

The Independent Schools Association invites applications for the role of Head of SEND. Join our dynamic team supporting the head teachers at independent schools to achieve educational excellence for their pupils.

Are you a strategic leader with a passion for inclusive education and deep expertise in SEND? ISA is seeking a dynamic and experienced professional to shape and lead national SEND support across our diverse network of member schools. This is a unique opportunity to influence practice, contribute to policy dialogue, and drive innovation in SEND provision across both specialist and mainstream settings. If you're ready to make a sector-wide impact, we'd love to hear from you.

## Job overview

<b>Role</b>	<b>Head of SEND</b>
<b>Department</b>	ISA Education Department
<b>Location</b>	Great Chesterford CB10 1PF, North Essex/Cambridge border or hybrid, or remote – see below for details
<b>Start Date</b>	January 2026 or earlier
<b>Salary</b>	Up to £50k salary <sup>#</sup> for part-time contract, plus 7% pension contribution. <sup>#</sup> This figure is <i>after</i> pro-rating
<b>Application deadline</b>	11 September, 9am

## About the employer: Independent Schools Association

ISA is the umbrella association and national charity supporting 796 independent schools and over 150,000 pupils nationally. Full information about the Association and its structure can be seen at [www.isaschools.org.uk](http://www.isaschools.org.uk).

Please also see our [Why work for us](#) website page, including further information for applicants.

ISA is an equal opportunity employer. ISA is an inclusive and nurturing organisation where employees feel empowered to share their experiences and ideas in a culture where difference is valued. We are committed to providing equality of opportunity and fostering opportunities to improve our understanding and practice. We welcome the positive impact that diverse and inclusive teams have at all levels of the Association, celebrating their differing approaches and points of view.

[More on Inclusion, Diversity and Equity at ISA.](#)

## How to apply

To apply for this position, please email your CV plus two documents (see below) to the CEO, Rudi Elliott Lockhart through [karen.goddard@isaschools.org.uk](mailto:karen.goddard@isaschools.org.uk).

Please download, complete and return the two templates:

- 1) [Cover letter template](#)\* (this is an anonymised sheet)
- 2) [Core details form](#) (this is a simple, single page form)

*\*This sheet is used for anonymous initial shortlisting, so should not include your name, etc. We recognise that some personal details—such as your name, age, gender identity, ethnicity, or other background information—may unintentionally give rise to unconscious bias during recruitment processes. You are not required to disclose personal information of this nature if you feel it may unfairly impact how your application is assessed. You should use the job description, person specification and skills base as a guide.*

Interviews will be held on 26 September 2025.

Details on the Vacancies section of the ISA website: [www.isaschools.org.uk](http://www.isaschools.org.uk).

Data relating to applications is stored securely for six months after the closing date of the advert. You can view our [Privacy Policy on our website](#).

## Job Description

This job description is a summary of the key accountabilities associated with the post. As such it supplements the basic duties outlined in the standard ISA contract of employment in accordance with the Association's policies and values, and under the direction of the CEO.

Contract	The post is a part-time, permanent contract, subject to satisfactory completion of a nine-month probationary period. It is subject to checks that include verifying the right to work in the UK.
Start Date	Start date from January 2026. We would consider a later or earlier start date for the right candidate.
Reports to:	The Director of Education and Inclusion
Hours of work:	Part-time (flexible, to be agreed, possibly c.3 days per week). We would welcome applications for termtime only working. Usually, 9.00 – 5.00, incl. one hour unpaid lunch break. Some flexibility is required, including occasional weekend working. Travel to events is often outside of normal working hours.
Holidays	Pro rata of standard 25 days per annum, plus up to 8 bank holidays. Holidays must be taken outside of published school term times. Option for additional unpaid leave during school holidays, by agreement; or a termtime only contract.
Location	Remote, hybrid, or at our office in Great Chesterford: ISA House, Great Chesterford Court CB10 1PF  Visit schools, attend meetings, and other ISA events offsite as required. The role involves some travel nationally, sometimes requiring overnight stays.
Remuneration	Up to £50k salary <sup>#</sup> for part-time contract, according to experience; plus additional pension contribution by ISA of 7% of gross salary. Salary is reviewed annually in September and is subject to a performance uplift within the agreed salary bands, plus cost-of-living uplift. <sup>#</sup> This figure is <i>after</i> pro-rating.

## Role overview

The *Head of SEND* will play a pivotal role in supporting the ISA mission by providing expert guidance, resources, and advocacy for all member schools in relation to SEND. This includes schools that are fully dedicated to SEND provision, those that are part of a group of SEND-focused schools, and mainstream schools with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The role will involve strategic collaboration, monitoring and interpreting new initiatives and policy at Government and DfE level, the development of practical resources, and tailored support to enhance the quality and inclusivity of SEND provision across the ISA community. A key aspect of this position is effective communication and relationship-building with school staff at all levels to help all ISA schools enhance the quality, inclusivity, and effectiveness of their SEND provision—whatever their size, structure, or specialist focus.

The post-holder will play a key role in further developing and strengthening existing networks and professional dialogue across ISA schools, helping to grow a more connected and collaborative SEND community. They will support and enhance the sharing of best practice and innovation, building on the strong foundations already established within the Association.

The post-holder will report to the Director of Education and work closely with them to ensure alignment with ISA's broader educational strategy.

## Core duties

Collaborate with, and report to, the Director of Education in developing and implementing strategies that support SEND excellence among member schools.
Monitor government policy developments, including white papers, consultations, and legislative updates, providing clear, accessible summaries and strategic insights to inform ISA strategy and school responses.
Create and disseminate best practice guidelines, toolkits, and policy templates tailored to the needs of SEND schools.
Work with colleagues to ensure ISA delivers training sessions, workshops, and webinars focused on current SEND topics, methodologies, and emerging policy trends.
Provide expert advice to the ISA team and member schools on SEND policies, compliance, effective practices, and implications of new government guidance.
Facilitate connections among SEND coordinators and professionals within the ISA network to promote knowledge sharing and collaboration at both local and national levels.
Represent ISA in national discussions on SEND education, ensuring the interests, insights, and challenges of our member schools are voiced and considered.
Understand the political context and engage with the wider education policy landscape to ensure ISA and its members can respond effectively and proactively to change.
Assess the effectiveness of SEND initiatives and provide feedback for continuous improvement.
Support ISA Schools to foster partnerships with the state sector to encourage mutual learning and collaboration.
Support ISA schools in identifying strategies to reduce costs within Learning Support Departments while maintaining quality provision.
Other related duties and responsibilities as reasonably directed by the Director of Education and Inclusion and the CEO.

## Person specification and skills base

### The successful candidate will have:

A minimum of five years' employment in a relevant role related to SEND, including at a senior level.
Extensive and diverse experience in SEND education to inform practice and strategic development.
A proven track record of developing and implementing successful SEND strategies in educational settings.
Strong and up-to-date knowledge of SEND legislation, policies, and best practices, with a commitment to staying informed as they evolve.
Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to engage diverse stakeholders.
Ability to work independently and manage multiple projects effectively.

### The successful candidate *may have*:

Experience working within or alongside independent SEND schools.
Familiarity with the challenges and opportunities unique to SEND education in the independent sector.
Experience in delivering professional development or training sessions.

**Please note:** This job description reflects the core activities of the role and as the Association and the post-holder develop, there will inevitably be changes in the emphasis of duties. It is expected that the post-holder will recognise this and adopt a flexible approach to work and be willing to participate in appropriate training.

## Summary of terms and conditions of service

This appointment is made under the agreed Terms and Conditions of Service for ISA staff.

The post requires some off-site work at school visits, meetings, and other Association events, sometimes requiring overnight stays.

ISA is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all employees and those associated with the Association to share this commitment. Please note that this post will require the satisfactory completion of all pre-appointment checks, including the right to work in the UK, and given the nature of our work in support of schools, may require an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (Criminal Records Bureau) check.

### Remote, Hybrid and Flexible Working

If you are seeking a fully remote contract or significant hybrid working, please make your expectations and availability clear in your application letter.

## Questions?

We are very happy to answer any queries that you may have at this stage. If you would like to know about the role, please phone Helen Stanton-Tonner on 01799 523619, or by email on [helen.stanton-tonner@isaschools.org.uk](mailto:helen.stanton-tonner@isaschools.org.uk).

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