

**Position:** Head of Academy

**Location:** Aga Khan Academy Dhaka (Dhaka, Bangladesh)

### **Aga Khan Schools (AKS)**

In 2000, His Highness the Aga Khan initiated the establishment of the Aga Khan Academies, an integrated network of not-for-profit residential schools committed to all-round excellence in education. The Academy in Dhaka is the fourth campus established after Mombasa, Kenya, Hyderabad, India and Maputo, Mozambique and is currently a day school.

The Academies aim to provide exceptional students from all backgrounds with an education of the highest international standard to prepare them for a life of leadership, service and lifelong learning, all of which are needed to succeed in a globally competitive world.

The Academies are committed to excellence in all aspects of education. This commitment includes the academic and co-curricular programmes as well as the campus itself, which consists of attractive, culturally sensitive facilities. The Academies strive to create a balance between academic demands, sports, cultural activities and service learning in developing young leaders. Students are challenged to be intellectually inquisitive and socially conscious. Using the IB curriculum framework, the Academies also integrate the Aga Khan Curricular Strands of ethics, pluralism, cultures (with an emphasis on Muslim civilisations), governance and civil society, and economics for development.

The Academies are part of a network of 200 schools, over 100 non-formal education programmes and eight hostels, collectively known as the Aga Khan Schools (AKS), which serves almost 100,000 students each year. AKS's unique approach to education centres on a commitment to high educational standards, access to education, and service learning, all of which is rooted in a pluralistic disposition, a strong ethical framework and a deep understanding of local contexts and cultures. Alongside the quality education provided across AKS, students develop specific skills and attributes inside and outside the classroom, which they carry with them beyond graduation to become leaders who contribute to improving the quality of life for people in their communities. AKS is part of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), which exists to improve the quality of life for the communities it serves and has been involved in education for over century.

### **The Aga Khan Academy Dhaka**

The Aga Khan Academy Dhaka opened in August 2022 and is now a fully authorised IB World School with the Primary Years, Middle Years and Diploma Programmes, as well as an early years section. With over 800 students and 200 staff, including 100 teachers, the Academy is a thriving educational community. In 2025, the new 'Commons' building, which will include the Dining Hall and the performing arts classrooms, and the Sports Complex and Swimming Pool, are expected to open. The construction of the residences is expected to follow.

The Academy continues the 35-year legacy of The Aga Khan School, Dhaka, which will see its last cohort of IGCSE students graduate in June 2025, following the graduation of its final cohort of A-level and IB Diploma students last year. Many of the students and staff at the Academy have transitioned from The Aga Khan School, Dhaka. The role of the Head of Academy requires sensitivity to this transition whilst establishing a new legacy for the Academy.

## **Role Description**

The Head of Academy leads the school. S/he is appointed by and accountable to the Board of AKES, Bangladesh, and reports to the CEO of AKES, Bangladesh. The Head leads the Academy's Senior Leadership Team and has ultimate responsibility for all aspects of the Academy's day-to-day running within the strategic, operational and financial policy frameworks established by the AKES,B Board in consultation with the Aga Khan Schools Head Office for the realisation of His Highness the Aga Khan's vision.

### **Specific tasks and responsibilities will include:**

- Ensuring that the Academy is distinctive and relevant through the provision of an outstanding and transformative education for students from a diverse range of backgrounds;
- Articulating and delivering a clear educational vision that embodies the values of the Academy and builds on the strengths of the Aga Khan Schools (AKS) and the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), including academic excellence, a service ethos, a strong ethical foundation and pluralistic values;
- Acting as a role model to students, parents and staff, setting high standards of personal conduct, and managing students' well-being and behaviour positively and fairly;
- Developing strong personal relationships with parents, staff and students by being visible and accessible;
- Ensuring high academic standards and performance of students within the framework of the IB curricular programmes;
- Building a high-performing team, and continuing to attract, develop and retain excellent staff;
- Ensuring performance evaluation of all staff on a regular basis and implementing professional development aligned to the strategic objectives of the Academy;
- Promoting an organisational culture that fosters teamwork, effective performance, high motivation and a sense of working towards a common vision, whilst upholding the pluralistic values of the Academy;
- Maintaining communications within, across and outside the Academy, fostering openness, transparency and collaboration;
- Championing the Academy in its dealings with other schools and organisations, ensuring it has a high profile, is embedded in the local community and connected nationally and internationally;
- Developing and delivering effective marketing strategies and admission policies to recruit students with diverse cultural, social and economic backgrounds, working in partnership with other agencies within the AKDN and beyond;
- Working towards the Academy's financial sustainability by leading the budgeting process, meeting admissions targets, and prudently managing financial resources;
- Working closely with the AKES, Bangladesh CEO and the AKS Head Office team on planning for the continued development of the Academy campus;

- Balancing the needs of a complex set of stakeholders including teachers, support staff, students, parents, the AKES, Bangladesh Board, the AKS Head Office, the AKDN Office, local leadership, alumni, and friends and supporters of the Academy;
- Leading the implementation of Academy network policies and programmes (including the student exchange programme, the international and national talent identification programme, the use of teacher coaches) within the Academy and playing a full part in collaborating across Aga Khan Schools and AKDN (including travel to meetings as appropriate); and
- Developing the Academy's links with other academies and schools in AKS and with other schools, universities and educational organisations in Bangladesh and beyond.

### *Person Specification*

The Head of Academy will identify closely with the powerful mission and vision of the Aga Khan Academies. They will understand the nature of educational excellence and display deep cultural awareness and sensitivity, gained ideally from direct experience working and living in a developing world setting. They should be an individual with a high level of stamina and resilience, the ability to work with a diverse range of people, and the sensitivity and humility necessary to engage broadly whilst determining strategy and policy. A sense of humour coupled with a strong understanding of young people and their motivations, hopes and aspirations are also key qualities.

Thus, the successful candidate will be expected to demonstrate evidence of the following skills, capabilities and experience:

### *Experience, Knowledge and Qualifications*

- Leadership and Management – proven ability gained in senior positions in schools with reputations for educational excellence;
- Academic Leadership – a reputation as a respected educational leader and thinker with a record of improving teaching and learning, and of introducing new techniques and approaches;
- Cultural Awareness – experience of living and working internationally, desirably in the developing world;
- Team Building – proven ability to develop effective management structures, to build, lead and develop teams, to align activities, to set objectives, and to assess performance within an established vision;
- Experience of the IB – ideally with broad understanding of the full IB continuum (PYP-MYP-DP);
- External Relations – experience of marketing a school to parents and the ability to demonstrate a capacity to build successful relationships with donors, corporations, governmental organisations, other schools and development agencies; and
- Financial Management and Stewardship – experience of working in schools with constrained finances, and an appreciation of the need to be engaged in developing realistic strategic and operational plans, of using and allocating resources wisely and with an entrepreneurial mind-set, and of establishing sustainable budgets and successfully implementing them whilst instinctively knowing what aspects of a school budget must be protected in order to assure quality. Ideally, experience of having led and managed a school to mature development and working with limited resources.

### *Leadership Competencies*

- External Awareness – an informed and critical awareness of the prevailing and evolving trends in the wider educational world;
- Internal Awareness – organisational sensitivity, with a genuine interest in people at all levels and a deep understanding of boarding education and its rewards and challenges;
- Vision and Creativity – the ability to craft a compelling vision, to convey it with consistency and passion, and to think in new ways about problems, inspiring innovative solutions;
- Leadership – strong team leadership ability, a team player mentality, and well-developed influencing skills, the ability to secure engagement at all levels, and a level of comfort at delegating and empowering colleagues;
- Relationship Building – the ability to establish and sustain strong relationships with parents, students, teaching and non-teaching staff, AKS Head Office and AKDN staff, the AKES,B Board of Directors, alumni and other stakeholders; and
- People Development – the ability to identify, recruit and retain the best staff, both local and expatriate, to bring out the best in others, to coach and to improve performance, to create opportunities, and to provide support for career development.

### *Personal Characteristics*

- Intellectual Capacity and Stamina – the ability to deal with a wide span of duties, and the flexibility to balance the internal and external demands of the role of Head of Academy within a development framework;
- Personality – open minded and intellectually curious, with the ability to inspire others to push boundaries, and the confidence as a leader to handle the consequences of an active and engaged school community;
- People Skills – high levels of emotional intelligence, and the ability to judge people's character, to spot talent, to recruit, develop and retain excellent staff, and to form successful and diverse teams;
- Collaborative Mindset – the ability to harness the power and support of the network within which the Academy exists and a willingness to play a leadership role in and across AKS and AKDN;
- Communication - excellent communication skills, adeptness at conveying a vision, the willingness to be visible and accessible, and the ability to inspire others to support and drive through initiatives;
- Decision Making – a consensual yet decisive approach, with the ability to inspire and energise debate, to facilitate group thinking, and to move assertively when required;
- Consultation – the confidence to encourage dialogue on key issues, and the willingness to seek input and advice from all quarters of the community;
- Cultural Awareness – a total commitment to the values of an international residential school, underpinned by an adaptable yet also clear minded approach that accepts differing points of view, and incorporates a commitment to fostering a community in which all parts feel valued and motivated to participate;
- Values – given the distinctive character of the Academy, an empathy with its culture, people and working practices will be essential, as will a firm belief in the values of service, community and education as the key drivers of developing future leaders; and

- Excellence – an instinctive understanding of what constitutes 'excellence' and what it takes to achieve and sustain it, with a determination to constantly seek improvement for students, staff and all stakeholders.