



# SEAX TRUST

## People Strategy



## SEAX Trust People Strategy

Approved by the Resources, Audit & Risk Committee & Effective Date of Adoption:	28 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
Next Review Date:	January 2028

### Related Policies & Procedures:

- Anti-Harassment & Bullying Policy (Staff)
- Career Pathways & Job Families Model
- Code of Conduct
- Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Pay Policy
- Redundancy & Restructuring Procedure
- Safer Recruitment Procedure
- Staff Handbook
- Staffing Structures (Central Team & Academies)
- Whistleblowing Policy

This Strategy was first introduced in October 2019 to ensure clear cross-Trust guidance

### Alterations made January 2026:

Section	Title	Change
Throughout	General updates in relation to new DfE and legal frameworks and initiatives	
Section 8	Indicators of Success	New section added

The **SEAX Trust** is committed to being a fair and reasonable employer and to ensuring that it provides a professional and ethical environment which serves and protects the whole education community.

Through the **Scheme of Delegation**, the SEAX Trust is responsible for determining HR policies in accordance with all appropriate regulations:

- Setting Terms and Conditions of Employment
- Establishing Trust-wide policies, including Pay, Performance Management, Code of Conduct, Recruitment, Capability, Discipline & Dismissal, Grievance, Leave of Absence, Sickness Absence, Redundancy & Restructuring
- Appointing the CEO
- Appointing cross-Trust staff
- Dismissing the CEO, local Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers and senior cross-Trust staff, in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary and Capability Policies

Through effective **HR management**, the SEAX Trust will:

- Establish and maintain an effective organisational structure in which all staff are clear about their roles
- Recruit, deploy and retain staff flexibly, to meet the establishment's priorities and future plans, making the best use of individual skills
- Induct and develop staff in line with their individual needs and those of the establishments' improvement plans
- Establish and maintain constructive and harmonious staff relationships through good channels of communication, consultation and feedback
- Ensure equal opportunities in recruitment, staff development, training, management and pay
- Develop, maintain and operate policies and procedures which motivate and support staff, facilitate the early resolution of disputes and promote attendance
- Allocate appropriate resources to HR management and equip managers at all levels to effectively manage HR issues
- Prioritise staff wellbeing, effective communication and transparent consultation systems
- Regularly monitor, measure, evaluate and review all aspects of HR management
- Have in place appropriate administrative systems to support the management of HR issues.

The **SEAX Trust** is responsible for determining the Pay Policy and Performance Management (Professional Growth) Policy, following consultation with staff.

The **CEO** is responsible for reviewing, proposing and implementing amendments to the Pay Policy and the Performance Management (Professional Growth) Procedure in consultation with staff.

The **Pay Committee** is responsible for reviewing and proposing amendments to the Pay Policy and the Performance Management (Professional Growth) Procedure. in consultation with staff, and for making pay decisions following Performance Management (Professional Growth) Reviews. Headteacher and CEO pay decisions are made by the Pay Committee, with ratification by the **Board of Trustees**.

All **Appeal Panels** have representation from independent cross-Trust Academy Committee members and/or Trustees.

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## 1. Introduction

This strategy has been adopted by the SEAX Board of Trustees to provide a framework for the recruitment, promotion and retention of staff and volunteers to all posts within the approved staffing structures of the SEAX Trust Academies, Central Team and additional voluntary posts, including the Board of Trustees itself, Trust Members and Local Governance Groups.

Trustees are fully aware of their responsibilities in ensuring recruitment procedures are free from unlawful discrimination. Trustees also appreciate the importance of fair, open and effective procedures to enable the Trust to recruit, promote and retain people with the right skills, aptitudes and attitudes. This policy is reviewed every two years and approved by the Board of Trustees in consultation with staff.

It is also recognised that poor recruitment, promotion and retention practice can result in increased staff turnover, lowering of staff morale and increased costs for the Trust.

Consequently, all staff, Trustees and Local Governance Group members are required to work in ways which are entirely consistent with this policy at all times.

## 2. Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of this strategy are to support the SEAX Trust's strategic purpose and closely align to the Trust's Vision and Values. The People Strategy also supports the Trust and individual school improvement plans, workforce sustainability challenges and succession planning.

Arguably, the Trust's most valuable asset is its body of highly skilled employees. They are central to successful Trust outcomes and are the foundation of everything the Trust hopes to achieve. Through consistent, fair and open procedures in recruitment, professional growth, wellbeing, succession planning and culture, the Trust believes it can offer a highly rewarding working environment and attract the very best people to support the pupils and families it serves.

In particular, the People Strategy supports:

- The recruitment, promotion and retention of the highest-quality staff and volunteers with specific skills, aptitudes and attitudes to ensure that our pupils and students feel safe, supported and are able to achieve their full potential
- The assurance that all staff recruited, promoted and retained are supportive of Trust ethos
- Equality of opportunity, including the fair and consistent offer of reasonable adjustments where required, as a key consideration at each stage of the recruitment, promotion and retention process, thereby encouraging diversity and inclusive opportunity for all
- Recruitment and opportunity for promotion on the most appropriate contract terms to meet the needs of the Trust's vision, whilst ensuring a satisfactory work life balance for individuals

- Recruitment, promotion and retention practice which reflects positively on the Trust as an employer
- The correct and proper use of recruitment, promotion and retention procedures to ensure efficiency and cost-effectiveness
- A retention strategy which is based on creativity and opportunity, in order that our best people have far reaching opportunity to stay within the Trust
- Unbiased use of the Trust's Capability and Disciplinary Procedures, when necessary
- A Redundancy & Restructuring Procedure which has the best interests of our pupil population at its core
- The continuous monitoring, review and improvement of our recruitment, promotion and retention practices.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

The SEAX Trust has overall responsibility for the adoption and review of this policy, including approval of any amendments.

The Headteachers/CEO, as appropriate, have responsibility for the implementation of the policy and ensuring that all recruitment and selection actions are consistent with the aims and principles set out above.

Responsibility for the day to day operation of this policy, including management of the administration process rests with the senior member of staff in charge of HR within each Academy and the Director of HR within the Trust's Central Team.

### 4. Legal Framework

This strategy has been drafted to ensure compliance with current employment legislation and contractual requirements as set down by national and local conditions of service.

The Trust complies with all current UK employment and education legislation, including the Equality Act 2010, Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR), Employment Rights Act 1996 and subsequent amendments, and all statutory guidance such as *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE, updated annually). The Trust reviews compliance at regular intervals, or whenever new legislation is introduced.

### 5. Recruitment and Selection Principles

The SEAX Trust adheres to strict safer recruitment procedures in line with the document, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', as updated. All external and internal recruitment is undertaken in accordance with our '**Safer Recruitment Procedure**' (please see separate procedure for further details).

In addition to the Trust's Safer Recruitment Principles, a number of other core principles feature in the recruitment and selection process. These include, but are not limited to:

- The notion that adequate time and consideration must be given to the recruitment and selection process
- The fact that all appointments should be made in relation to the benefit of pupils and students
- Consideration as to whether the post in question remains relevant and/or whether it would be preferable to hold an internal review, or to consider outsourcing possibilities
- The firm understanding that re-advertising is preferable to the appointment of an unsuitable candidate
- A commitment to favouring candidates who match the values, ethos and attitudes of the Trust, rather than basing selection on qualifications, skills and past experience alone
- Collaboration in the pooling of candidates cross-Trust, where possible, to ensure 'best fit'
- Promotion of the Trust's commitment to Equality & Diversity, including the provision of reasonable adjustments and targeted advertising, where appropriate
- A practice to regularly seek direct feedback from those in our community with protected characteristics in relation to our marketing materials
- Targeted advertising to ensure minority pupil groups are consistently represented and reflected in members of the Trust's workforce
- Apprenticeship, work experience and contractual opportunities for our own SEAX student population
- Consideration of the Trust's 'Disability Confident Employer' status
- Continued commitment to a fair and unbiased procedure, including the anonymisation of all application forms
- An understanding that in the education sector, staff remuneration is awarded via the use of public funds and that appointment, reward and progression should be linked to value for money
- A wider understanding of an employer's obligations to relevant legislation (See Section 4 above).

## **7. Staff Recruitment, Promotion & Retention**

There are a number of national initiatives in place to ensure schools are seen as a model employer and an employer of choice. These initiatives make up part of the SEAX Trust's retention strategy.

However, in addition to these initiatives, the Trust seeks to support recruitment, promotion and retention in line with its own values and key drivers for success. With this in mind, particular attention should be given to the following areas (quotations are from the SEAX Trust Development Plan 2024-27):

### **SEAX Trust Culture**

The SEAX Trust culture is core to the offer we make to our pupils and students and our culture reflects the principles upon which the Trust is based to the wider Trust community. Key to the

culture the Trust wishes to promote are the actions and behaviours of those people who are representative of it. The following points therefore sit at the heart of the Trust's people strategy:

- Positive promotion of the SEAX Trust vision and ethos to those inside and outside the SEAX community
- A culture of respect and dignity and a commitment to diversity, equality and inclusion
- A commitment to achieving excellence across the organisation
- A culture of knowledge-sharing and support which is encouraged, fostered and celebrated
- An incremental move towards leadership and management of business services centrally, including admin, catering & site teams, allowing schools a sole focus on teaching and learning
- An awareness of the psychological reasons by which individuals are drawn to work in the education sector and an understanding of what this may mean for the organisation and how this might be managed in order that professionalism and student support remain the organisation's key focus
- Development of outreach training and in-reach 'Taster sessions' to build reputation as a 'learning and development trust for SEND'
- Clear capability and disciplinary procedures which support under-performance and tackle wrong-doing
- Continual review of the Trust's People Strategy, based on quantitative and qualitative data feedback and the developing vision and key performance indicators of the Trust.

## **Collaboration**

**"We achieve more together than we would ever do as individuals"**

- Central Team and Leadership consistently model collaboration and provide individual development opportunities both cross-Trust and externally
- Development of a data-driven 'coaching culture', where everyone is trained and has regular opportunity to practice a consistent model
- Broadening of Cross-Trust Working Groups, to represent all functions of the organisation, where policy & practice are developed by relevant stakeholders before ratification
- A consultation procedure where every stakeholder has opportunity to shape policy and practice
- Recognition of, and collaboration with, unions
- Pooling of job applicants cross-Trust, wherever possible, to ensure 'right fit'
- Annual SEAX Conference, providing opportunity for whole-Trust collaboration
- A cross-Trust newsletter with a focus on collaboration and connection, with articles written by staff, for staff
- Invitations to colleagues from all organisational functions to meet Trustees personally and a strong Central Team presence in schools

## **Wellbeing**

**"Wellbeing of our staff matters to us and we take a positive, proactive approach to ensuring this is considered in all decision making"**

- A Wellbeing Charter developed by employees and further development of the Trust's wellbeing group with representation from all provisions and the presence of a wellbeing lead in all schools

- Regular all-staff wellbeing surveys, which are acted upon by leaders and where those actions are published
- Pro-active support and training for mental and physical health needs; OH, employee assistance programme, supervision, counselling, mediation, coaching and the provision of reasonable adjustments
- Adoption of the DfE's Workload Reduction Toolkit and promotion of other time-saving methods to reduce workload, such as the removal of unnecessary meetings and promotion of remote meetings where possible
- Workload impact assessments in relation to the adoption of new policies
- A wide variety of routes and encouragement to raise matters of concern, including bespoke Whistleblowing, Grievance and Complaints Procedures
- A range of cross-Trust support groups, working groups and opportunities for key staff to develop policy and procedure
- Recognition of, and collaboration with, unions
- An 'open-door' policy – both within schools and for staff to approach the Central Team
- Regular invitations to colleagues from all organisational functions to 'meet the Trustees' and a strong Central Team presence in schools
- Data-driven monitoring of work-life balance expectation and workload support framework
- Regular formal and informal consultation and feedback opportunities for all employees
- A consultation procedure where every stakeholder has opportunity to shape policy and practice and which includes collaboration with unions
- On-going adoption of national and local Terms & Conditions, pay scales and pension facilities for teaching and support staff
- A total reward package and recognition of achievement (See **Appendix A**)
- Regular bench-marking exercises of comparative local and national remuneration
- The maintenance of clear job descriptions, bespoke to SEAX schools, which are reviewed regularly
- A thorough and consistent induction procedure and 'buddy' system at commencement of employment and on change of role
- Provision of a Staff Handbook, where easy-access for all employees allows clear, fair and consistent procedures to be communicated
- Whole-Trust Sickness and Leave of Absence policies, based on trigger points to ensure fairness and consistency
- A commitment to flexible working practices through the Trust's Flexible Working Policy, including fixed-term contracts, job-share opportunities and the ongoing opportunity to work more flexibility and from home where the role allows
- A zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment
- Leavers' surveys and interviews – with regular turnover reports submitted to Trustees

## **Equality & Diversity**

**"We celebrate, embrace and seek out a diverse workforce and which reflects the diversity of our young people and their families"**

- A 'live' Equality & Diversity Policy, including bi-annual targets set and monitored by all stakeholders, with transparent publication of progress on website
- Staff equality and diversity training from induction and throughout career

- A published undertaking to ensure swift and thorough action whenever concerns are raised
- Our anti-racism commitment ensures all staff understand that swift action will be taken to prevent racism at any level
- Targeted advertising to ensure minority pupil groups are consistently represented and reflected in the workforce
- Apprenticeship, work experience and FTC opportunities for our own SEAX pupil population
- Inclusive leadership training
- On-going 'Disability Confident Employer' status, which supports neurodiversity-friendly employment
- Trustee monitoring reports on employment, reward and development opportunities in relation to minority groups
- Anonymisation of all application forms
- A practice to seek direct feedback in relation to the experience of those in our community with protected characteristics and a requirement for their direct input in our marketing materials
- A commitment to reduce the Trust's Gender Pay Gap with annual reports made publicly available
- Regular bench-marking exercises of comparative local and national remuneration (see Wellbeing section above)
- Whole-Trust Sickness and Leave of Absence policies, based on trigger points to ensure fairness and consistency (see Wellbeing section above)

## **Staff Progression & Development**

### **"Staff development is essential to developing and keeping the best quality staff"**

- The promotion of continuous, high-quality personal development opportunities, including in-house and external training, apprenticeship and 'Challenge Partners' opportunities
- A 'Career Pathway' approach, promoting in-house training opportunities and resulting in individuals who can cover absence and are ready to apply for the next career move – inside or outside the Trust
- A healthy staff turnover figure
- A thorough and consistent induction procedure and 'buddy' system at commencement of employment and on change of role (see Wellbeing section above)
- A whole-Trust PMR system, bespoke to SEAX Trust, linked to individual professional standards and mediated by the Headteacher Group/Pay Committee, in order that staff reward is judged fairly and consistently
- 360 degree PMRs for Leaders and the Central Team with an option to 'share' targets and feedback more transparently within relevant teams
- Promotion and development of a 'coaching culture', where key staff are trained in the delivery of a consistent cross-Trust coaching model
- Development of a 'Stepping-Stones' initiative where staff are encouraged to experience aspects of their chosen job family more widely
- Promotion of initiatives such as, '50 Ideas for CPD', for staff achievement whilst at SEAX Trust
- A culture of 'grow your own' to develop staff and aid recruitment
- Active leadership progression pathways, including support through NPQ programmes,

Challenge Partners, internal secondments and the identification and development of future leaders

- A framework for workforce planning, analysing talent/retention likelihood in line with Trust aims, resulting in development of an action plan where gaps are identified and acted on
- Development of a whole stakeholder understanding of the benefits of change
- Opportunities for staff to work cross-Trust on secondments/visits/'staff-swaps'
- All posts consistently advertised cross-Trust
- External benchmarking in terms of pay, reward and employment, in line with government initiatives in the education sector (see Wellbeing section above)
- Central Team attendance at local/national groups, conferences and 'partnering' with other Trusts.

## **Technology**

### **"Technology allows us to work at our most efficient and innovative"**

- HR analytics in the form of human capital/workforce reporting are technology-based; including absence/diversity/Gender Pay Gap/Exit information/wellbeing/ surveys – allowing us to predict and mitigate risk
- As a 'learning trust' we use technology to educate inside and outside the organisation, with outreach/training videos and 'bite-sized learning' readily available on our website and intranet
- A consistency of systems cross-Trust, in IT Platforms, MIS, Safeguarding and site management, facilitate efficient information retrieval centrally and aid communication
- A rigorous approach to data protection, led centrally, with external auditing
- PMR is an individual-centred and led process, where technology allows staff and Line Managers to update and review progress 'at a glance' throughout the year
- Induction is an on-line process, consistent cross-Trust and bespoke to SEAX
- I-pads are readily available for Trustees/SLT/Central Team, reducing the need for 'paper-based' meetings/interviews/committees
- Microsoft Teams' meetings allow attendance by a wider staff population, reducing unnecessary travel and time factors
- Full access to relevant websites and data bases from both work and home allow limitless access to data and information to inform future decisions
- Home-working is made possible through the use of relevant technology
- SEAX has a strong and positive presence on social media and uses this as an advertising medium
- The use of AI in administration, workload reduction and HR analytics gives rise to time-saving efficiencies
- The Digital Skills Framework technology is used to support staff
- Routine processing has been replaced by automated technology in admin, finance and HR procedures
- Ed-Tech solutions have enabled efficiencies in the classroom

## **Sustainability**

## **“We model sustainability in all that we do so we leave an important legacy for the next generation”**

- A flexible working policy, which applies from the point of employment
- Home-working options for all staff, where roles allow
- Microsoft Teams’ meetings, reducing travel implications (*see Technology section above*)
- ‘Green Badge’ recognition and culture
- Addressing potential funding and staffing issues pro-actively; putting pupil need and workforce quality first, restructuring and using capability/disciplinary procedures where necessary and upholding an honest and thorough attitude to risk
- A culture of reflection when vacancies arise, so that we are not merely replacing ‘like for like’, but giving full consideration to all aspects of where sustainability can be found
- A full explanation of the Trust’s commitment to sustainability at induction
- A full probationary period with review of regular targets for all staff – where underperformance is monitored and addressed.
- Climate education expectations are now part of the curriculum and a commitment to green skills development for our Estates Teams ensures that we take sustainability seriously across the Trust
- Remote meetings and local recruitment supports the reduction of commuting emissions and we use sustainability goals in procurement and workforce planning.

## **Recruiting the Best People**

### **“We aim to recruit the best to all roles in our schools and to keep them because they love working in the SEAX Trust”**

- A recruitment, promotion and retention policy which allows flexibility in order to attract, reward and retain the best people
- Hiring is an exercise as much in personal attitude as in skills and experience
- Capability/disciplinary policies which address ‘softer’ behaviours, such as a ‘can-do’ attitude, rather than merely skills-related performance
- Code of Conduct training annually for all staff
- Future planning includes ‘grow your own’ staff, linking with our PMR ‘next steps’ initiative and looking outwardly beyond the organisation for upcoming changes
- Turnover figures are below the national average for the education sector
- Data proving that SEAX Teachers are more likely to stay in the profession
- Consistency and fairness – in pay, development and opportunity
- Non-negotiable expectation that we are all professionals and that, as representatives of the Trust, this is embedded in everything we do
- We have an ethical philosophy and make ethical decisions linked to our key drivers
- Reward & recognition for the right people – developing a workforce with the values and drivers which align to those of the Trust
- A culture of conscientiously balancing support for the individual in line with the wider Trust community, with swift action taken to investigate wrong-doing, solve ‘wrong-fit’, grievances and disciplinary issues, and to support capability needs.

## **8. Indicators of Success**

The SEAX Trust uses a data-informed approach which includes a range of key performance indicators in order to measure the success of its People Strategy.

Amongst other markers, the Trust regularly measures:

- Turnover and retention figures
- Absence data
- Gender Pay Gap trajectory
- Diversity and equal opportunity metrics
- Workload reduction and wellbeing measures
- Staff Survey indicators
- Recruitment analytics

The SEAX Trust encourages any of its employees who may, at any time, consider resigning from their role, for whatever reason, to speak openly to their Line Manager at the earliest opportunity. Wherever possible, it is our wish to work together with employees to resolve issues, in order to support and retain our best staff members.

**Appendix A** Further information from the SEAX website, available at: [www.seaxtrust.com](http://www.seaxtrust.com) :

### Work with us ...

The **SEAX Trust** is a small but growing partnership of Special Academies within the community of Essex, whose Vision is to:

- **put no limits on what we believe young people can achieve; creating opportunities and meeting individual needs so that our young people can live rich and fulfilled lives;**
- **have the courage and drive to challenge and champion change to enable equal opportunity and equity for all;**
- **influence, respect, listen and act and which in turn is known as a voice to listen to, act upon and respect.**

Our greatest asset towards achieving our Vision is our body of **highly-valued staff** and, in recognition, we implement a wide range of **strategic and person-centred reward practices** in all of our Trust Academies.

### Be rewarded by us ...

By becoming part of a team of **outward-looking professionals**, where you can influence the future

### Progress with us ...

A focus to provide high quality **professional development** opportunities for all staff  
An extensive range of **training and development** opportunities, including **Challenge Partners and NPQ**  
Experienced and **dedicated practitioners** who are keen to help you learn  
A range of exciting internal **career opportunities**  
**Automatic pay progression** and a professional growth framework which is supported by a Trust-wide coaching culture

### Be inspired by us ...

**Challenging** roles and **recognition** of achievement  
A **motivational** strategy towards both education and business  
Staff **involvement** in wider decision-making  
Teachers who **stay in the profession**

### Be reassured by us ...

A strategic aim to ensure a **fair work/life balance**  
A **highly supportive** organisational culture  
A firm commitment to the strengths of **equality and diversity**  
A sense of **cohesion and belonging**  
A policy to raise **matters of concern**

### Ask us ...

If you would like the opportunity to progress your career within the **SEAX Trust**, we would be delighted to hear from you. You can register your details and area of interest by contacting:

**Director of HR for SEAX Trust**

**Email: [jobs@seaxtrust.com](mailto:jobs@seaxtrust.com) Telephone: 01245 963000**

The **SEAX Trust** is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All posts are subject to satisfactory medical checks, enhanced DBS clearance and references.

**We look forward to hearing from you soon**