

Job Title *Dame's Assistant*

Reports to *Dame*

Job Purpose

The Dame's Assistant plays a key role in assisting the Dame in the pastoral care of pupils and the day-to-day running of the boarding house, deputising for them in their absence, which includes providing first-line medical care, including the administration of medicines. They have particular responsibility for supervising house laundry, cleaning of boy rooms, as well as Messing Teas, making the most of the opportunity to spend time with pupils. They play an important role in helping to develop a culture based on kindness, courtesy, dignity and respect, and creating an environment where individual differences and the contributions of all members of the house are recognised and valued.

Dame's Assistants work flexibly and collaboratively with the Dame to ensure that students' needs are put first, and that they can both take appropriate rest breaks. They will be a visible presence in the House at all times when on duty. Boarding houses are integral to the students' lives, and the Dame's Assistant will have a direct impact on their experience of school life.

Dame's Assistants spend a minimum of two hours per day working for the central housekeeping team, cleaning pupil rooms and/or communal areas as directed by the Housekeeping Supervisor, ensuring that appropriate standards of cleanliness are maintained. In addition, they are often responsible for liaising with the Buildings Department to ensure the fabric of the house is compliant with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding and in a good state of repair.

This is a 'live-in' role, meaning the Dame's Assistant lives in accommodation within College. They provide cover for the Dame during periods of time-off and absence and will be part of an overnight on-call duty rota throughout the week. Alongside other house staff, they also support an agreed number of house functions and events during the year, which may be outside normal working hours.

Dame's Assistants report into the Dame for pastoral activities and into the Housekeeping Supervisor for the portion of their role that involves cleaning. The primary reporting line is to the Dame.

Key accountabilities:

- Providing high levels of pastoral care to pupils;
- Contributing to building an effective house team;
- Deputising for the Dame, including providing effective first-line medical care;
- Providing administrative support to the Dame as required;
- Effective supervision of laundry and Messing Teas;
- Ensuring appropriate standards of cleanliness are maintained when cleaning communal areas and/or pupil rooms;
- Ensuring the fabric of the house is safe and compliant within the Dame's Assistant's areas of responsibility, reporting any concerns to the relevant central team.

Last Updated: 29 May 2024

This role profile highlights the key tasks and responsibilities of the role, it is not designed to be an exhaustive list of duties. Roles naturally change and develop over time and it is expected that incumbents will perform tasks which are not included within their role profiles.

Key Tasks and ResponsibilitiesResponsibilities to the House

Pupils:

- Provide a sympathetic presence in the house, working closely with the Dame to provide a high level of pastoral care to pupils, liaising closely with other relevant staff as necessary, including those in the Safeguarding Team, the Stephenson Centre for Wellbeing and the Health Centre;
- Promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils, adhering to the school's Safeguarding procedures and Child Protection Policy and processes at all times;
- Support the Dame at house functions and events, helping to set up beforehand, serve and clear/wash up afterwards;
- Be 'on call' when on duty overnight;

Deputising for the Dame:

- Be present at meals ensuring regular pupil attendance and overseeing behaviour;
- Provide first-line medical care for pupils, holding formal daily surgeries, including after every meal, and administering medications in line with school policies, liaising with and/or referring to the school's health and medical staff when necessary;
- Accompany pupils to routine medical appointments as necessary, and respond to medical emergencies, including accompanying pupils to the Health Centre or hospital;
- Provide consent for medical interventions when necessary, such as when pupils are to undergo operations in hospital, as well as deal with pupil's private medical insurance;
- Authorise medical absences for pupils;
- Communicate with parents where necessary concerning housekeeping, pastoral and medical matters, responding to all communications parents in a timely manner;

Housekeeping:

- Clean pupil rooms and/or communal areas as directed by the Housekeeping Supervisor, ensuring that appropriate standards of cleanliness are maintained;
- Supervise laundry; sending pupils' clothing and sheets to the laundry or tailors once a week, checking return of these items and following up anything unnamed or missing, as well as ensuring that house laundry and linen stores are kept tidy;
- Supervising Messing Teas, at all times ensuring that health and safety requirements are adhered to, keeping the area clean and tidy and also taking the opportunity to get to know the pupils, set standards and to provide pastoral support;
- Encourage and help pupils to keep their rooms in good order;

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Compliance:

- As delegated by the Dame, keep a house maintenance log to help direct the work of central maintenance, and liaise with the Buildings Department to help ensure that the fabric of the house is compliant and in a state of good repair;

Responsibilities to the School

- Attend weekly meetings with the Dame, as well as other meetings as directed by the Dame;
- Attend all training sessions and meetings that might be necessary to carry out professional duties, including pastoral and Health and Safety matters, and training related to the cleaning aspects of your role;

Safeguarding:

- Commitment to and promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion;
- All positions at Eton are classed as 'regulated activity' as per the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 guidance, therefore a good understanding of safeguarding procedures is essential;
- Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including but not limited to, completing safeguarding training as required, and ensuring any safeguarding updates issued by the College are read and understood;
- Understand and comply with procedures and legislation relating to confidentiality.

Other:

- Have an understanding that, due to the nature of the role within a Boarding House, a willingness to be flexible is key;
- Carry out any additional task reasonably required by the Dame.

Skills and Competencies Required

To be successful in this role, you will need to be able to demonstrate the following;

- A high standard of verbal and written communication skills, able to actively listen and communicate clearly and effectively with others, at all levels;
- Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to nurture good working relationships, working collaboratively and inclusively;
- The ability to work using your own initiative and be a strong team player;
- A resourceful and flexible approach to work with a positive 'can do' attitude;
- Confidence in your own abilities and the ability to deal with challenging situations, making sound judgements and acting as a role model;
- The ability to solve problems and seek help when necessary;

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- Good organisational skills, ability to manage and prioritise your own workload whilst remaining calm under pressure;
- Previous experience of handling administration and competent computer skills – particularly Word, Excel and Outlook;
- The flexibility to work within a dual reporting line structure, able to take direction from the Dame, House Master and Housekeeping Supervisor;

Ideally you will also have;

- Demonstrable experience of pastoral care for children or young adults, preferably in a boarding school context, would be desirable;
- First Aid or relevant medical training;
- An awareness of the Children’s Act and Safeguarding and Child Protection.

Working Pattern

- This post is for 42 hours per week, mainly working afternoons, across 6 days per week.
- The 1 day off per week will be 1 day between Monday – Friday.
- The post-holder would be ‘on call’ 2 nights per week.
- Specific rota will be discussed at interview.
- You will be working term time and paid over 12 months.

Benefits

The role of Dame’s Assistant provides valuable experience of working in both the pastoral and housekeeping spheres of a boarding house, providing pastoral and first-line medical support for pupils and contributing to the oversight of the day-to-day running of domestic operations. The post holder will benefit from an outstanding induction and professional development programme, as well as peer mentoring and support. The post holder might go on to be promoted into the role of Dame at Eton or a Matron elsewhere.

Disclosure Checks

Eton College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including, but not limited to, reference checks with past employers, an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (including Barred List information), an online search and, where applicable, Prohibition checks. If you are successful in your application, you will be required to complete a DBS Disclosure Application Form. Any information disclosed will be handled in accordance with any guidance and/or Code of Practice published by the DBS. The College is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore all convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings (including those which would normally be considered as “spent” under the Act) must be declared, subject to the DBS filtering rules. It is a criminal offence for any person who is barred from working with children to attempt to apply for a position at the College.

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