ROCHDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL

JOB DESCRIPTION

SERVICE:	Children's Services
SECTION:	Education and Belonging
LOCATION:	Number One Riverside
JOB TITLE:	Head of Belonging
POST NUMBER:	TBC
Grade:	SM3
Accountable to:	Strategic Head of Education and Belonging
Accountable for:	• Strategic Lead for Attendance • Strategic Lead for Inclusion and Alternative Provision • Strategic Lead for Education Safeguarding • Inclusion and Vulnerable Learners Team • Equality and Traveller Achievement Services
Hours of Duty:	37 flexible working hours in accordance with the needs of the service.
Any Special Conditions of Service:	The Authority operates a Smoke Free Policy for all its employees and applies to any building and associated grounds within the immediate vicinity of the building which is wholly owned, leased or operated and occupied by Rochdale Borough Council. This post is Politically Restricted in accordance with current regulations. Some out-of-hours working and attendance at evening meetings will be required in accordance with service needs. Appointment to this post is subject to an Enhanced DBS check, including a Barred List check against the Child Workforce. The Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects staff to share this commitment.

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ORGANISATIONAL CHART

Director of Children's Services

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Assistant Director, Schools and Inclusion

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Strategic Head of Education and Belonging

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Head of Belonging

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- Strategic Lead for Attendance
- Strategic Lead for Inclusion and Alternative Provision
- Strategic Lead for Education Safeguarding
- Inclusion and Vulnerable Learners Team

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE JOB

1. To provide strategic and operational leadership for the Council's Belonging Services, ensuring children and young people are safe, included, engaged in education and able to achieve positive outcomes.
2. To assure, govern, commission, challenge and evaluate the impact of belonging strategies across the whole system.
3. To lead and shape the Council's strategic approach to attendance, inclusion, safeguarding and vulnerable learners, working collaboratively with schools and partners to drive educational excellence, belonging and improved outcomes for all children and young people.
4. To support the Strategic Head of Education and Belonging in delivering the Council's vision for educational excellence, inclusion and belonging.
5. To develop, implement and evaluate strategies that improve attendance, strengthen inclusion, reduce suspensions and permanent exclusions, and improve outcomes for vulnerable learners.
6. To build effective partnerships with schools, trusts, social care, health services and wider stakeholders to secure a coherent system-wide approach to inclusion and belonging.
7. To oversee the effective discharge of the Local Authority's statutory functions relating to school attendance, Children Missing Education, Elective Home Education, Fair Access, Alternative Provision, Section 19 duties and education safeguarding.

Control of Resources

Personnel

The postholder will provide leadership and management across the Belonging Service and will oversee the work of teams and managers allocated to the post.
The postholder will be responsible for promoting high standards of performance, accountability, continuous improvement and professional development.
The postholder will ensure effective supervision, performance management, workforce planning and succession planning across areas of responsibility.

Financial

Responsible for working in accordance with the financial regulations and procedures of the Authority.
Responsible for monitoring budgets associated with areas of responsibility and ensuring the effective and efficient use of resources.
Contribute to securing and managing grant funding and commissioned activity aligned to service priorities.

Equipment/Materials

Responsible for all materials and equipment used within the service areas reporting to the postholder.
Ensure efficient, effective and economical use of resources.
Responsible for ensuring compliance with Council policies relating to ICT, data security and information governance.

Health/Safety/Welfare

Responsibility for the safety and welfare of self and colleagues in accordance with the Health and Safety Policies of the Council.

Equality and Diversity

To work in accordance with the Authority's Policy relating to the promotion of Equality and Diversity.

Training and Development

The post holder will be responsible for assisting in the identification and undertaking of his/her own training and development requirements in accordance with the Council's Performance Management Framework.

Relationships (Internal and External)

Internal

- Directors and Assistant Directors
- Strategic Head of Education and Belonging
- Head of School Service
- Head of SEND
- Virtual School Head
- Strategic Lead Children's Services and Health
- Children's Social Care
- Early Help Services
- Legal Services
- Corporate Services
- Elected Members
- Rochdale Parent Carer Voice

External

- Schools and Multi Academy Trusts
- Governors and Trustees
- Alternative Provision Providers
- Department for Education
- Ofsted
- Greater Manchester Partners
- Health Services
- Police
- Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations
- Parents and Carers
- Other Local Authorities

Responsibilities

The postholder must -

(i) Perform their duties in accordance with Rochdale Borough Council's Equality and Diversity Policy.
(ii) Ensure Rochdale Borough Council's commitment to public service orientation and customer care is consistently reflected in service delivery.
(iii) Ensure that all statutory responsibilities and legislative requirements relevant to areas of responsibility are effectively discharged.
(iv) Foster effective relationships with schools, partners and colleagues to improve outcomes for children and young people.

(v) Contribute to the production, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of service plans, strategies and Council priorities.
(vi) Promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young people at all times.

Values and Behaviours

Approach the job at all times using the values set out below

- Proud of the difference we make
- Passionate about the diversities of the Borough
- Pioneering and Open in our Approach

Be aware of and apply these values and associated behaviours at all times.

Principal Duties

1. Provide leadership, direction and line management to the Strategic Lead for Attendance, Strategic Lead for Inclusion and Alternative Provision and Strategic Lead for Education Safeguarding.
2. Support the Strategic Head of Education and Belonging in delivering the Education and Belonging Strategy and wider Children's Services priorities.
3. Lead the development, implementation and evaluation of Rochdale's strategic approach to belonging, inclusion, participation and educational engagement.
4. Ensure the effective discharge of statutory responsibilities relating to attendance, Children Missing Education, Elective Home Education, Fair Access, Alternative Provision, Section 19 provision and education safeguarding.
5. Provide strategic leadership and oversight of the Council's attendance, inclusion, safeguarding and vulnerable learner portfolio, ensuring alignment with the Education and Belonging Strategy and wider Children's Services priorities.
6. Lead system-wide improvement through effective governance, partnership influence, commissioning and performance management, ensuring services deliver measurable improvements in outcomes for children and young people.
7. Provide assurance to the Strategic Head of Education and Belonging regarding the effectiveness of statutory functions relating to attendance, inclusion, safeguarding, Fair Access, Alternative Provision, Elective Home Education, Children Missing Education and Section 19 provision.
8. Champion a borough-wide culture of belonging, inclusion and educational participation through strategic partnerships with schools, trusts, health services, social care and community organisations.
9. Oversee the development, implementation and evaluation of strategic frameworks that reduce exclusion, improve attendance, strengthen safeguarding and improve outcomes for vulnerable learners.
10. Lead strategic initiatives aimed at improving outcomes for vulnerable learners, including disadvantaged groups, traveller children and young people with additional barriers to engagement and achievement.
11. Promote trauma-informed, relational and restorative approaches across schools and educational settings.
12. Develop strategic partnerships with schools, trusts, social care, health colleagues and community organisations to improve outcomes for children and young people.
13. Represent Rochdale at local, regional and national meetings relating to attendance, inclusion, safeguarding and vulnerable learners.
14. Chair and lead strategic boards, panels and partnership forums associated with the Belonging portfolio.
15. Establish and maintain robust performance management and quality assurance arrangements across all areas of responsibility.
16. Ensure accurate and timely reporting to senior leaders, elected members and strategic boards regarding performance, risk and improvement activity.
17. Identify, manage and mitigate operational, legal, financial and reputational risks associated with the Belonging portfolio.
18. Contribute to the Council's response to critical incidents affecting schools, educational settings and vulnerable children and young people.
19. Champion innovation, continuous improvement and evidence-informed practice across all areas of responsibility.
20. Contribute as a member of the Education and Belonging Leadership Team to the wider strategic development of Children's Services.

Secondary Duties

1. To participate in Council programmes of in-service training as a trainee and, when required, as a trainer or facilitator.
2. To maintain confidentiality and observe data protection and associated guidelines where appropriate.
3. To respond to complaints, Freedom of Information requests, Member enquiries and other correspondence relating to areas of responsibility.
4. To undertake such other duties and responsibilities of an equivalent nature as may be determined from time to time by the Strategic Head of Education and Belonging, Assistant Director Schools and Inclusion, or their nominated representative, in consultation with the postholder.

Job Description prepared by Rebecca Cradock Date September 2026

Agreed by Postholder _____ Date _____

Supervisor _____ Date _____

Service Director _____ Date _____

Rochdale Borough Council
Person Specification

Directorate:	Children's Services	**Post:**	Head of Belonging
Service:	Schools & Inclusion	**Grade:**	SM3
Job Ref:			

Note to Candidates:
The *Essential Criteria* are the qualifications, experience, skills or knowledge you **must show you have** to be considered for the job. The *How Identified* column shows how the Council will obtain the necessary information about you.

If the *How Identified* column says the **Application Form** next to an *Essential Criteria,* you must include in your application enough information to show **how** you meet these criteria. You should include examples from your paid, voluntary work or education.

The Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects staff to share this commitment.

	Criteria	**Essential (E) Desirable (D)**	**How Identified: AF Application Form I Interview A Assessment**
(a)	**Special Working Conditions**		
1.	Able to attend evening meetings, undertake occasional out-of-hours work and travel as required to meet service needs.	E	AF / I
(b)	**Qualifications and Experience**		
2.	Degree level qualification (or equivalent) and evidence of continued professional development relevant to education, children's services, inclusion, safeguarding or leadership.	E	AF / I
3.	Significant senior leadership experience within education, children's services, local government or a related public service environment, including leadership of managers and complex services.	E	AF / I
4.	Successful experience of leading strategic change, improvement and transformation resulting in improved outcomes for children and young people.	E	AF / I / A
5.	Experience of developing effective partnerships and influencing senior leaders across education, health, social care and wider stakeholder organisations.	E	AF / I / A
(c)	**Skills and Knowledge**		
6.	Extensive knowledge and understanding of current education legislation, statutory guidance and local authority responsibilities relating to attendance, inclusion, safeguarding, vulnerable learners and alternative provision.	E	AF / I / A
7.	Demonstrable ability to provide strategic leadership, challenge and assurance across complex service areas, using performance information, quality assurance and evidence to	E	AF / I / A

	drive improvement.		
8.	Strong understanding of inclusive education, belonging and safeguarding, with a clear vision for improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.	E	AF / I / A
9.	Excellent communication, presentation and influencing skills, including the ability to provide advice and challenge at senior leadership, partnership and elected member level.	E	AF / I / A
(d)	**Behaviours and Values**		
10.	Demonstrates a commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people and approaches the role using Rochdale Borough Council's values: • Proud • Passionate • Pioneering and Open	E	AF & I