Star

NURTURING TODAY'S **YOUNG PEOPLE**,
INSPIRING TOMORROW'S **LEADERS**



Head of Communications and Engagement

STAR ACADEMIES



Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the Head of Communications and Engagement role at Star Academies.

This is an exciting opportunity to play a leading role in shaping how one of the country's highest-performing multi-academy trusts tells its story, engages its audiences and strengthens its reputation.

Working closely with senior leaders and colleagues across the Trust, you will lead communications that reflect our mission and values, celebrate the achievements of our schools and pupils, and build strong relationships with the people and communities we serve.

You will provide hands-on leadership of our communications function, setting high standards and ensuring a clear, consistent and engaging approach across Star Central and our family of schools. From corporate and internal communications to media, digital, brand and engagement, you will ensure our work is purposeful, well coordinated and delivers impact.

We are seeking an experienced, creative and commercially aware communications professional with sound judgement, strong leadership skills and a collaborative approach. You will combine strategic thinking with the drive to turn ideas into action, alongside a genuine belief in the transformative power of education and Star's mission to improve the life chances of young people.

If this opportunity excites you and you believe you can make a significant contribution, we would be delighted to receive your application.

Sir (Mufti) Hamid Patel (CBE)
Chief Executive Officer
Star Academies

Dr Kathryn Chorlton
Executive Director:
Communications and Social Impact

Who we are

Star Academies is a mixed Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) that runs a diverse network of primary and secondary schools. We are a values-based organisation, committed to enhancing social mobility. All our efforts are geared towards raising the aspirations of children and young people in areas of social and economic deprivation to improve their life chances and help them succeed at the highest levels of education, employment and the professions.

Star Academies is one of the country's leading education providers, and our schools promote excellence in everything they do. In every school, the entire staff team – working in partnership with parents and the local community – is committed to nurturing today's young people and inspiring tomorrow's leaders.

Our schools work together as Star Partnerships in five cluster areas – Lancashire, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, the Midlands and London. Schools within the Partnerships collaborate to share expertise and maximise opportunities and experiences for our pupils.

Star Academies employs the very best staff and invests heavily in their professional development. Staff benefit from an extensive programme of training and coaching through our professional development hub, Star Talent Academy.

We aim to transform the quality and breadth of opportunities available to every child by working with key strategic partners. We have active partnerships with charities, universities, professional bodies, businesses, multi-academy trusts, schools and education providers. Our partnerships help us deliver the outstanding educational outcomes and transformational life experiences that every child deserves.

Our mission, vision and values

Mission

We aspire to create outstanding organisations that promote educational excellence, character development and service to communities.

Vision

Nurturing Today's Young People, Inspiring Tomorrow's Leaders. Our vision is wide-ranging. It encompasses aspiration, educational excellence, system leadership, social mobility and cohesion.

We aim to:

- Transform the educational achievement of the nation's young people, schools and academies
- Elevate the life chances of young people in areas of social and economic deprivation – from all backgrounds – to help them succeed at the highest levels of education, employment and the professions
- Lead a national drive based on rigour and high expectations designed to improve school standards
- Provide more choice for parents by offering them the chance to send their children to an inspirational school
- Ensure ambition and high aspirations are rewarded through all our schools
- Make a demonstrable impact on social mobility and equality in communities that have called out for change for so long
- Create a diverse network of faith and non-faith schools, ensuring every child has access to a first-rate education that embodies opportunity for all

In doing so we will **nurture today's young people and inspire tomorrow's leaders**.

Values

SERVICE	Being a responsible citizen in our community.
TEAMWORK	Working together for excellence.
AMBITION	Aspiring to be our best.
RESPECT	Treating others as we wish to be treated.

Priorities

All our work is structured under three overarching priorities:

- Educational excellence.
- Operational excellence.
- A strong Star community.

> "STAR ACADEMIES EMPLOYS THE VERY BEST STAFF AND INVESTS HEAVILY IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT"

About the role

We welcome applications from a broad range of contexts and backgrounds.

Overview

Post	Head of Communications and Engagement
Contract	Permanent (subject to probationary period)
Hours	Full-time.
Compensation	£76,880-£89,880
Staff benefits	Professional development is key to our ongoing success, so we continually invest in our employees through our professional development hub, Star Talent Academy. With a wealth of training, mentoring and progression opportunities across a large, growing group of academies, joining our team of leading education experts could propel your career to the next level. We can also offer you a range of rewards and benefits, including competitive salaries and pension schemes, generous holiday entitlements and healthcare cash plans.
Location	Hybrid. The post holder will be required to work three days a week in a Star Academies office. We have office locations in Blackburn, Birmingham, London and Manchester. This role requires regular travel to Star Academies' Blackburn office, and between schools, partner agencies and other locations.
Start date	January 2027 (or as soon as possible)

Head of Communications and Engagement

Job purpose

To provide strategic leadership of communications across Star Academies, strengthening the Trust's reputation, profile and engagement and supporting the delivery of its strategic priorities.

Job summary

- Provide strategic leadership for communications, engagement, brand and marketing across Star Academies, shaping a clear and compelling Trust narrative and ensuring activity supports organisational priorities, change and strategic decision-making.
- Protect and strengthen Star's reputation, profile and influence through expert advice to senior leaders, effective stakeholder engagement and proactive management of reputational risks and opportunities.
- Lead a high-performing communications function, setting clear priorities, standards and measures of impact and ensuring high-quality delivery across the Trust and its schools.

Key responsibilities and accountabilities

Strategic communications and leadership

- Develop, lead and evaluate a Trust-wide communications and marketing strategy aligned with Star Academies' mission, Corporate Strategy and organisational priorities.
- Shape and articulate a clear and compelling narrative for the Trust, translating organisational priorities into effective communications, campaigns and messages.
- Act as a trusted strategic adviser to the Chief Executive and senior leaders on communications, reputation, stakeholder engagement and emerging issues.
- Ensure communications, reputation and stakeholder considerations inform corporate planning, organisational change and major strategic initiatives.
- Identify emerging reputational risks and advise senior leaders on appropriate communications responses.
- Establish clear priorities, service standards and performance measures for communications, brand and marketing across the Trust.

Brand, marketing and digital

- Lead the development and stewardship of the Star Academies brand, ensuring a coherent visual identity, tone of voice, messaging and approach to brand governance.
- Develop and deliver brand and marketing strategies that strengthen Star's positioning, profile, recognition and trust among key audiences.
- Develop and implement marketing strategies and campaigns that support pupil recruitment, strengthening the profile and proposition of Star's schools within their communities.
- Develop and implement employer marketing and the Trust's employee value proposition (EVP) to support the attraction, engagement and retention of high-quality teaching and professional staff.
- Lead the strategic development of Star's digital presence and channels, including Trust and school websites, social media and other digital platforms.
- Oversee the development of high-quality written, visual, digital and printed content and campaigns that communicate Star's purpose, achievements and impact, ensuring high standards of editorial quality, design and accessibility.
- Provide strategic oversight of creative services and third-party contracts, including design, print, signage, photography, video, uniform and brand-related suppliers, ensuring quality, consistency, compliance and value for money.
- Use audience insight, stakeholder feedback, data and analytics to evaluate brand, marketing and digital activity and inform continuous improvement.

Communications

- Develop and lead the Trust's approach to internal communications, ensuring colleagues are informed, engaged and connected to Star's mission, values and priorities.
- Prepare leadership communications to staff, pupils, parents and other key stakeholders, ensuring clear, consistent and effective communication of the Trust's priorities, developments and key messages.
- Lead the Trust's approach to national, regional, local and education-sector media relations, including a press service for schools, media enquiries, proactive PR and media monitoring.
- Lead communications for sensitive, complex, high-profile and crisis situations, including response strategies, key messages, media statements and stakeholder communications.
- Lead stakeholder mapping and monitoring to identify, prioritise and strengthen relationships with government, policymakers, sector bodies, partners and other influential stakeholders, informing targeted communications and engagement activity.
- Provide strategic communications leadership for Trust-wide change and business transformation, developing narratives and engagement approaches that build understanding and support for change.

Communications

- Oversee key Trust-wide communication channels, including Trust SharePoint sites, Senior Leaders' Bulletin, Trust calendar and other internal communications.
- Develop effective approaches to pupil and parent communications and engagement, including parent communication platforms (MCAS), handbooks and other key information.
- Develop and deliver communications that support employee engagement, wellbeing, benefits and organisational culture.
- Lead the Trust's approach to stakeholder surveys, working with colleagues to gather, analyse and respond to feedback from pupils, parents and staff.
- Lead communications and engagement for Trust-wide recognition programmes, including the Star Awards and staff recognition initiatives.
- Support the delivery and promotion of Trust-wide induction, conferences, professional development and talent initiatives through effective communications and branding.
- Develop and coordinate opportunities for Star and its academies to secure external awards, recognition and other profile-raising opportunities.
- Provide strategic communications guidance, resources, templates, toolkits and advice to schools, supporting high-quality communications while enabling schools to retain an appropriate local voice and identity.
- Lead and coordinate communications for Star's strategic partnerships, charitable activity and major Trust initiatives, including Eton Star Partnership, ensuring activity is aligned with the Trust's wider narrative, reputation and strategic priorities.

Management

- Lead and develop a high-performing communications team, with clear roles, responsibilities, objectives and accountability.
- Oversee workforce planning, recruitment, performance and professional development across the function.
- Lead business planning, budget management, procurement and resource allocation, ensuring effective use of resources and value for money.
- Establish and monitor KPIs, service standards and performance reporting, using evidence and insight to drive continuous improvement.

Other responsibilities

- Promote the Trust's vision of 'nurturing today's young people, inspiring tomorrow's leaders'.
- Champion the Trust's values of 'Service', 'Teamwork', 'Ambition' and 'Respect'.
- Contribute to the wider life of the Trust and the Star community.
- Carry out any such duties as may be reasonably required by the Trust.

Records management

- All staff who create, receive, and use records in the course of their job are responsible for ensuring that records are managed appropriately. It is therefore likely that this post-holder will have responsibility for record-keeping as part of the role. Employees are required to be conversant with the Trust's policies and procedures on records management.

This appointment is with Star Academies. The job description forms part of the contract of employment of the person appointed to this post. It reflects the position at the present time only and may be reviewed in negotiation with the employee in the future. The appointment is subject to the terms and conditions outlined in the 'Star Academies Contract'.



About you

We are looking for someone who brings most of the following:

CRITERIA	↓ ESSENTIAL	↓ DESIRABLE
Qualifications	• Educated to degree level or able to demonstrate equivalent senior-level professional experience in communications, marketing, public relations, journalism or a related field • Evidence of relevant continuing professional development	• Postgraduate or professional qualification in communications, marketing, public relations, digital communications or leadership • Membership of a relevant professional body, such as the Chartered Institute of Public Relations or Chartered Institute of Marketing
Experience	• Experience of leading communications, engagement, brand or marketing within a large, complex or multi-site organisation • Strong track record of developing, implementing and evaluating integrated communications and marketing strategies aligned with organisational priorities • Experience of advising chief executives, executive leaders or other senior decision-makers on communications, reputation, stakeholder engagement and emerging issues • Proven experience of anticipating and managing reputational risks, sensitive issues, high-profile communications or crisis situations • Experience of proactive and reactive media relations, including handling press enquiries, developing media strategies and producing statements and briefings • Experience of developing, managing or strengthening an organisational brand, including visual identity, messaging, tone of voice and brand governance • Experience of developing and delivering audience-focused marketing campaigns with clear objectives and measurable outcomes • Experience of developing effective communications and engagement approaches for a range of internal and external stakeholders • Experience of using digital technology, data, automation and AI to improve communications and marketing • Experience of managing budgets, suppliers and resources effectively • Experience of leading, developing and motivating a multidisciplinary communications team • Experience of establishing objectives, service standards and performance measures and using evidence, insight and analytics to improve delivery	• Experience within education, the public sector or another values-led organisation • Experience handling complex issues involving schools, children, families, regulators or public bodies • Established relationships with national, regional, local or education-sector media • Experience of pupil recruitment, talent attraction, employer brand or employee value proposition campaigns

CRITERIA	↓ ESSENTIAL	↓ DESIRABLE
Knowledge and skills	• Strong understanding of internal and external communications, reputation management, media relations, stakeholder engagement, brand and marketing • Ability to think strategically and translate organisational priorities into clear narratives, communications and campaigns • Ability to influence, challenge and advise senior colleagues with credibility and sound judgement • Excellent written, verbal, editorial and presentation skills, with exceptional attention to detail and the ability to communicate complex issues clearly and compellingly for different audiences • Ability to develop creative and innovative approaches to communications, engagement and storytelling • Sound political and organisational awareness, with the ability to handle sensitive and confidential matters calmly and discreetly • Strong analytical skills and a results-focused approach, using evidence and insight to evaluate impact and inform decisions • Excellent project management, planning and organisational skills, with the ability to manage competing priorities and deadlines • Strong leadership skills, with the ability to set direction, establish high standards and drive effective delivery	
Personal qualities	• Excellent interpersonal and relationship management skills including being able to influence, negotiate and deal with conflict • Commitment to the Trust's mission, vision and STAR values • Commitment to personal and professional growth and striving for excellence • Commitment to motivate and inspire others through positivity and integrity • Commitment to inclusion, equality and safeguarding • Emotional resilience and adaptability in a fast-paced environment	

How to apply

Star Academies is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from all sections of the community. You can apply for this post by visiting our vacancies page: **www.jobtrain.co.uk/starcareers/vacancies.aspx** and filling in the associated application form. CVs will not be accepted for this post.

Star Academies is committed to making our recruitment practices barrier-free and as accessible as possible for everyone. If you would like us to do anything differently during the application, interview or assessment process, please add details to the reasonable adjustment question on the application form.

If you have any questions based on any aspect of the appointment process or require any additional information, please contact Daniel Burgess, Resourcing Partner, by emailing **daniel.burgess@staracademies.org**

Our commitment to inclusive recruitment

We are committed to recruitment campaigns that are developed with inclusivity at their core.

Pillars of an inclusive approach

1. Ensuring roles are designed and described clearly and accurately, removing hidden barriers that might inadvertently dissuade a great candidate from applying.
2. Communicating a clear commitment to inclusivity throughout all recruitment marketing materials – showing as well as telling candidates that we are an open, inclusive employer.
3. Taking positive action by seeking and welcoming applications from under-represented groups – using recruitment interactions and headhunting to reach a wider pool.
4. Assessing impact and improvement through effective diversity and equal opportunities monitoring and ongoing dialogue with staff.

We ask all candidates to complete an Equality Monitoring Form. Completion of the Equality Monitoring Form is optional. Any responses you give will assist us in our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and will not be used in any decisions affecting you.

Confidential disclosure

Star Academies is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share that commitment. All applicants who are offered employment will be subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring check (DBS) before their appointment is confirmed. As the job for which you are applying involves substantial opportunity of access to children it is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. You are, therefore, required to declare any current or spent convictions, cautions, reprimands, bind-overs or warnings you may have had, regardless of how long ago. The disclosure of a current or spent conviction, caution, reprimand or warning does not necessarily mean that your application will not be progressed or that an offer of employment cannot be confirmed. The main consideration should be whether the nature or timing of the offence makes you unsuitable for work within an education environment.

Use of AI in applications

We know that AI tools are increasingly used in application writing. While you may use them to support drafting, we are most interested in hearing your authentic voice, illustrated with your own experiences and examples.

Right to Work in the UK

All applicants must have the right to work in the UK.