

Developing a People Strategy

Introduction

People are fundamental to every organisation because success depends mainly on people driving the strategies, operations, culture and, most notably for schools and academy trusts, the outcomes for their pupils. Typically, 80% of school and trust budgets are spent on people. Still, several challenges face the education sector, including recruitment and retention, health and wellbeing, and pay and reward.

A strong People Strategy will support the organisation's vision and address broader sector challenges. When done well, a People Strategy can create a competitive advantage to attract top talent and keep your employees performing at their best, delivering the best possible outcomes for pupils.

To be successful, a People Strategy should be aligned with the vision, mission and core values of the school and academy trust.

Vision and Mission

The vision and mission provide clear direction for the entire organisation, ensuring everyone is aligned and moving towards a common goal. It helps answer the questions of:

- "Where are we going?" (vision)
- "Why and how will we get there?" (mission)

In a multi-academy trust, a shared vision and mission will unify the academies, fostering a sense of belonging, a common identity, and a clear purpose.

It will guide decision-making at all levels, ensuring that decisions align with the organisation's objectives. A compelling vision and mission will inspire and motivate staff, pupils, and stakeholders. It will set the foundation for measuring performance and allow the organisation to set strategic objectives and key performance indicators that align.

The vision and mission play a pivotal role in shaping the organisation's culture, too. They set the tone for behavioural expectations, work ethics, and interpersonal dynamics. It's these shared workplace values, behaviours, ethics, and beliefs of people within the organisation that create its culture. Therefore, the values must connect with the culture.

Values

Values should be clearly communicated to ensure they are embedded in daily life within the organisation and are evidenced in practice that others can recognise. The values and ethos should be reflected in the People Strategy and everyday policies and practices, ensuring these principles are not just stated but consistently demonstrated. This can be achieved by developing policies that align with the school's and academy trust's values, appointing staff who embody these values, integrating them into the curriculum, and fostering a school culture that encourages respectful behaviour, empathy, and ethical decision-making among pupils and staff.

What should you include in your People Strategy

It will vary depending on the vision and mission statement; however, in general, a People Strategy will include the following priorities:

- Recruitment and retention
- Talent management
- Professional development

- Employee engagement
- Health and wellbeing
- Pay and reward
- Equality, diversity and inclusion.