

SHANGHAI  
AMERICAN  
SCHOOL

Brief for the appointment of

# HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Puxi Campus





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# BACKGROUND

## The School

Shanghai American School (SAS) is an independent, non-profit, coeducational English-language day school offering an American curriculum, pre-kindergarten to grade 12, for expatriate families living in Shanghai, the People's Republic of China. SAS is an entity duly registered, licensed and regulated by the Shanghai Civil Affairs Bureau and the Shanghai Education Commission, but is governed by the Shanghai American School Association of Parents. Every parent of a child at the school, by virtue of their child's enrolment, is a member of the Association.

SAS has two campuses, one in Pudong, one in Puxi, each offering a full pre-kindergarten through grade 12 program. Each campus offers a high school with a wide range of AP courses, as well as the full IB diploma. With 2754 students and 652 faculty and staff members, SAS is the largest international school in China.



## Our Value Proposition

Being a successful leader at Shanghai American School means being part of a highly collaborative team, dedicated to shaping ethical global citizens, integrating technology with human-centred approaches.

Shanghai American School is among the oldest and most reputable international schools in Asia, and is a thriving, innovative learning community. Anchored in its mission and

core values, the school balances a focus on the distinct needs of every student with a commitment to world-class learning outcomes. We are a school that strives to create a strong sense of belonging for all members of the community, and the school's strong financial standing allows for a resource-rich teaching environment. To lead at SAS is to be part of a team looking to set the standard for an international education that is caring, impactful and forward-looking.

Though SAS has two campuses in Shanghai, in Pudong and Puxi, we follow a One School approach, which signifies our commitment to the same high standards of education, support, and resources, and fostering strong collaboration between the two campuses. We are dedicated to cultivating a sense of dignity, respect, and belonging for every individual within our school community, and empower students and staff alike to thrive and contribute positively to a unified school culture.

## Core Commitments

### SAS Mission

The Shanghai American School inspires in all students:

- A lifelong passion for learning.
- The commitment to act with integrity and compassion.
- The courage to live their dreams.

### SAS Vision

To empower members of our community through individualized, authentic, innovative, and inspired learning engagements to contribute positively to their world.

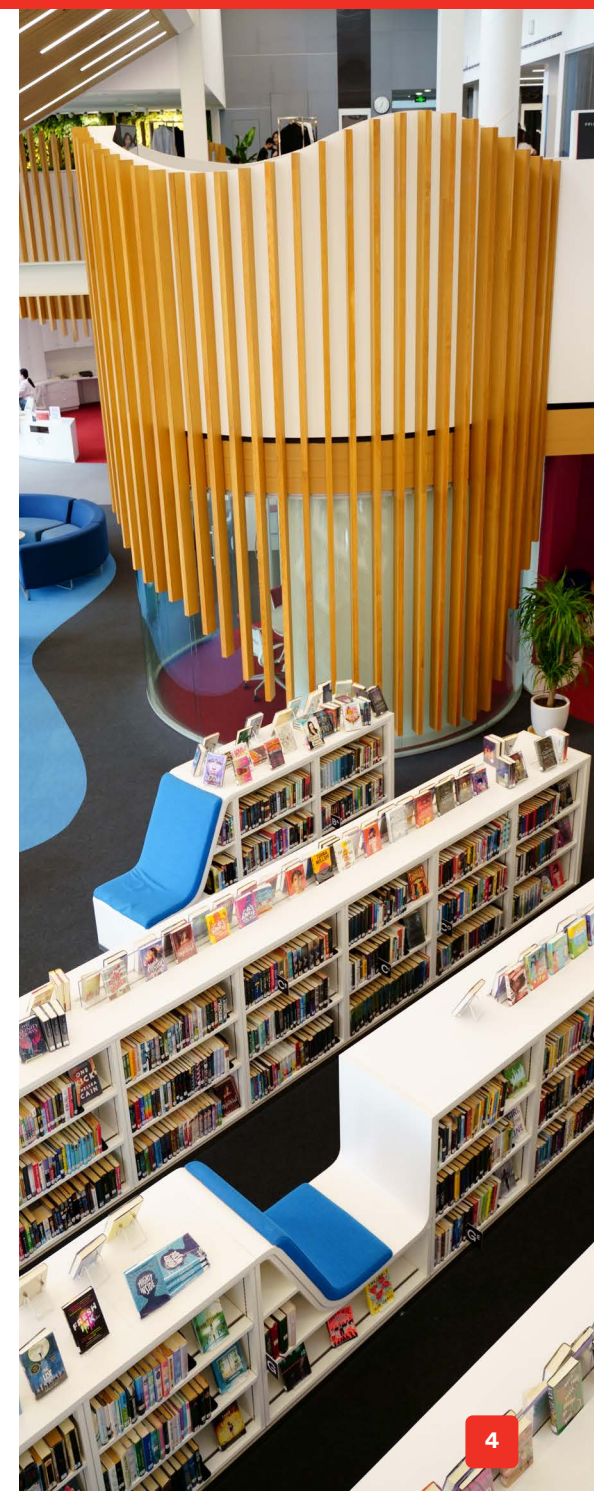
### SAS Cultures

- **Culture of Wellbeing:** Where adults and students learn, live, teach and embed\* practices that promote belonging within a system that nurtures wellbeing.
- **Culture of Collaboration & Innovation:** Where diversity of ideas within collaborative teams leads to meaningful innovation in support of equity in learning and student wellbeing.
- **Culture of Inclusion & Equity:** Where diversity is valued, and learner differences are viewed as resources and assets to their learning.

### SAS 7 Principles of Practice

Our Principles of Practice are rooted in research on effective learning and articulate our core beliefs about what is essential for optimizing our students' educational experiences. They inform our decisions as we evaluate, revise, and reimagine our programs.

- **Whole-Body Cognition:** At SAS, we believe in emphasizing the integration of thought with sensory-motor inputs, emotion, culture, and context. We recognize that cognition is a complex process, and we create a learning environment that engages the whole person.
- **Distinct Developmental Stages:** At SAS, we believe in the unique nature of childhood and adolescence, seeing these stages as neither deficient nor derivative of adulthood. We tailor our approach to meet the specific needs of each developmental phase.
- **Sense-Making in Learning:** At SAS, we believe that learning is fundamentally about constructing individual meaning through interactions with the world and others. We help students make sense of complex concepts by fostering a culture of inquiry and reflection.
- **Facilitative Teaching:** At SAS, we believe that teachers are more than instructors; they are advanced learners who guide and facilitate student learning. We use a collaborative approach that builds a community where educators and students learn from each other.
- **Challenging & Authentic Engagements:** At SAS, we believe in rigorous, problem-centred, and transdisciplinary activities that intellectually stretch students. We emphasize authentic, meaningful activities that ensure learning that resonates with real-world applications.
- **Intentionally Responsive Spaces:** At SAS, we believe that learning spaces should be purpose-built and responsive to all learners' needs. We create an inclusive community that nurtures growth by designing environments that support diverse learning styles.
- **Equity & Wellbeing in Learning:** At SAS we are committed to ensuring access, honouring diverse cultures, and fostering equitable learning experiences. We recognize that education is most effective when all students feel seen, respected, and supported.





## SAS Strategy

- **Innovative & Individualized Academics:** SAS believes a vibrant academic program models innovation, nurtures students' individual growth, and allows them to create personal pathways to success in school, in college, and in life.
- **Inspiring & Creative Learning Environment:** SAS believes that exceptional learning happens when innovative educators inspire future leaders in world-class, technologically advanced learning spaces, on campus and online.
- **Personal Growth & Exploration:** SAS believes in an expansive, whole-child educational experience that extends beyond the classroom to inspire our students to live their dreams.
- **Ethical Global Citizenship:** SAS believes all members of the SAS Community are global citizens capable of changing the world for the better.
- **Vibrant Community:** SAS believes in a vibrant school community united in mission and aspiration.





## History

Shanghai American School is Shanghai's most established international school, with a history that began in 1912. What was founded as a school for the children of American missionaries soon became a valued institution amongst diplomatic and expatriate business families as well.

SAS survived and thrived through a relatively tumultuous period in Shanghai before closing in 1950 after the People's Republic of China was established on the Mainland. It reopened again in 1980 on the grounds of the U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai, and until 1992, the school offered self-contained classes through grade eight.

In 1993-1994, a ninth grade was added. Beginning in the 1994-1995 school year, grades ten, eleven and twelve were added to enable SAS to provide a complete Pre-K-12 educational program. A growing foreign community and expanding foreign business activity created increasing enrolment thus prompting a move in 1989 from the grounds of the U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai to the campus of the Shanghai Number Three Girls' Middle School.

When that campus became too small to accommodate enrolment, SAS moved to a campus close to the current Puxi site in August 1996. The same year, the first Pudong campus opened at the Hua Xia Cultural Centre, where it was housed for two and half years in a reconstruction of the Ming Dynasty Sung family house. By 1998, students began migrating to the new campuses, and the world of the Shanghai American School reached across both sides of the Huang Pu River with the rapidly growing city of Shanghai between them. Since that time, facilities on both campuses have continued to be expanded and improved (see the Facilities section below).

The school has grown from eight students when it reopened in 1980 to a height of 3,365 students in 2013. Today, SAS has 2938 students enrolled in Pre-K through 12 across both campuses and we expect to have 2965 students at the start of semester 1, 2025-2026. On both campuses, the elementary school has a wait pool; the middle and high schools have capacity for additional students. SAS is the largest international school in China with 513 faculty members from 26 countries.





## Accreditation

Shanghai American School (SAS) is associated with the Office of the Overseas Schools of the U.S. Department of State and is a member of the East Asia Regional Council of Schools (EARCOS), the Association of China and Mongolia International School (ACAMIS) and an Affiliated member of the Near East South Asia Council of Overseas Schools (NESA). SAS is a member of the Council of Internationals Schools (CIS), the National Association of College Admission Counselling (NACAC) and the Association of College Counsellors in Independent Schools (ACCIS). Other affiliations include the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), Independent

School Management (ISM) and the Principal Training Centre (PTC). SAS is accredited by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) and offers the IB Diploma program and courses in the HS on both campuses. SAS is an affiliated member of the College Board and is authorized to offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses. SAS is a member of the Asia Pacific Activities Conference (APAC) and the Association of Music in International Schools (AMIS). SAS has been accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) since the 1981-1982 school year. The last full WASC Self-Study was in 2020 which was followed by a Mid-Cycle Report in Spring of 2024.

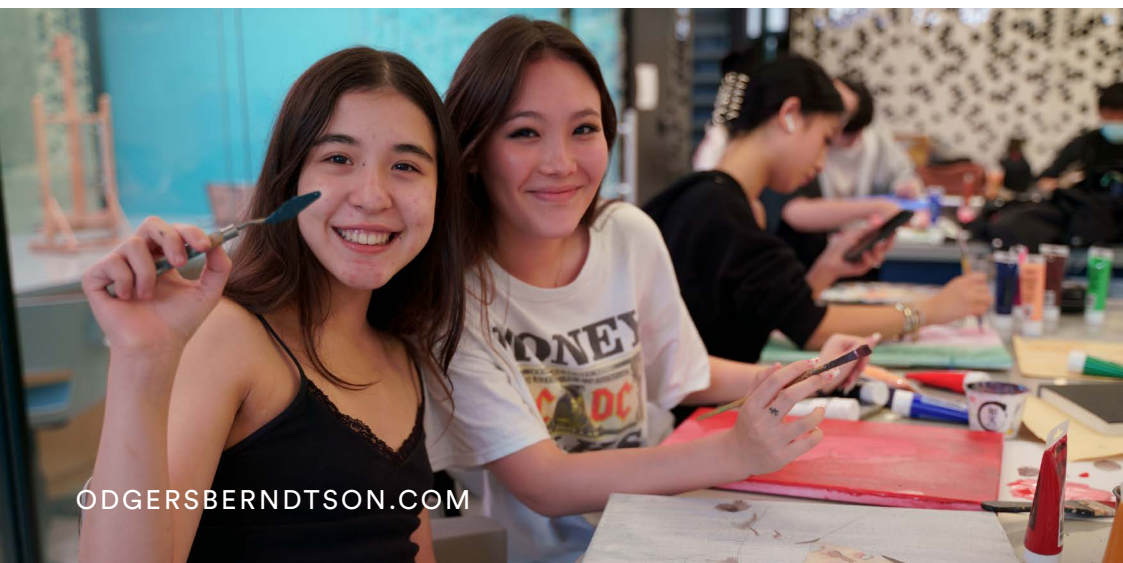
## Curriculum

Shanghai American School (SAS) offers an American-based curriculum driven by the SAS Transdisciplinary Transfer Goals. The program emphasizes a strong foundation in core subjects such as mathematics, science, language arts, and social studies, complemented by a variety of engaging electives that promote creativity and exploration. Embracing its diverse community, SAS integrates various cultural perspectives into the learning experience, encouraging students to develop a sense of global citizenship. Language development is a key component, with opportunities for students to learn English and Mandarin, supporting multilingualism from an early age. The curriculum

strives to accommodate individual learner needs, promoting engagement and hands-on experiences. SAS also offers the International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advanced Placement (AP) programs in high school, allowing students to design their personal pathways from the rich offerings.

The SAS Transdisciplinary Transfer Goals equip students to transfer their knowledge and skills beyond the classroom, in authentic settings, over a lifetime, by becoming:

- Critical Thinkers
- Skilful Communicators
- Effective Collaborators
- Creative Learners
- Ethical Global Citizens





## Technology and Generative AI

Technology, including Generative AI, is integrated into teaching and learning in age-appropriate ways across every grade level and subject at SAS. SAS follows ISTE Standards, an internationally recognized framework designed to prepare students for success in a connected, digital world. In addition to foundational technology skills, ISTE standards foster creativity, communication, collaboration, innovation, and computational thinking. By incorporating Generative AI tools, we enhance these skills further, enabling students to explore new avenues for creativity and problem-solving. We also promote Digital Citizenship, which encompasses safe, ethical, and legal use of technology, including AI, and responsible social interactions involving technology.

## High School Students

Nearly all our 1028 high school students hold foreign passports, and they come from a wide variety of previous school environments. To accommodate and prepare a broad range of students, we offer core college preparatory curriculum through both the Advanced Placement and International

Baccalaureate programs. Students can choose to pursue the IB Diploma, the AP Capstone Diploma, or a combination of AP and IB courses. A Shanghai American School education equips students to transfer their knowledge and skills beyond the classroom, in authentic settings, over a lifetime.

## Faculty

SAS has the largest teaching population, 363 teachers in total, of any of the international schools in the region. Eighty-two percent of the faculty are expatriate overseas-hire teachers. Approximately 7% are expatriate local-hire teachers and 11% are Chinese nationals, the majority of whom are Chinese language teachers. In total they represent 24 nationalities. As of school year 20-21, faculty tenure averages 5.9+ years.

## Professional Learning

SAS is committed to supporting onsite and offsite professional learning experiences aligned to its organizational goals and individual faculty members' professional learning needs. SAS offers a schoolwide annual Professional Learning Plan supported by dedicated time and multiple expert

consultants visits. SAS faculty may apply for financial support of up to 11,000RMB per year for external professional learning not available through the SAS Professional Learning Plan or through visiting consultants.

## Governance

The school is governed by a Board of Trustees, with its mandates from the school's Articles of Association. The Board of Trustees currently consists of 15 members: seven elected and seven appointed. The U.S. Consulate General to Shanghai appoints one of these Board members; the other six are chosen by the Board itself. An elected Board member's term is two years, but that individual may volunteer to serve a second two-year term. An appointed Board member's term is the same; however, that individual must receive the approval of the Board in order to serve a second two-year term. Elected members must be current parents with children enrolled at SAS; appointed members may or may not have children enrolled in the school. In Spring of 2019 SAS appointed its first alumni to the Board. The Board chair is selected by the Board itself through majority vote. There are currently four standing committees of the Board: Finance, Strategy, Trusteeship, and Audit.



## The Puxi Campus

The twenty-nine-acre Puxi Campus is located in Huacao Town, west of HongQiao International Airport. Huacao Town has several expatriate housing compounds that provide accommodation for many of the SAS Puxi families. Living nearby allows students to attend after school activities and for parents to be on campus regularly, resulting in the campus having a local community environment. Families also live in the HongQiao area and downtown Puxi areas some thirty to sixty minutes from campus.

Shanghai, China's largest city, is a vibrant and modern metropolis, rich in history and culture. It is the financial and commercial center of China with a well-established record of foreign investment. China's rapid growth, industrial expansion, and modernization, that began in the 1990s, changed the face of Shanghai, resulting in modern high rises, international five-star hotels, modern department stores and luxury residential complexes for expatriates and Chinese





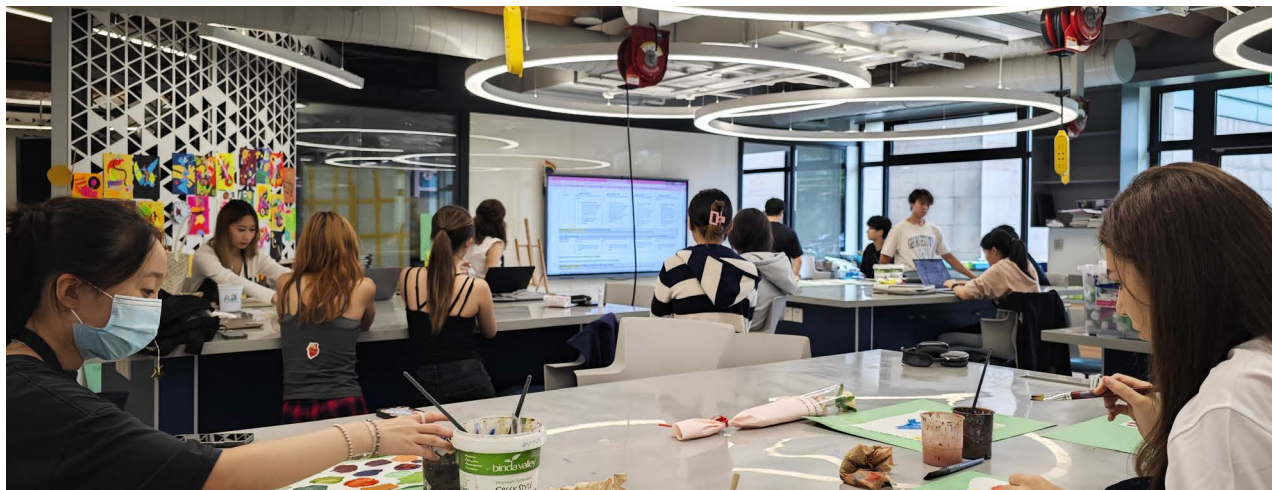
# THE ROLE

## Position Overview

### High School Principal, Puxi Campus

The High School Principal should uphold the SAS One School approach. While the High School Principal is based at the Puxi campus, the person will be working in close collaboration and alignment with the High School Principal in Pudong, to coordinate and implement school-wide initiatives.

Reporting to the Head of Campus, the High School Principal provides leadership in all educational and community matters in the High School on the Puxi Campus. The High School Principal ensures that all programs and practices of faculty and staff are guided by and support the School's mission and core values. Working in collaboration with the general, academic and operational leadership teams, faculty and staff, students, parents and the broader community, they establish an environment in which all stakeholders have access to the necessary support, opportunities, and care to thrive in the SAS learning environment.



The High School Principal should demonstrate enthusiasm and the ability to develop and implement forward-thinking educational programs, leveraging innovation to enhance interdisciplinary, inquiry-based, and collaborative learning experiences.

### Duties and Responsibilities School Leadership

- Advance SAS's vision and strategic priorities.
- Foster an inclusive culture of learning that values collaboration, reflection, and growth.
- Cultivate a learning environment that promotes transdisciplinary connections and global mindedness.

- Be adept at managing budgets.
- Be able to implement a competency-based pedagogical ecosystem.
- Build meaningful partnerships with families, students, faculty, staff, and administrators from diverse backgrounds.
- Collaborate closely with the Vice Principal and other leaders to ensure cohesive, strategic decision-making.
- Participate in strategic planning sessions and operational meetings to address divisional priorities and goals.

### Divisional Oversight and Student Access

- Oversee daily operations for the High School, ensuring alignment with adopted curriculum and school-wide goals.
- Be a visible presence and be regularly available to students, faculty, staff and parents.
- Guide and support progressive pedagogical practices that meet the diverse needs of all learners.
- Monitor and guide the developmental growth and learning of students and ensure their well-being and success.





### Faculty and Staff Leadership

- In collaboration with the academic leadership team implement SAS agreed upon professional growth and professional evaluation and recruitment for teachers, teacher assistants, and staff.
- Lead the faculty in the articulation of the school's mission, goals, and assessment and curriculum practices.
- Report to the Head of Campus and perform other duties as assigned.

### Needs and Operations Section

- The High School Principal is responsible for all aspects of the High School's instructional programs and promotes a culture of high achievement among faculty and students in line with the mission and core values of SAS.
- Attract, develop and retain a high-performing faculty body.
- Create an environment where faculty receive specific and constructive feedback that allows them to grow and know how they are being evaluated.

- Empower people to navigate the complex landscape of High School.
- Plan and manage a multi-faceted budget with the needs of the entire organization in mind.
- Unite stakeholders – students, teachers, parents –in the effort to support High School students in their individual pathways.
- Build a strong rapport with the parent community in a way that empowers parents and serves their desire for involvement.
- Collaborate and build strong relationships with fellow High School Principal and the various academic and operational leadership teams cross-campus to ensure alignment and consistency of student learning experiences.
- Support and drive initiatives in line with the school's strategic goals.



# THE PERSON

## Skills, Experience, and Attributes Sought

- Foster positive relationships among students, staff, parents, and the community to promote collaboration and engagement.
- Knowledge of and experience with best practices in high school curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- Exhibit strong skills in crisis intervention and resolution, ensuring the safety and well-being of all students and staff.
- Oversee the effective management of school budgets and resources, ensuring fiscal responsibility and sustainability.
- Maintain open and transparent communication with all stakeholders, including students, parents, and faculty, to facilitate understanding and support.
- Develop and maintain a positive school climate that promotes learning, respect, and collaboration.
- Work collaboratively with faculty and staff to implement programs and initiatives that enhance student achievement and community involvement.
- Lead the effective implementation of innovative and forward-thinking educational programs and initiatives, managing change smoothly and efficiently.
- Demonstrate resilience and adaptability in complex and uncertain situations, maintaining focus on school goals.
- Exhibit patience and perseverance when faced with challenges, fostering a supportive environment for staff and students.
- Embrace innovative ideas and diverse perspectives, encouraging a culture of continuous improvement and professional development.
- Strong intercultural competencies with an ability to work and foster a diverse and inclusive environment.
- Ability to lead through kindness, empathy, and understanding to facilitate a nurturing learning environment.





## How we see the world is how we experience the world

We believe that diversity, equity, and inclusion enrich our community and create a sense of belonging that compels each of us to grow. Therefore, we commit to a journey of community growth that is grounded in best and sustainable practices rooted in our mission and core values. We seek individuals who are ready to contribute to such an environment.

## Child Safeguarding at SAS

Shanghai American School, in keeping with our core values and vision statements, has a Child Safeguarding Policy that guides our faculty, staff, and families in matters related to the health, safety and care of children in attendance at our school. By accepting employment at SAS, all faculty and staff agree to work in partnership with the School and abide by the policies adopted by the SAS Board.

With this in mind:

- Applications will be thoroughly and rigorously screened in line with our strong commitment to all aspects of child protection and safeguarding.
- Shanghai American School reserves the right to withdraw an applicant's candidacy at any time should information be forthcoming that may suggest the candidate is not suitable to progress in the process.

- Shanghai American School reserves the right to withdraw an applicant's candidacy if current and former supervisor references are not provided.
- Hiring is contingent upon successful criminal background checks.



# HOW TO APPLY

Shanghai American School has engaged the services of Odgers Berndtson to assist with the recruitment of the next High School Principal, Puxi Campus.

The closing date for applications is:  
**XXXXXXXX XX XXXXXXXX 2025.**

Letters of application, CVs and completed application forms should be submitted online (preferred) at: **XXXXXX.odgersberndtson.com**

In line with GDPR, we ask that you do NOT send us any information that can identify children or any of your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and/or biometric data) in your CV and application documentation.

Following this notice, any inclusion of your Sensitive Personal Data will be understood by us as your express consent to process this information going forward. Please also remember to not mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

All candidates are also requested to complete an online Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form. This can be found at the end of the application process. Any information collated from the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Forms will not be used as part of the selection process and will be treated as strictly confidential.

For an initial discussion, please contact:

**Freddie Dennis: +44 (0) 20 7529 6366**  
**freddie.dennis@odgers.com**

**Ruth Lewis: +44 (0)20 7529 3959**  
**ruth.lewis@odgers.com**

**Harry Ford: +44 (0)20 7529 1013**  
**harry.ford@odgers.com**

Initial interviews with Odgers Berndtson will take place **w/c XX XXXXXXXX**. Shortlist interviews with the Selection Panel will take place on **XX XXXXXXXX**. Candidates taken forward to the final stage will be invited to have a briefing visit to the School thereafter, ahead of a final interview which will take place on **XX XXXXXXXX**.

*Shanghai American School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful applicant will be required to apply for an Enhanced Disclosure check by the Disclosure and Barring Service.*



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