



Job Description and Person Specification

HEAD OF PASTORAL

Location:	Head Office, Denton with regular travel to schools across Greater Manchester
Hours of Work:	Monday to Friday, 8:30 to 16:00 Term Time plus 21 days
Salary:	£48,000 to £54,000
Line Manager:	Director of Education

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

- Develop and implement the group-wide pastoral strategy aligned with organisational growth plans and school improvement priorities.
- Establish consistent pastoral systems, procedures and operational frameworks across all schools.
- Lead the development and implementation of group-wide strategies relating to:
 - Safeguarding
 - Attendance
 - Behaviour
 - Student Wellbeing
- Monitor the effectiveness of pastoral systems and drive continuous improvement across all settings.
- Support the onboarding and integration of new schools into the group.
- Ensure pastoral provision reflects the vision, values and standards of the organisation.

Safeguarding Leadership

- Provide strategic oversight and quality assurance for safeguarding practice across all schools.
- Support and guide Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and safeguarding teams.
- Ensure full compliance with:
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children
 - Independent School Standards
 - Relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance
- Develop, review and maintain safeguarding policies, systems and procedures.
- Lead safeguarding audits, reviews and compliance checks across the group.
- Support schools with complex safeguarding cases and external agency engagement.
- Monitor safeguarding trends, referrals and incidents to identify areas for intervention and improvement.
- Lead safeguarding training and professional development programmes.

Attendance Strategy & Intervention

- Develop and implement a group-wide attendance strategy focused on improving pupil engagement and reducing persistent absence.
- Establish effective attendance monitoring, reporting and intervention systems.
- Analyse attendance data and identify trends, vulnerable cohorts and emerging risks.
- Support schools with attendance intervention planning and family engagement strategies.
- Ensure schools meet statutory attendance responsibilities and reporting requirements.

Behaviour & Inclusion Leadership

- Lead the development and implementation of consistent behaviour systems and relational practice frameworks across all schools.
- Promote trauma-informed and therapeutic approaches to behaviour management.
- Support schools with:
 - Behaviour intervention planning
 - Reintegration programmes
 - Risk management
 - Exclusion reduction strategies
 - Positive handling oversight
- Monitor behaviour trends and support schools in implementing targeted interventions.
- Ensure behaviour systems support inclusion, emotional regulation and positive pupil outcomes.

Leadership & Team Management

- Lead, support and develop pastoral leaders and teams across the group.
- Provide coaching, mentoring and professional supervision to pastoral staff and safeguarding leads.
- Build leadership capacity and support succession planning within pastoral teams.
- Promote a culture of accountability, collaboration and professional excellence.
- Work collaboratively with Headteachers and Senior Leadership Teams across all schools.

Quality Assurance & Compliance

- Develop and implement robust quality assurance systems across all pastoral functions.
- Conduct regular audits, reviews and compliance checks across group schools.
- Produce reports, action plans and operational recommendations for the Director of Education Headteacher.

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- Monitor key performance indicators relating to safeguarding, attendance, behaviour and wellbeing.
- Ensure all schools maintain accurate, compliant and high-quality pastoral records and systems.

Partnership & Stakeholder Engagement

- Develop effective relationships with:
 - Local authorities
 - Social care teams
 - Safeguarding partners
 - External agencies
 - Parents and carers
 - Therapeutic and alternative provision partners
- Represent First Steps Together Group professionally within external networks and safeguarding forums.
- Promote the organisation's commitment to safeguarding, inclusion and exceptional pastoral care.

Leadership & Accountability

The Head of Pastoral will:

- Report directly to the Director of Education.
- Lead and support pastoral teams across all schools within the group.
- Work collaboratively with Executive Headteachers, Headteachers and Senior Leadership Teams across all provisions.
- Provide strategic leadership for safeguarding, attendance and behaviour systems across the organisation.
- Support organisational development and school improvement priorities.
- Provide regular reports, analysis and operational updates to the Director of Education.
- Ensure pastoral systems remain compliant, effective and aligned with organisational expectations.

Person Specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Significant leadership experience within education, safeguarding or pastoral leadership	✓	
Experience leading safeguarding across large sites or multiple settings	✓	
Extensive knowledge of KCSIE and safeguarding legislation	✓	
Proven experience developing attendance and behaviour strategies	✓	
Experience managing pastoral or multi-disciplinary teams	✓	
Strong understanding of SEMH, SEND and trauma-informed practice	✓	
Experience of school improvement and quality assurance processes	✓	
Ability to analyse data and use it strategically to drive improvement	✓	
Excellent leadership, communication and organisational skills	✓	
Experience working with external agencies and safeguarding partners	✓	
Ability to manage high-risk and complex safeguarding matters	✓	
Experience operating across multiple school sites	✓	
Experience within independent or specialist education settings		✓
DSL qualification or advanced safeguarding training		✓
Leadership qualification (NPQSL/NPQH or equivalent)		✓
Understanding of Independent School Standards		✓
Experience supporting organisational growth and development		✓

Personal Attributes

The successful candidate will demonstrate:

- Exceptional integrity and professionalism
- Strong emotional intelligence and resilience
- Strategic thinking and operational leadership capability
- A child-centred and values-driven approach
- High levels of accountability and initiative
- The ability to lead change and drive improvement
- Excellent judgement under pressure
- Commitment to safeguarding, inclusion and high expectations

What We Offer

- A senior leadership opportunity within a growing organisation
- The opportunity to shape pastoral strategy and systems across multiple schools
- A collaborative and ambitious leadership team
- Ongoing professional development and leadership opportunities
- 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.