision. The school seeks a leader who understands and respects the Kenyan context and Pembroke's unique British-Kenyan identity, and who is visible, present, and known to the children in their daily lives.



The Person (continued)

Communication is another defining priority. The next Head must be open, transparent, and relational - someone who explains decisions clearly, invites dialogue, and builds trust through consistency and accessibility. Strengthening internal communication will be essential so that staff feel informed, aligned, and valued, and so that pupils and parents experience the clarity and openness they seek.

Pembroke also needs a Head who can continue to develop and empower its people. The school is looking for a leader who will nurture talent, grow middle leadership, and ensure accountability is fair and consistent, while recognising staff contributions and addressing cultural tensions with sensitivity and respect.

A cohesive and aligned Senior Leadership Team is central to the school's success. The next Head must bring clarity, collaboration, and shared purpose to a hardworking SLT, ensuring consistency in tone, visibility, and communication, and fostering a culture of trust and collective ownership.

Above all, the school seeks a leader of integrity - someone fair, principled, steady, and courageous. Pupils, parents, and staff all emphasise the importance of honesty, moral purpose, and kindness. The next Head must be able to make difficult decisions with clarity and compassion, modelling the respect and humanity that define Pembroke's ethos.



Qualifications & Experience

Pembroke House is looking for a Head with a strong academic foundation and substantial experience in school leadership.

The successful candidate will have:

- A good university degree - with additional qualifications in education and / or leadership welcomed.
- A PGCE / PGDE with a license to teach (QTS, TSC, SACE or equivalent)
- At least 5 years of teaching experience.
- At least 5 years of leadership experience at senior or middle-leadership level, showing the ability to guide teams, manage people well and oversee the smooth running of an organisation.
- A background as an engaging and forward-thinking educator, confident in shaping curriculum and encouraging creative contemporary approaches to teaching and learning.
- A clear understanding of prep school boarding, alongside awareness of the independent sector's opportunities and pressures - both nationally and internationally.
- Experience contributing to or leading strategic planning that reflects an organisation's values and long-term direction.
- Familiarity with staff management and HR processes, including safe recruitment, professional development and appraisal.



Abilities & Skills

The next Head will need to combine strategic clarity with strong interpersonal skills.

They will demonstrate:

- The capacity to set a clear direction for Pembroke and turn it into practical, achievable priorities.
- Excellent communication skills, both written and spoken, with the confidence to engage a wide range of audiences.
- Strong relationship-building skills, with the ability to connect naturally with pupils, staff, parents, members of Council and the wider community.
- A leadership style that empowers others - enabling colleagues to take responsibility.
- Sound judgement and the ability to navigate complex or sensitive situations with care.
- The ability to engage intelligently with financial planning, resource allocation and the stewardship of the school's people and facilities.
- Strong digital literacy and an understanding of how technology and AI can enhance both learning and school operations.



Personal Attributes

Pembroke House is seeking a leader whose character and presence will inspire confidence across the community.

The successful candidate will be:

- Forward-looking and thoughtful, able to anticipate change and guide the school with purpose and calm.
- Ambitious for the school, with the presence needed to motivate and unite others.
- Commercially aware, able to recognise opportunities and make decisions that support long-term sustainability.
- Collaborative in approach, encouraging professional growth and modelling the behaviours expected across the school.
- Deeply centred on pupils' wellbeing and development, with a natural empathy for children and a commitment to their happiness and progress.
- Visible and approachable, known and trusted by pupils, staff and parents in the daily life of the school.
- Principled, fair and consistent, with the integrity to make difficult decisions with clarity and compassion.
- Confident and authentic, able to represent the school with complete conviction.

Pembroke is both a family and a school. Its next Head will unite the community behind a shared vision, strengthen communication and cohesion, empower staff, and preserve the child-centred warmth that makes Pembroke so special. This is a rare opportunity for a leader who can listen, explain, inspire, and guide a remarkable school into its future.





How to Apply

Pembroke House has engaged the services of Henry Knight from **Prepositions - Prep School Recruitment** to assist with the search. Any candidate who would appreciate an informal and confidential discussion please contact Henry by email on henry@prepositions.co.uk.

If you wish to apply, please complete and submit the Pembroke House application form along with your CV and a covering letter of no more than 2 sides of A4, stating your interest in the post and how your experience and personal qualities make you an outstanding candidate. Your letter of application should be addressed to Mr. Thomas Wright, Chair of Council.

All application documents (uploaded as PDFs) must be sent by email to henry@prepositions.co.uk by the closing date detailed below:

- Closing Date: Sunday 24th May 2026 at 6pm BST.
- All applications will be acknowledged by email within 24 hours.
- First round interviews will be conducted online during the week commencing Monday, 1st June 2026.
- Final round interviews will be held at Pembroke House between 19th and 25th June.

Any offer will be given verbally and in writing as soon as possible following the final interview.

Pembroke House is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Any applicants must be willing to undergo screening appropriate to the post, including checks with current and past employers, alongside all relevant safeguarding checks from any country in which an applicant has lived and worked. For example, any potential candidate who has worked in the UK would need to share their current DBS and also apply for an ICPC; the school would carry out both a Section 128 and Prohibition from Teaching check.