



Job Description and Person Specification

ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL

Location:	School-Based
Hours of Work:	Monday to Friday, 08:15 to 16:00 Term Time plus Staff Directive Days
Salary:	£34,068 to £2
Line Manager:	Headteacher/School Leadership Team

First Steps Together Group is a growing and ambitious group of independent schools committed to transforming outcomes for children and young people through exceptional education, therapeutic support and relational practice.

Our schools provide highly supportive, inclusive and aspirational learning environments for pupils with a range of additional needs, including SEMH, SEND and complex vulnerabilities. As the group continues to expand, we are committed to establishing sector-leading standards in safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and pastoral care across all settings.

We are seeking an exceptional, experienced and values-driven leader to join the organisation as Head of Pastoral, providing strategic leadership and operational oversight for all pastoral systems and teams across the group. This role presents an exciting opportunity to shape and lead pastoral provision across a growing organisation dedicated to improving life chances for children and young people.

Role Overview

The Head of Pastoral is a senior operational leadership position within First Steps Together Group, responsible for the strategic leadership, development and operational oversight of all pastoral systems and teams across the group's independent schools.

Reporting directly to the Director of Education, the postholder will lead on the implementation, monitoring and continuous improvement of group-wide systems relating to:

- Safeguarding and child protection
- Attendance and pupil engagement
- Behaviour and inclusion
- Pastoral care and student wellbeing
- Compliance and statutory practice

The role requires an experienced and highly effective leader capable of operating strategically across multiple school settings while maintaining strong operational oversight of pastoral practice, safeguarding culture and student support systems.

The successful candidate will work closely with Executive Headteachers, Headteachers and Senior Leadership Teams to ensure consistent standards, robust safeguarding practice and high-quality pastoral provision across the organisation as the group continues to grow.

Core Purpose of the Role

To strategically lead and operationally oversee all aspects of pastoral provision across First Steps Together Group, ensuring outstanding safeguarding culture, effective behaviour systems, high attendance expectations and exceptional standards of care and support for pupils.

The role will drive consistency, accountability, compliance and continuous improvement across all pastoral functions within the organisation.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership & Organisational Development

- Support the Head of School and Leadership Team in implementing the School Improvement Plan and agreed strategic priorities.
- Ensure the curriculum and learning experiences remain inclusive, ambitious and responsive to pupil needs.
- Contribute to maintaining and embedding a strong, consistent vision, ethos and values across the school setting.
- Participate in evaluation activities (learning walks, book looks, pupil voice) and help identify actions that raise standards and outcomes.

Leading Teaching & Learning

- Support monitoring of teaching and learning through agreed drop-ins/observations, offering constructive feedback and coaching.
- Work with teachers to identify individual pupil needs and ensure support strategies are implemented effectively and promptly.
- Assist in the development, implementation and review of assessments, ILPs, behaviour plans and risk assessments.
- Promote consistent routines and high expectations in all learning environments.
- Maintain a positive, approachable presence and model high professional standards to support staff wellbeing.

Behaviour, Attendance & Pastoral Leadership

- Support the Head of School in maintaining a positive, respectful culture for pupils, staff and visitors.
- Help oversee behaviour systems, including restorative conversations and accurate use of recording platforms.
- Support staff in applying and reviewing behaviour plans, ensuring updates are completed and communicated timely.
- Contribute to attendance monitoring, including family liaison, phone calls and strategies to remove barriers to attendance.
- Lead or assist with pastoral interventions, reward programmes and initiatives that improve engagement and motivation.

Staff Support, Development & Deployment

- Line manage staff as directed by the Headteacher/Head of School.
- Assist with daily organisation, supervision and effective deployment of support staff throughout the school day.
- Help induct new staff, ensure safeguarding, routines, expectations and procedures are clearly understood.
- Contribute to staff briefings, assemblies and training activities.
- Support the appraisal process by gathering evidence, offering coaching and signposting staff to relevant CPD.
- Promote strong communication and collaborative practice across teaching, support and specialist staff teams.

Relationships with Parents & External Agencies

- Strengthen home-school relationships through regular, positive and constructive communication with parents and carers.
- Attend parent evenings, multi-agency meetings and contribute to formal reporting cycles.
- Liaise with external agencies and previous settings to support smooth, well-informed transitions for new pupils.
- Support multi-agency work relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and learning.

Resources, Organisation and Enrichment

- Assist the Head of School in organising and ensuring the safe, effective use of resources within the setting.
- Support the planning and delivery of enrichment activities and off-site learning opportunities each term.
- Contribute to the implementation of incentive and reward systems that reinforce positive behaviour and engagement.

Senior Leadership Contribution

- Support the Head of School in leading the school setting and contribute actively to leadership meetings.
- Share good practice, ideas and strategies that improve staff performance and student outcomes.
- Act as a point of contact in the absence of the Headteacher/Head of School, ensuring safe and smooth day-to-day operation.

Safeguarding

- Actively promote and uphold the school's safeguarding policies and statutory responsibilities.
- Report any safeguarding concerns promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL.
- If trained/appointed, operate as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL, as required.

Success Criteria

- High standards of teaching, learning and pupil engagement are consistently maintained.
- Pupil outcomes and progress improve, with data used effectively to identify trends, gaps and priorities for action.
- Behaviour systems and expectations are applied consistently and effectively across the school.
- Attendance and engagement improve, with data used to identify concerns and evaluate the impact of interventions.
- Safeguarding practice is robust, compliant and embedded in everyday school practice.
- School Improvement Plan priorities are effectively implemented, with clear evidence of progress and impact.
- Staff receive effective support, coaching and challenge that improves the quality and consistency of practice.
- Pupils with SEND and additional needs receive appropriate support that enables them to make progress and achieve positive outcomes.
- Strong relationships are maintained with pupils, families and external professionals.
- The postholder provides a visible, accountable and effective leadership presence, contributing to the safe and successful operation of the school.

Person Specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Experience of teaching or supporting learning within an education setting	✓	
Experience supporting colleagues, mentoring staff or leading an area of school practice	✓	
Experience contributing to school improvement and quality assurance processes	✓	
Strong understanding of effective teaching, learning and assessment	✓	
Experience working effectively with pupils with SEND, SEMH and behavioural needs	✓	
Strong understanding of effective behaviour management and positive behaviour for learning	✓	
Understanding of attendance, pupil engagement and strategies to remove barriers to education	✓	
Ability to analyse pupil, attendance, behaviour and performance data and use it to drive improvement	✓	
Strong understanding of safeguarding responsibilities and child protection practice	✓	
Excellent leadership, communication and organisational skills	✓	
Ability to support, motivate and appropriately challenge staff to improve practice	✓	
Ability to build effective relationships with pupils, families and external professionals	✓	
Ability to remain calm, organised and make effective decisions in a busy environment	✓	
Experience within a specialist, SEND, alternative provision or similar setting		✓
QTS or equivalent teaching qualification		✓
Leadership qualification (NPQML/NPQSL or equivalent)		✓
DDSL experience or advanced safeguarding training		✓
Experience leading assemblies, staff briefings or professional development		✓

Personal Attributes

The successful candidate will demonstrate:

- Strong integrity and professionalism
- A visible, positive and child-centred leadership approach
- Resilience and emotional intelligence
- High levels of accountability and initiative
- A calm, organised and solution-focused approach
- The ability to support, challenge and motivate others
- Commitment to continuous improvement and high expectations
- Commitment to safeguarding, inclusion and positive outcomes for every pupil

What We Offer

- A key leadership role within a growing specialist education organisation
- The opportunity to contribute directly to school improvement and pupil outcomes
- A supportive and collaborative school leadership team
- Ongoing professional development and leadership opportunities
- Opportunities for progression as First Steps Together continues to grow
- Term-time working
- Competitive salary and benefits package
- The opportunity to make a meaningful difference to the lives of children and young people

Safeguarding Commitment

First Steps Together Group is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All appointments are subject to pre-employment checks including an Enhanced DBS, satisfactory references, online checks and overseas police checks (where required).

The successful candidate will be expected to demonstrate a strong commitment to safeguarding, inclusion and the wellbeing of children and young people at all times.