

DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND CULTURE PERMANENT ROLE

Thank you for showing an interest in this post. We hope that the following information about St Helen's school and job description will help you decide that this is an application which you wish to pursue.



WELCOME TO ST HELEN'S



St Helen's School is a large, thriving all-through school and many of the girls who leave us at the end of Year 13 have been with us since Nursery or Reception. We are ambitious for every single girl: that she achieves her potential; that she leaves us to embark upon an exciting and fulfilling future, able to deal with whatever life throws at her with resilience and courage; that she possesses inner confidence, strong personal integrity, and a sense of fun; that she is ready to go out into the world and make a difference.

St Helen's has a long tradition of academic excellence which encourages girls to pursue intellectual curiosity beyond the curriculum. We are proud of our 2024 results where 82% of A Level students obtained A*-B grades and 81% of GCSE awards were graded 9-7. Sixth Formers go on to established, high-ranking universities including Oxford and Cambridge, with more than a third studying STEM subjects. However, we give our girls much more than just academic success; our Co-Curricular programme is rich and varied, and our pastoral care ensures that every girl is known, valued, and cared for.

Within easy reach of central London, our school is set in 21 acres of grounds and, just as we are proud of our students' academic achievements and their personal development, we are also proud of our facilities and buildings. We have invested significantly in developing our facilities over the last ten years.

St Helen's has a warm and lively atmosphere that makes it a rewarding and exciting place to work. Our staff and our pupils look out for each other and encourage each other to be the best possible version of themselves. As such, you will play a vital role in supporting the school in the next stage of its journey. We look forward to receiving your application.

Bridget Ward
Head



THE SCHOOL

St Helen's is an academically selective independent girls' day school for over 1100 students aged 3-18, set in beautiful green space in Northwood, London.

It draws pupils from a wide area of north-west London, Buckinghamshire, and Hertfordshire with easy access by Underground from central London.

We want our students to be ever intellectually curious. They will believe they can do anything. They will want to explore how they can best interact with the world around them and make a difference for the better in their own way. They will be ready for whatever the future brings.

Our aims are:

- To provide each and every girl with the opportunity and means to achieve academic excellence.
- To provide our students with the personal skills, emotional resilience, and the confidence to achieve their full potential through a varied, rich and challenging Co-Curricular programme.
- To know, value and respect all girls as individuals so as to best support them on their journey through the school.
- To ensure that the girls are ready to play a full and active part in their communities and in an interconnected digital world.

Our students achieve high academic standards, and we encourage them to develop lifelong skills in a diverse range of areas, both within and outside the curriculum, and to pursue their individual ambitions. The school is proud of its tradition of providing a balanced and forward-looking education through which its pupils can become confident, independent learners and leaders in their fields, their professions, and their communities. Attention to the individual child is at the heart of everything we do and shapes the pastoral care, teaching and learning and the co-curricular opportunities on offer at St Helen's.



CORE PURPOSE

The Director of People and Culture is a strategic leadership role responsible for developing and implementing a people strategy that aligns with St Helen's mission, values, and strategic goals. The role will focus on enhancing staff wellbeing, fostering a positive organisational culture, and ensuring the school attracts, retains, and develops top talent. We are seeking a commercially focused Director to lead our People strategy and function at a pivotal time of growth and transformation. You will drive strategic workforce planning and ensure legal compliance while enhancing employee engagement and performance.



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As a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the Director of People and Culture will provide expert guidance on all people-related matters, ensuring that staff are supported, engaged, and empowered to deliver exceptional outcomes for pupils.

This is a senior leadership role with direct influence on business direction and outcomes.

REPORTING

The Director of People and Culture will report to the Business Operations Director

HOURS

Our core office hours are 8.00am – 4.30pm or 8.30 - 5.00pm, Monday to Friday, with an hour's unpaid lunch break. However, the nature and seniority of this role requires a level of flexibility.

This role is whole year (52-week contract) and therefore attracts a total of 30 days paid annual leave entitlement, plus bank holidays during our holiday year which runs from 1st September to the 31st of August.

SALARY RANGE: To be discussed at interview.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Lead the development and execution of the HR strategy aligned with business objectives.
- Oversee the whole employee lifecycle, including Talent Acquisition, Learning & Development, Onboarding, Reward, and Employee Relations.
- Act as a strategic advisor to the Head, Business Operations Director and Governors on all people-related matters.
- Provide a comprehensive and pro-active administrative support service in relation to all aspects of HR.

- Champion Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEIB) across the organisation.
- Lead organisational change, culture initiatives, and restructure projects.
- Accountability to ensure compliance with UK employment law and regulatory requirements.
- Manage and develop a team of HR professionals.
- You will provide a comprehensive and pro-active administrative support service in relation to all aspects of HR.

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

- Develop and implement a comprehensive People Strategy that supports the school's mission, vision, and strategic objectives.
- Act as a trusted advisor to the SLT and Governors on all people-related matters, including wellbeing, retention, and organisational culture.
- Lead on the development and implementation of policies and practices that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion across the school.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of people-related initiatives, using data and feedback to drive continuous improvement.
- Manage and develop a team of HR professionals.

Staff Wellbeing

- Design and deliver a holistic wellbeing strategy that addresses mental health, physical health, and work-life balance.
- Collaborate with the HR team to identify and address wellbeing challenges, ensuring that staff feel supported and valued.
- Introduce initiatives to reduce workload pressures and promote a healthy work environment.
- Act as the school's lead on mental health and wellbeing, fostering a culture of openness and support.

Talent Management

- Oversee the recruitment, retention, and development of staff, ensuring that the school attracts and retains high-calibre talent.
- Work with the HR team to ensure that safer recruitment policies are in place and that recruitment processes are efficient, inclusive, and aligned with the school's values.



- Ensure all recruitment processes comply with statutory safeguarding requirements including KCSIE guidance, and DBS checking procedures. Collaborate with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure recruitment practices align with the school's broader safeguarding culture and policies.
- Develop and implement a talent management framework, including succession planning and leadership development programmes.
- Monitor staff turnover and exit data, identifying trends and implementing strategies to address retention challenges.

Human Resources

- Provide strategic direction and oversight for all employee relations matters, ensuring consistent application of policies and procedures across the organisation whilst maintaining a positive workplace culture.
- Lead complex employee relationship investigations including grievances, disciplinary actions, and workplace conflict resolution ensuring fair, timely and legally compliant outcomes.
- Serve as an escalation point for sensitive employee matters, providing guidance and support to managers and the HR Business Partner/Advisor in handling difficult situations with discretion and professionalism.
- Foster collaborative relationships with legal counsel, union representatives, and external advisors to ensure comprehensive support for complex employee relations matters.
- Partner with IT leadership to establish systems governance frameworks, security protocols, and disaster recovery plans for all HR technology platforms.
- Lead the evaluation, selection, and implementation of integrated HR systems including HRIS, payroll, and employee self-service platforms.

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

- Promote a positive, inclusive, and collaborative organisational culture that reflects the school's values.
- Lead on staff engagement initiatives, including surveys, focus groups, and feedback mechanisms.
- Foster strong relationships with staff at all levels, ensuring that their voices are heard and acted upon.
- Champion the school's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, ensuring that all staff feel respected and valued.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Develop and implement a professional development strategy that supports staff at all stages of their careers.
- Ensure that training and development opportunities are aligned with the school's strategic priorities and staff needs.
- Work with the SLT to identify and address skills gaps, ensuring that staff have the tools and resources they need to succeed.
- Lead succession planning initiatives and talent programs to ensure scalable and engaging educational experiences.
- Establish metrics and evaluation frameworks to measure the effectiveness of learning initiatives and demonstrate ROI on development investments.
- Lead by example in pursuing your own CPD requirements while mentoring others in identifying and accessing appropriate professional development opportunities.
- Participate in professional networks and industry forums to maintain awareness of market developments and regulatory changes.

COMPLIANCE AND SAFEGUARDING

- Ensure that all people-related policies and practices comply with relevant legislation and best practice.
- Work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure that safeguarding is embedded in all people-related processes.
- Oversee the HR team to ensure that payroll, contracts, and other operational HR functions are delivered efficiently and accurately.
- Promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils and adhere to and ensure compliance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

REWARD AND BENEFITS

- Develop and implement comprehensive total rewards strategies that attract, retain and motivate top talent while maintaining competitive market positioning and cost effectiveness.
- Conduct comprehensive research into the competitive landscape for educational professionals including salary benchmarking, benefit trends and recruitment practices.
- Collaborate with finance and senior leadership to model the financial impact of compensation decisions and ensure alignment with organisational budget constraints.



St Helen's School

- Oversee the design, implementation and ongoing management of comprehensive benefits packages including health insurance, pension, and life assurance.
- Develop, monitor and maintain annual staff payroll budgets in collaboration with senior leadership and finance.
- Lead the procurement and tender process for employee benefit contracts including health insurance, pension scheme and supplementary benefits.
- Conduct comprehensive market review and analysis of benefit provider options to ensure competitive rates and coverage.

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

- Develop and execute internal communications strategies that align with organisation goals, enhance employee engagement and support business transformation initiatives.
- Lead cross-functional collaboration with senior leadership, marketing, and operational teams to ensure consistent, timely and transparent communication to all staff.
- Oversee the creation and distribution of key organisational communications and establish protocols and governance frameworks to ensure message consistency, accuracy, and appropriate tone.
- Establish metrics and analytics to measure communication effectiveness, staff understanding, and engagement levels, using insights to refine communication strategies.

OTHER DUTIES

- Attend meetings and be an active member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Follow responsibilities as defined in the Health & Safety Policy
- Promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young people with whom s/he comes into contact and adhere to and ensure compliance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Support and promote the school's ethos, strategic plans and objectives
- Any other duties that may from time to time be required by the Business Operations Director, Head or Board of Governors.



THE PERSON

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

- A proven track record of strategic leadership in people management, preferably within the education sector or a similarly complex organisation.
- Extensive experience in developing and implementing people strategies that drive engagement, wellbeing, and retention.
- Strong knowledge of HR best practice, employment law, and safeguarding requirements.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to build strong relationships at all levels.
- A deep understanding of wellbeing initiatives and their impact on organisational performance.
- Experience in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace.



- Strong analytical skills, with the ability to use data to inform decision-making.
- A commitment to the values and ethos of St Helen's School.
- Proven experience in leading HR through organisational change or transformation.
- In-depth knowledge of UK Employment Law
- Equality Act 2010
- GDPR (UK Data Protection Act 2018)
- TUPE regulations
- Disciplinary and grievance procedure
- Familiarity with HR compliance and Health & Safety obligations under UK law (e.g. HSE requirements)

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

- Experience of working in an independent school or similar environment.
- Knowledge of the specific challenges facing the education sector, including recruitment and retention.
- Master's degree (e.g., MSc HRM, MBA)
- CIPD Level 7
- Achieving Chartered Member or Chartered Fellow status (CM CIPD or FCIPD) is highly respected
- Experience in unionised environments

Key Skills & Competencies

- Strategic thinker with strong business acumen
- Inspiring leadership and team management
- High emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills
- Confident communicator, both written and verbal
- Strong analytical, decision-making, and influencing skills

BENEFITS

- Competitive pay and pension contribution scheme
- Private Medical Insurance
- 30 days paid holiday entitlement plus bank holidays
- 50% fee remission for staff children subject to spaces and entry examinations (pro rata for part time staff)
- A strong culture of professional development
- Access to the School's swimming pool and fitness suite (specified times)
- Free on-site parking and excellent public transport links
- Free lunch and refreshments (term time only)
- Generous occupational sick pay
- Cycle2Work scheme
- Electric Vehicle Charging facilities onsite (discounted monthly membership)
- Discounted Staff Coach Travel
- A beautiful working environment – the school is set in a conservation site of 21 acres.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Closing date: Noon on Friday 8 August 2025

Please apply as soon as possible as shortlisting/interviews will progress up until the closing date. Should a suitable candidate be appointed, we reserve the right to close the advert early.

Due to the volume of applicants, we receive, if you do not hear from us within 4 weeks of the closing date, please assume we will not be progressing your application further on this occasion.



St Helen's School

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to the school where they will be interviewed by the Business Director, Head and a member of our Governing Body. There will also be the opportunity to meet our HR Team and have a tour of the school.

St Helen's school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, as detailed in Part 3 (Safer Recruitment) of the KCSIE 2024 guidance document. Applicants will be asked for proof of right to work in the UK and undergo child protection screening, including checks with past employers and the disclosure and barring service.

If you have any queries about this position, please contact the school at recruitment@sthelens.london

