



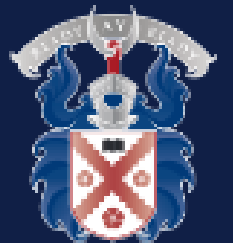
Appointment of Executive Head

Candidate Information, November 2023

Reference: LAJAOB

Saxton Bampfylde

深圳曼彻斯通城堡学校
MERCHISTON
SHENZHEN



01 INTRODUCTION

Are you an experienced senior leader with high level communication skills, an open and inclusive style and the ability to bring people along with you in a collaborative manner? Would you have an overriding commitment to – and passion for – the education, well-being and development of young people within a 4 to 18 curriculum in an exceptional and truly British International School in Shenzhen, China?

The single investor and chairman of the board of governors seeks an outstanding candidate to provide vision, challenge, motivation and support for a very strong team of co-leaders, academic and support managers, colleagues and a diverse community including very talented multilingual Chinese staff. The new Executive Head will lead the shaping of the future direction of Merchiston International School (MIS) to further its broad educational outcomes and build on our success to date. This is an extraordinary opportunity for a progressive but considered, entrepreneurial and strategic thinker who can drive a shared vision for the continued development of the MIS vision, whilst also importantly, considering the dynamics of the culture of China.

This exciting post arises as a result of a joint project between Merchiston Castle School (MCS) International School, a former parent and the Lighthouse Investment Company. MIS opened in August 2018 and follows the British IGCSE/A-level curriculum. As one of Scotland's and the UK's leading boarding schools, MCS played a leading role in the development of MIS. Many of the distinctive values and culture of MCS permeate the new school, MIS, whilst all parties understand that a blending of the best of the east and the west is the way forward.

MIS, like MCS, in seeking the pursuit of excellence, places great emphasis on critical relationships, namely – the relationship between students and staff and the relationship between school and home. Thus, together as one harmonious community, MIS can prepare its students for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.



02 MISSION & VALUES

At MIS, our vision is to: “inspire academic excellence and strength of character. We instill integrity and courage in our young people so that they will become authentic, ethical, global citizens and the best possible version of themselves.”

And our mission is to: “blend 'the best that has been thought and said' with the knowledge necessary for success in the 21st Century. As the first British boarding school in Shenzhen, and the only overseas campus of Merchiston Castle School in Edinburgh, we draw on 200-years of academic excellence, but we are driven by timeless values.

MIS students learn to understand and to value human achievement in the arts, science, and in public life. We seek to ignite the curiosity common to life-long learners. We teach students to value evidence, never to settle on an easy answer but to search rigorously for truth. Such training does not merely yield strong examination results; it produces the unmistakable authenticity of leaders.

Belonging is fundamental to the development of character. Our unique pastoral and boarding provision develops individuals by emphasising kindness and ethical decision making as duties for all. Beyond the classroom, our co-curricular programme develops courage alongside skills. The courageous risk making a vigorous tackle in sport, they dare to appear before an audience, or to submit a picture for public exhibition. Through calculated risk, the courageous learn where their strengths and weaknesses lie and, thus, the ground beneath their feet is firm. This is true confidence.

By these means, MIS students are prepared for the tests of life, rather than a life of tests.

These values are central to achieving our mission. As a moral compass, they guide us from day to day in our learning, thinking and decision making. The impact of our MIS values is evident in the daily life of the school. Our values ensure that each child is:

- Adaptable and resilient, gaining the confidence and leadership skills to succeed in a dynamic and global world, constantly striving for the highest standards.
- Enquiring and collaborative, becoming an enthusiastic and curious learner committed to excellence in all that they do, in order to flourish as an individual and contribute meaningfully to a flourishing society.
- Principled and respectful, developing compassion and humility, assertiveness and integrity. Responsible and internationally-minded, understanding and respecting the needs of others to develop tolerance, within and beyond our community.
- Expressive and positive, balancing modesty with confidence in pursuit of happiness and fulfilment.



03 THE SCHOOL

Located in Longhua District in the north of Shenzhen city, MIS occupies a ground space of 20,000 square metres providing a building area of 50,000 square metres, which can accommodate up to 1,200 students with a maximum class size of 22 and 16 for Early Years.

The school opened its doors to boys and girls aged 4-18 (Years 1 – 13) in 2018 and shares the close foundational support and strong partnership of MCS. Threaded through the MIS education is the same ethos, identity and core pastoral tenets which characterise learning at MCS in Edinburgh. It is apt that MIS shares the same school motto of 'Ready ay Ready.' This school song is sung with as much conviction in MIS, Shenzhen as it is in MCS, Edinburgh.

MIS students learn through a first-class international curriculum in state-of-the-art facilities underpinned by the very best teachers throughout the school. MIS hires highly qualified, motivated and experienced staff who can develop young minds and help ensure the students become skilled and creative thinkers. Most of the teachers are from the UK, with a few specialist teachers from other countries and a strong Chinese team teaching Mandarin.

A rigorous academic curriculum, myriad enrichment opportunities, nurturing family care and support in the boarding houses, strong links within the local and regional community and the opportunities for leadership and service all closely replicate those of MCS.

The school campus provides an unparalleled educational space for learning and teaching and boarding accommodation. Impressive facilities include The Colinton Atrium, The Castle Hall, on-campus libraries, multi-media classrooms, integrated science laboratories, The Robertson Theatre, a black box theatre, an indoor swimming



pool, a small football pitch, tennis courts, basketball facilities, bouldering wall and a fitness suite. As is often the case in the Far East, some of these leisure facilities are (safely) on the roof. All these facilities ensure that MIS integrates an exciting and adventurous campus life with a beautiful academic space for all students and teaching staff.

Whilst not seeking to replicate the historical campus of MCS, Edinburgh, the school design references the ethos, qualities and values of the school, translated in a contemporary manner, and reinforces the forward-thinking and 21st century outlook of the establishment.

The further provision of games-playing facilities is ongoing. The school dining hall provides healthy and balanced menus using organic ingredients where possible and implements the highest standards of food quality and safety, to ensure that the students' dining experience is not only delicious and palatable but safe and healthy. Napier Floor is situated on the 8th floor of the main building and enjoys an entertainment and memorabilia room for entertaining prospective and current parents.

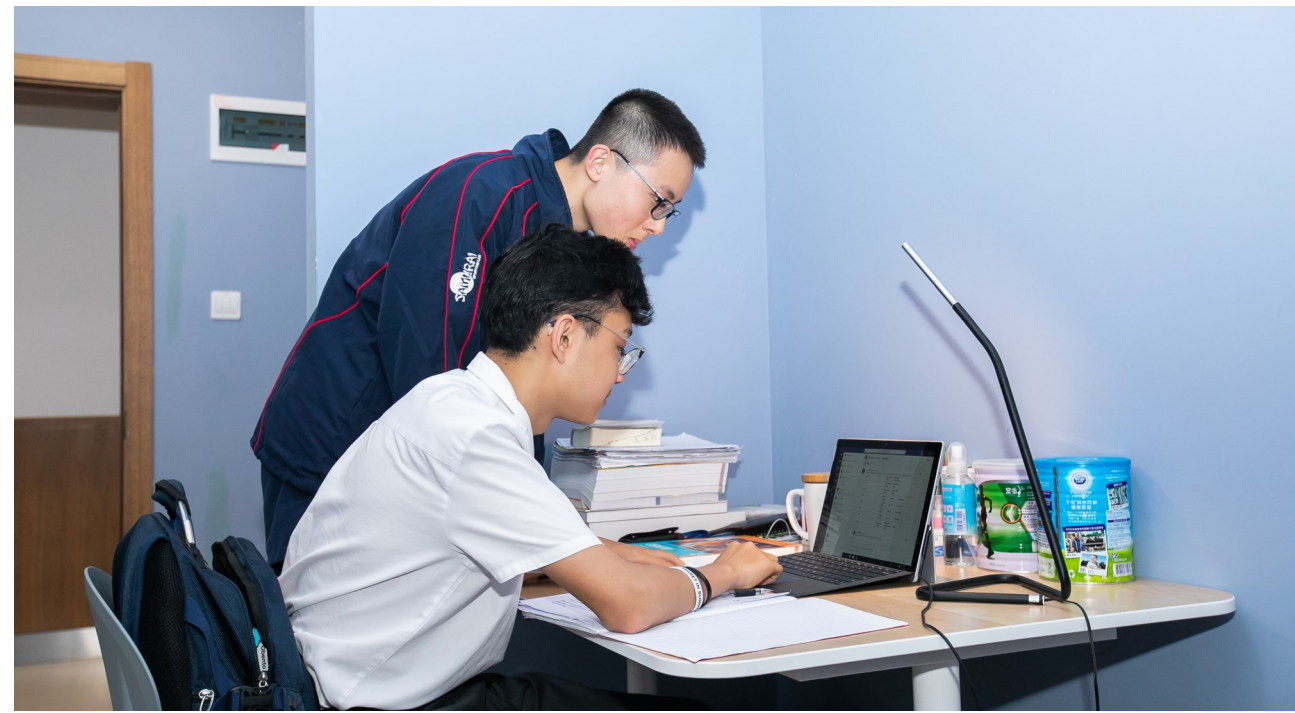
04 LEARNING & TEACHING

The MIS curriculum and learning and teaching methods blend the very best Socratic western and Confucian eastern educational traditions. English is the primary language of instruction in MIS. Chinese culture is taught through the Art, Music and Performance Arts programme.

Students from Early Years to Year 9 study the English National Curriculum, with additional access to Mandarin (Putonghua) language learning as part of the core curriculum. Students from Years 10 to 13 study for IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education) examinations and GCE (General Certificate of Education) A Level examinations. The curriculum aims to support all the students and prepare them thoroughly for their future studies in world-renowned universities across the globe and, at the same time, to facilitate their access into China's society.

We believe that high quality learning takes place when the following ingredients are present:

- **Metacognition:** Students are aware of how they are learning; they are aware of the knowledge, the skills and the attributes that they are developing as they are being developed. Through feedback and self-reflection, students are aware of progress made and of what actions can be taken to make further, significant progress in their learning.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students are applying their knowledge in challenging ways, such as solving problems, modifying existing rules to create something new, relating the experiences of others to their own context, weighing evidence to make a judgement or evaluating a process or product.
- **Engagement:** Students are active in the lesson there are multiple opportunities for students to engage by completing tasks, working with others, taking risks, etc. Students take ownership of their learning and have pride in their work, seeking out opportunities to advance towards mastery of skills and content.
- **English-Language Mastery:** Students are taking advantage of opportunities to advance their subject-specific English in the classroom and use their social English vocabulary.
- **A high-quality environment:** students are in a supportive and safe environment, free from distractions. They are able to draw upon subject expertise and resources most appropriate to the task as well as have the skills to make the best use of them. The environment created helps to foster a spirit of enthusiasm for life-long learning.



05 CO-CURRICULAR

Adopting MCS, Edinburgh's ethos, MIS features a wide range of co-curricular activities, supported by state-of-the-art teaching and sports facilities. MIS, like MCS, nurtures students and develop their talents in a diverse range of interests such as music, drama, art, science and technology; as well as mainstream sports including football, swimming, basketball, tennis and rugby. MIS also provides opportunities for adventure and outdoor activities such as golf, among others. MIS pursues a programme of enrichment including performing arts and music; drama; visual art; sport and co-curricular activities.

PASTORAL CARE

MIS offers three apartment buildings with state-of-the-art facilities, providing a living area of 10,000 square metres. Inheriting MCS, Edinburgh's boarding house system, MIS provides a family-style boarding system with high-quality child protection, safeguarding policies and procedures. The boarding system allows the houseparents and teachers to pay close attention to students both in and out of the classroom and helps students to build relationships, develop independence and resilience, as well as team-building and leadership skills.

The thread of nomenclature is again important, the three houses called Pringle, Chalmers and Rogerson mirroring the house names at MCS, Edinburgh. Indeed, the MIS pupils also wear the Merchiston tartan as part of their school uniform. The uniqueness of MIS and its approach to boarding underlines the central importance of boarding and excellent pastoral care at MIS.



06 SHENZHEN

Shenzhen, in south eastern China, is a modern metropolis that links Hong Kong to China's mainland. Shenzhen is located on the southern tip of central Chinese mainland, in the south of Guangdong Province, spreading along the eastern bank of the Pearl River just north of Hong Kong.

The city has a subtropical marine climate. The distance between Hong Kong and Shenzhen is 29 km. The road distance is 43.8 km. There are numerous ways to travel between the two including ferry, bus, airport express and high-speed train, metro and bus. It is known for its shopping destinations, including Luohu Commercial City, a massive mall with a vast array of wares. The city also features contemporary buildings, such as the 600m-tall skyscraper Ping An International Finance Centre, and several amusement parks.

In 1979, Shenzhen was a small border city of some 30,000 inhabitants that served as a customs' stop into mainland China from Hong Kong. Shenzhen, a boomtown in southern China's Guangdong province, is now known for its transformation from a tiny fishing village into a vast metropolis. Shenzhen consistently ranks as one of the most appealing cities for the Chinese public. The city is populated by the city flower, Bougainvillea and the City trees: Lychee and Mangrove.

Shenzhen hosts the Shenzhen Stock Exchange as well as the headquarters of numerous multinational companies such as JXD, Vanke, Hytera, CIMC, SF Express, Shenzhen Airlines, Nepstar, Hasee, Ping An Bank, Ping An Insurance, China Merchants Bank, Tencent, ZTE, Huawei, DJI and BYD. Shenzhen ranks 12th in the 2023 Global Financial Centres Index. It has the third busiest container port in the world.



07 THE ROLE

The fact that the kitemark of the home school, MCS, Edinburgh, is well known across the British independent sector creates an excellent platform upon which to build, and to find outstanding candidates for MIS, Shenzhen. We expect this to be a highly attractive post for ambitious serving Heads and Deputy Heads, either in the UK or at international schools, who wish to be involved in the continued development and successful running of this recently established and innovative initiative.

The successful opening of MIS in August 2018 by the investor and the impact of leadership teams since, means that the next appointed Executive Head has the exciting opportunity to build on these solid foundations and continue to develop this ambitious, young school to the next level. With English as a first language, the successful candidate should bring a deep understanding of China and the UK. A passionate educationalist and strong communicator, they will be collaborative leaders who enjoy working as part of a team. They will be well qualified and understand the importance of academic achievement alongside top quality pastoral care. Able to demonstrate a clear commitment to the school, they will share MIS's aspiration to be the leader in education in Shenzhen.

Key Responsibilities

Board Relations

- Develop policies for Board action and implement all Board-approved policies.
- Offer professional advice to the Board on all matters requiring Board action.
- Develop and implement the school's Strategic Plan.
- Arrange and attend all Board meetings.

Leadership

- Provide dynamic, consistent and motivational leadership for the school and its staff, ensuring the successful delivery of the vision, ethos, aims and objectives as determined by the school board.
- Have overall responsibility for the strategic planning and operation of the school in line with the school's aims and objectives.
- Provide leadership within the community to ensure best possible outcomes for the students of the school and their parents.
- Develop and maintain respect across all stakeholders, inspiring individuals to contribute positively to shared ideas and plans for the school.
- Apply the policies of and be responsible to the school Board for all aspects of school life.
- Act as an ex-officio member of the Board.
- Organise staff orientation each school year.

Educational Attainment and Deliver

- Create a culture and environment in which the students thrive and attain high educational standards.
- Ensure that the school curriculum and educational programme are developed and delivered through effective learning and assessment practice.
- Drive innovation in education in the school and keep abreast of modern educational theory and practice.
- Ensure that a high quality educational experience is available for all the school's students.

Resources and Performance Management

- Supervise the preparation and presentation of the annual budget.
- Deliver effective operational management for the school within the school's budget and in accordance with financial probity.
- Develop and implement a performance management framework for the delivery of high quality education through people performance appraisal.
- Implement, and report on, targets for achievement and operation of the school, and personal targets as agreed by the school's Board.
- Set high standards and expectations for students and staff behaviors and actions in support of the achievement of the school's aims.
- Recruit, manage, develop and motivate a committed, effective and diverse workforce that has a clear understanding of the vision of the school and where individuals have personal role clarity enabling and promoting high quality learning.

- Develop strategic approaches to support and monitor positive transformational change across all aspects of school life.
- Ensure the organizational structure and ways of working support effective education and learning.
- Oversee the processing and submission of required reports to the accrediting agencies and other regulating bodies as required.

Academic Performance

- The Executive Head has overall responsibility for managing school operations as well as the academic quality and institutional strength of the School.
- Evaluate, coordinate and develop the academic aims and standards of the School.
- Provide effective leadership in developing and implementing quality assurance processes in the School which align with the School's quality framework and take an active role in enhancement activity.
- Ensure the effectiveness of annual monitoring, reporting and review processes in the School and report on and monitor outcomes and actions.
- Be accountable for the management of School learning and teaching.
- Improve consistency of quality assurance processes within the School, working with the School Leadership Team (or equivalent).
- Promote good practice in quality assurance and enhancement processes, fostering and embedding a strong student-focused quality assurance and enhancement culture.

Partnerships

- Foster and enhance strong links with Merchiston Castle School, bridging real links between Merchiston International School and Merchiston Castle School in concepts like exchanges by teachers/students & curriculum development.
- Work with the family of schools and support Lighthouse Group to expand Merchiston brand.



- Work with other public and voluntary sector agencies, clubs and societies in the local community to develop extended services to enable the wider community to access knowledge, skills and learning opportunities.
- Work closely with Deputy Heads and the other ALT members to ensure a collaborative community in the school.
- Support and develop public service, internationalism and social enterprise activities.
- Present a positive image of the school in the community.

09 PERSON SPECIFICATION

This is a demanding but immensely interesting job – a superb opportunity for someone who enjoys leadership in the UK or international arena, has the ability to build strong and happy teams, can manage a growing organisation, and has a passion for education and the MIS vision. The person will be an adept “cross-cultural people manager” and they will possess strong commercial acumen and strategic vision.

The position will suit a person who is a confident, consolidating force with vision, able to inspire excellence in the team and who is bold in the face of challenges. Excellent interpersonal skills will be essential. At the same time, understanding the nuances of Chinese culture and having an understanding of the international schools’ market in China or Asia will be crucial.

Our Executive Head will have:

- Proven and successful school leadership experience as an experienced head or an ambitious talented deputy with a minimum of five years in a senior managerial or equivalent position, who has effectively developed, implemented and sustained strategic goals and vision within an organisation;
- The credibility to lead a school of this complexity and gain the respect of other school leaders, including the investor, pupils, staff and parents;
- A good understanding and commitment to school evaluation leading to continuous improvement through challenging, inspiring, monitoring, motivating and supporting others to achieve the very best for all students and staff;
- The skills and the “know-how” for a recently established school, together with an all-embracing international education perspective;
- An overriding commitment to and passion for the education, well-being and development of young people within a 4 -18 British Curriculum School in China;
- Credible academic qualifications at an undergraduate degree level and/or further academic study at Masters or PhD level or a further professional leadership qualification in Education and Management such as an MA, MBA, NPQH;
- An understanding of contemporary education and the methods to build further success in an increasingly changing and competitive, international school Chinese market, and keep abreast of global developments in high quality learning and teaching;
- A strong understanding, in tandem with the staff responsible, of the “what next?” expectations of students and parents, and entry requirements for the best world-class universities;
- Outstanding communication skills and style, demonstrating authenticity, confidence, determination, engagement, inspiration, sensitivity and transparency;
- An appreciation of the importance of consultation and gaining consensus, yet simultaneously exude the desire and need for decisive leadership, along with an intuitive feel for the best working relationship with the investor, the Lighthouse Investment Company, the board of governors, and senior colleagues;
- The ability to stimulate and motivate senior leadership to work cohesively and collaboratively in pursuit of group aims;
- An interest in the role and potential of advancing technology and its ongoing impact on development in learning in education and the ability to handle IT capably to support and enhance internal and external communications and professional working relationships;
- A commercial, networking and relationship-building strategic outlook on the international school sector in the Far East with an appreciation of the opportunities available in a changing international world;

10

- The ability to deal with all the business, financial and strategic aspects of operating in a growing school in the context of our "best of the east and west world's" brand of education;
- The ability to represent the school and promote its interests at all levels of engagement both within and without the school;
- The ability to seek time to reflect, read widely and pursue continuous, personal and professional development;
- A dynamic, positive problem-solving and innovative approach;
- The ability to remain calm under pressure and manage competing priorities in the overall needs of the school;
- A flexible and adaptable mind-set and the ability to see the larger picture, politically astute and organisationally very aware, with a real cross-cultural competence;
- The skill to manage time, delegate effectively and manage with a clear view of the way ahead;
- Energy, resilience and stamina;
- The ability to laugh at oneself and display a sense of humour through the challenges, lows and highs;
- The personality and depth of character which exudes personal values and characteristics such as enthusiasm, honesty, honour, integrity and a warmth of personality which all lead to remembering the mantra "Pupils First";
- China - specific qualities needed for success: humility; strength; patience; the ability to work at speed, build trust and understand the notions of "guanxi", (the ability to form good business relationships) and "mianzi" (maintaining and saving face), within the context of a strong overall business operation.
- In addition to understanding Chinese culture, be excited and positive about living in China, making a difference and contributing to this country being a leading force in all aspects of today's global economy.



11

APPOINTMENT TERMS

The preferred start date for the new Executive Head is August 2024. This may be negotiable depending on the successful candidate's notice period.

The package will be competitive, based upon experience and with the opportunity of a further bonus based upon performance. A three bedroom apartment will be provided on site. Fee remission and comprehensive health insurance are also included in the package.

HOW TO APPLY

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

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at www.saxbam.com/appointments using code LAJOB. Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter.

The closing date for applications is noon on **Friday 22nd December 2023**.

Safeguarding

MIS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Successful candidates are required to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the role, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

KCSIE online checks

In line with the latest KCSIE guidance, Saxton Bampfylde 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.

GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are 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.



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