Head of
St John's Preparatory

ST JOHN'S PREPARATORY

Candidate Brief

Head of St John's Preparatory – Welcome and Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the position of Head of St John's Preparatory School.

The Council of St John's College invites applications for this important leadership role as we prepare for the departure of our current Head at the end of 1 April 2026, following six impactful years of dedicated service. We now seek an inspirational, visionary, and values-driven educational leader to guide the Preparatory School into its next chapter.

St John's College is a world-class Anglican institution, committed to excellence in education and the holistic development of young people. The successful candidate will work in partnership with a committed and experienced Council, a supportive parent body, and a dynamic staff team to ensure the continued success and strategic advancement of the Preparatory School.

Whether you are a seasoned Head looking for a new opportunity, or an experienced Deputy Head ready to take the next step in your career, this position offers the chance to make a profound and lasting impact within a globally respected South African school.

We are seeking a leader who will:

- Embody and promote the Anglican ethos and values that underpin our school's identity.
- Lead the Preparatory School with vision and strategic insight, ensuring it remains relevant, inclusive, and transformative within a 21st-century African and global context.
- Champion diversity, transformation, and a sense of belonging for all members of our school community.
- Combine a passion for a liberal arts education with an innovative, future-focused approach to teaching, learning, and pastoral care.
- Inspire trust, collaboration, and confidence among students, staff, and parents alike.
- Bring strong leadership experience, educational expertise, and fresh perspectives to our team.
- Develop and implement a cohesive strategy that aligns the Bridge Nursery School, Pre-Preparatory, and Preparatory School, consistent with the broader strategic goals of Council.

This is a rewarding and challenging role—one that requires a leader of integrity, purpose, and imagination. If this opportunity resonates with your professional journey and personal values, we would be delighted to receive your application.

Further details about St John's College and the responsibilities of the role can be found in the Role Description, and the Candidate Profile and Application Process outlines the attributes and experience we are seeking in our next Head of Prep.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Sincerely

Mr Stuart West
Executive Headmaster

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About St John's College

St John's College is a world-class Anglican school founded in 1898. The school accepts boys from Grade 0 to Grade 12 into the Pre-Preparatory School, Preparatory School and the College, and accepts boys and girls in The Bridge Nursery School, St John's Sixth Form (AS and A Levels) and Aftercare.

St John's is among South Africa's leading schools, with a reputation for excellence extending well beyond the country's borders.

Based in Houghton, Johannesburg, St John's follows the rich traditions of the Anglican Church. Teaching is based on sound values and morals, as well as the Anglican ethos of respect and care, while also celebrating the traditions of other faith communities to foster mutual understanding and respect. We strive to ensure that our students are comprehensively developed in body, mind, and character, so that they will be equipped with the skills and inspired to lead, serve, and improve society in a public-spirited manner.

St John's is an African centre of excellence – the strong commitment to academics is balanced by a diverse and rich extra-curricular cultural and sporting programme, to develop young individuals who are inquiring, enthusiastic, and resilient.

Vision and Mission

The school motto is *Lux Vita Caritas* - Light, Life, and Love.

St John's College aims to create an environment in which our students can live their lives to the full, learn accountability, fulfil their potential, and reach their dreams.

Mission Statement

St John's College aspires in the service of God to:

Be a home of religious discipline – meaning fair and just parameters and consequences, tempered with compassion.

Be a home of sound learning – St John's must be benchmarked against the best in the country (and the world) in the educational arena.

Be a home of goodwill – involvement in charity, good works and service must be the hallmark of a Johannian.

The students leaving St John's College are to be:

Rightly trained in body – sports and all aspects of healthy living must form part of the curriculum.

Rightly trained in mind – apart from the academic, where creativity, inquiry, and self-directed learning are emphasised, students should be exposed to as many varied activities as possible, to develop the mind and promote meaningful experience.

Rightly trained in character – students must be continually challenged and supported to expand and grow by a demanding, professional, and encouraging staff who have a passionate belief in the potential of every student.

Ethos and Spirituality

St John's College is an Anglican Diocesan College of Johannesburg and its Christian spiritual practice is an integral part of school life. Founded by St Mary's Church to provide Christian education in the growing town of Johannesburg, the school's roots in the Anglican faith were deepened when the Community of the Resurrection took over the College to ensure its survival.

Guided by the Benedictine "rule of life" – prayer, work, rest, recreation and study – and the Anglican ethos of "scripture, reason and tradition", the school remains grounded in spiritual integrity.

Alongside the great festivals of the "church year", our daily reading of scripture and prayer, the weekly Mass and divinity classes all provide a special balance to the academic and co-curricular education provided at St John's. This rhythm reminds us as a community that we are grounded in a reality deeper than knowing and more enduring than time; the reality that is the Creator God.

The life, death and resurrection of Jesus is foundational to the evolving Christian theological traditions of the dignity of each human person, the sacredness of the Earth as our common home, and the call to act for the justice and peace of God to come on Earth. This reality inspires us to embrace, as our school motto, three simple words that describe the nature of Christ: *Lux, Vita, Caritas* – Light, Life, Love.

Infused with this sense of spirituality, St John's College is sustained by faith in God the Father, source of all being and life; God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again; and God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known to the world.

Grounded in this faith, the school seeks to develop each student in a community of inclusivity, respect and courage; seeking to provide a space for the emergence of new generations of young people who are able to navigate and embrace the unique challenges facing contemporary South Africa, and who are brave enough to envision and act for a different and better world.

About St John's Preparatory

St John's Preparatory School was the first school to be established when St John's was founded in 1898. The Prep began life in downtown Johannesburg as a parish of St Mary's Anglican Church on Eloff Street. As demand for enrolments grew in the early 1900s, the school was relocated to its current site on Houghton Ridge. The purchase of the land was made possible by the generosity of diamond magnate Sir Thomas Cullinan and Johannesburg Consolidated Investments, which sold the land to St John's for half its market value at the time. Herbert Baker was commissioned to design the new school buildings, along with his partner Frank Fleming. The Prep school building, with its original classrooms, offices and quad, was the first structure to be erected on the site after the foundation stone was laid on 12 January 1907.

Now, as then, St John's Prep aims to deliver a world-class, multifaceted preparatory school experience that nurtures boys who are rightly trained in body, mind, and character. Lessons are prepared and delivered in ways that enable boys to learn best, born of the insight that boys need a unique approach and a dedicated environment in which to thrive.

The Prep aims to ensure that its students are all well prepared for the demands and rigours of College life.

Academic Programme at the Preparatory

The curriculum at St John's Prep is continually evaluated and developed to respond to the needs of its community and provide for the broader South African and global contexts. We aim to develop in our boys a lifelong desire to learn and explore.

Each classroom is equipped with an interactive whiteboard, and boys are encouraged to utilise technology to enhance learning in various ways. We encourage independent learning and strive to develop a culture of responsibility, empowering boys with the life skills needed to meet the rigorous demands of College and further study.

The curriculum is holistic, covering a wide range of subjects. The boys learn four languages: English, Afrikaans, isiZulu, and Sesotho. Mathematics, Natural Sciences, History, Geography, Design and Technology, Information Technology, Sports, Music, Art, Drama, Innovation (Innov8), Social and Civic Justice through Christ (SCJC) and Character Education. We also encourage boys to develop critical and creative thinking skills, study skills, research skills and emotional intelligence.

Most importantly, our curriculum is underpinned by Anglican values. Our Divinity for Life programme is designed to provide our boys with a strong Christian foundation, which they are encouraged to build upon in their daily lives.

Pastoral Care

At St John's, we see the boys' emotional well-being as central to their growth and success. To this end, we provide pastoral care and support to the boys at multiple levels:

- The school's Pastoral Care team, comprising the headmaster, deputies, housemasters, chaplains and the school psychologist, meet weekly to discuss boys requiring additional support
- The school psychologist provides counselling and therapy when required
- The Academic Support teacher provides remedial therapy to boys in need of extra support in their academic programme

Arts Programme

St John's offers a rich and diverse Arts programme encompassing music, visual arts and dramatic arts. The programme is designed to align with St John's mission, ensuring that students leaving the Prep are comprehensively developed in body, mind, and character.

We believe students should be exposed to as many varied activities as possible. This develops the mind and promotes meaningful experience. Students are continually challenged and supported to expand and grow by demanding, professional, and encouraging staff who have a passionate belief in the potential of every student.

Sports

At St John's Preparatory, all boys are encouraged to participate in sports. Sports is a wonderful outlet for children that makes school enjoyable – not just the organised sports, but the games of touch, branders, one bounce and open gates.

It's a great way to release energy, bond with classmates, interact with children of other ages, and get to know the teachers in a more informal setting. Playing sports reveals authentic character – the shy boys come into their own, leadership emerges, and truly exceptional personalities are discovered.

Sports teach character, but what they really do best is reveal it. We aim to instil such a passion for sports that, in 30 or so years' time, all our alumni will continue to benefit from participating in some form of physical exercise.

About St John's Pre-Preparatory

The Pre-Preparatory, for little boys in Grades 0, 1 and 2, offers a creative, stimulating learning environment with a strong sense of purpose, which encourages the development of each child. We aim to equip each boy with the cognitive, physical, emotional and social skills necessary for a happy and confident start to his school journey.

Each day follows a familiar pattern of work and play where boys feel secure and where their strengths and skills are encouraged to flourish. The curriculum is wide and varied. From Grade 0 to Grade 2, we have specialist teachers for lessons in Afrikaans, isiZulu and Sesotho, as well as Art, Drama, Music, Physical Education, and Technology. In Grades 1 and 2, the curriculum becomes more structured, and the learning environment becomes more formal. After three years, the boys transition from the Pre-Preparatory to join Upper I (Grade 3) in the Preparatory School.

About St John's Bridge Nursery School

The Bridge Nursery School accommodates students from Grade 0000. Our highly qualified staff ensure that each child is cherished and nurtured in a safe and structured environment. Students are provided with a variety of experiences and learning opportunities that allow them to learn and grow in a safe and supportive manner. The classes are small and emphasis is placed on individualised teaching, ensuring that each child is known and valued.

St John's Aftercare

Situated in the grounds of The Bridge Nursery School, our after-school centre accepts students between the ages of four and 10. Our highly experienced staff supervise homework after a hot lunch and refreshments. The children are encouraged to play outside, and games of cricket and soccer are popular. There are structured activities arranged for the children to enjoy, as well as plenty of time for free play.

The Council of St John's College

The Council of St John's College is the governing body of St John's College. Council members represent the key constituencies within the school, including the Anglican Church, staff, Old Johannians, parents and students, and consist of nominated and co-opted members with a range of skills needed to fulfil the Council's mandate.

In particular, the Council is responsible for:

- The strategic vision of the school
- The policy, finances and oversight of the general administration of the College
- The acquisition, upkeep, repair, maintenance and insurance of all buildings
- The delegation of leadership responsibilities to the heads
- The future sustainability of the College

The Council has several subcommittees to assist in carrying out its work. These include executive, nominations, finance, building, human resources, scholarships and bursaries, information technology, and transformation and diversity. The chairman is in regular contact with the College headmaster and meets regularly with each of the school heads.

The Diocesan Bishop of Johannesburg is the designated Visitor to the College and must approve the appointment of all Council members, the Headmaster and the Chaplains.

Role Description

The Preparatory Head, who reports to the Executive Headmaster of St John's College, has full authority over the Preparatory, the Pre-Preparatory, the Bridge Nursery School and Aftercare.

The Preparatory Head works closely with the Executive Head and Council to define the aims and policies of the Preparatory School and to implement strategies, plans, and procedures that support these objectives. The role ensures the effective operation of the school and drives continuous improvement in educational standards and service delivery.

The Preparatory Head will be expected to assist with implementing the following pillars of the current five-year strategy determined by the Council:

1. **Excellence First** - To drive continuous improvement, high-quality outcomes, and to build trust and credibility.
2. **People at the Core (Staff and Students)** - To attract, support, and retain exceptional staff and students who align with the school's values.
3. **Stakeholder Focus** - Ensure that the needs and concerns of all parties are considered to encourage stronger relationships and better decision-making.
4. **Financial Resilience** - To weather economic challenges and ensure long-term sustainability and growth.
5. **Infrastructure and Innovation** - Support economic growth, efficiency and long-term progress.

In consultation with Council and the Executive Head, the Preparatory Head is responsible for leading the Prep management team and activities associated with the day-to-day administration of the Prep, acting within the established framework. The Head provides the Council and the Executive Head with the information, advice and recommendations needed to carry out functions effectively, and to understand how the Prep is performing.

Key responsibilities

Strategic Leadership and Direction

- Working with the Executive Head and Council to develop the strategy, in accordance with a clear understanding of the school's ethos, values and heritage, and taking responsibility for its implementation.
- Securing internal and external stakeholder commitment to the strategy.
- Ensuring that the Anglican faith, the ethos and the values of the school are upheld and embedded in every aspect of College life and that a positive relationship is maintained with the Anglican Church of South Africa.
- Driving transformation and diversity.
- Constantly striving for continued excellence in all aspects of school life.
- Staying informed about developments in the sector and the broader external environment, and proposing changes as needed.

Leadership and Management of Staff

- Attracting and retaining the best teaching talent and ensuring an overall standard of excellence in learning and teaching.
- Building a professional team to ensure the achievement of the vision, mission and strategy of the College.
- Ensuring that roles and responsibilities for all staff (including their active commitment to the school's ethos and core values) are clear and that high standards of performance are set and maintained.
- Ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures are in place for the recruitment, remuneration, development and fair treatment of staff throughout their tenure at St John's.

Academic, Educational and Pastoral Excellence

- Overseeing the implementation of a comprehensive educational programme grounded in the spiritual and moral character formation of students, that will enable individual students to flourish in their personal growth and equip them with the characteristics required to live meaningfully and virtuously in a 21st-century context.
- Overseeing the continued development and maintenance of excellent curricula
- Ensuring that all students fulfil their academic potential and that overall the school achieves academic excellence.
- Ensuring continuous innovation and the adoption of technology to support this.
- Ensuring rigorous assessment.
- Ensuring the implementation of pastoral care systems designed to facilitate the integration, socialisation and personal development of each student in accordance with the school's core values.
- Ensuring the implementation of an appropriate system of policies and discipline designed to guide the conduct of students in a constructive manner that will contribute to their personal growth.
- Achieving excellence in arts and culture.
- Facilitating excellence in sports through achievement and participation.

Financial Management

- Working with the Finance Committee of Council and the Head of Finance and Operations to ensure that the school is appropriately funded.
- Ensuring that appropriate contracts, budgetary, and spending controls are in place to ensure the financial sustainability of the school.
- Working with the Foundation on fundraising activities for the school.

Strategic Oversight and Alignment

The Preparatory Head will be expected to formulate a cohesive strategy for the Preparatory, Pre-Preparatory and The Bridge Nursery School continuum to strengthen the feeder system and ensure a robust pipeline into the College. This will be aligned to the Council strategy to:

- Drive excellence in academics, sports and culture.
- Grow and attract world-class leadership and staff.
- Foster stakeholder relationships.
- Ensure financial resilience through operational excellence, asset growth and sound management.
- Support infrastructure and innovation plans that deliver excellence and ensure sustainability.

External Engagement

- Collaborating with the marketing department to implement creative strategies that showcase the school effectively, while building strong relationships with current and prospective families.
- Developing and maintaining long-term relationships with alumni and friends of the school through the Old Johannian Association and the St John's College Foundation.

Candidate Brief

The Head of the Preparatory School will be an energetic, forward-thinking teacher and leader who will continue to innovate whilst enriching the ethos and values of a high-performing school.

The ideal candidate should have a track record of highly successful leadership experience, developed as either a Head or a Deputy, and possess warmth and a passion for learning to inspire students, staff, and parents. The incumbent will be a naturally collaborative leader, willing to fully embrace their role as Head and the unique opportunities this presents for contributing to the development of the St John's College strategy in education and beyond.

Essential Qualifications and Experience

- Tertiary qualifications in education or a related discipline, preferably to postgraduate level.
- Demonstrated leadership qualities in building high-performing teams and organisational cultures.
- Leadership experience with at least five years in a senior leadership role in education or a related sector.
- An outstanding and inspirational leader, able to engage well with a wide variety of stakeholders and possessing superior judgment skills.
- A strong track record of successfully introducing innovation in the education sector; a creative thinker who is future-focused.
- Experience in the independent schools' sector would be a considerable advantage.
- Strong financial literacy and analytical skills.
- Outstanding communication skills, both written and oral, and the ability to be the 'face of the organisation' and represent it impressively in various forums.
- Extensive experience in leading and managing a comprehensive school *safeguarding programme*.

Skills and Knowledge

- Exceptional knowledge and demonstrable success in all aspects of school leadership
- Outstanding people leadership skills, with a willingness to be decisive whilst delegating meaningfully and appropriately
- An instinctive understanding of how to create the conditions in which others can grow, develop and succeed
- A clear grasp of the role of Head, with the proven ability to devise and implement strategy, prioritise effectively and balance the many different elements of the role.
- A demonstrable commitment to the Council's strategic imperatives, including transformation.
- The ability to engage with a diverse St John's community, including parents, students, Old Johannians and other stakeholders of the school from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds.
- First-class communication skills, with the presence, gravitas and personal authority to act as a compelling ambassador for St John's College.
- Strong interpersonal skills with the ability to inspire the whole school community in the pursuit of excellence
- An intellectual enthusiasm for wider educational developments, particularly in relation to developments in technology supporting academic outcomes and effective teaching and learning

Personal Attributes

- An understanding of, and a commitment to, the St John's College ethos and vision.
- Strong commitment to the happiness and well-being of our students.
- Bold, inspirational and motivational.
- Dynamic and visionary team player.
- Excellent judgment and integrity.
- Charismatic, confident, and an assured communicator.

Application Process

Interested candidates should submit a letter of motivation, including a detailed CV and three contactable references, to *carel@cnandco.com* by close of business on Friday, 27 June 2025. If you have not heard back from us by Friday, 11 July 2025, please consider your application unsuccessful. Interviews will be conducted from 14 to 28 July, 2025.