

JOB DESCRIPTION ADMISSIONS & PLACEMENTS PARTNER

PEOPLE MANAGER	Chief Growth & Strategy Officer
DIRECT REPORTS	SEND Admissions & Placements Coordinator & Referrals Coordinator
LOCATION	London

- This job description should be considered as guidance and is not exhaustive.
- It may be amended at any time following discussion between the People Manager and colleague and may be reviewed as part of the performance review process.
- The postholder may be required to undertake other duties as reasonably required by their People Manager or any member of the leadership team.
- All posts are subject to Enhanced DBS checks in addition to a range of other vetting checks as per the latest statutory safeguarding guidance.

OVERVIEW

The Admissions and Placement Partner is an integral member of the Head Office and Extended Leadership Team (ELT). This role is the architect of the OHS student placement pipeline, responsible for high-level oversight of our commercial relationships with Local Authorities, the long-term sustainability of our student population, and the effective leadership of the Admissions Department.

The Partner ensures that OHS's admissions and placement strategy is proactive, evidence-based, and aligned with our organisational growth targets. While overseeing the operational integrity of the referral process, the role strategically manages external partnerships, driving enrolment growth, and leading a high-performing team to ensure our provision remains the "provider of choice" for commissioners for existing commissioners and becomes it for new.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Strategic Growth:** Develop and implement a multi-year admissions and placement strategy to achieve or exceed growth targets across existing and new school sites. Forecast occupancy, pupil and colleague numbers, and income and expenditure, contributing to long-term strategic roadmaps.
- **Team Leadership & Development:** Provide direct management and supervision to the SEND Admissions and Placement Coordinator and Referrals Coordinator. Foster a high-performance culture, conduct performance reviews, and drive professional development within the department.
- **External Negotiation:** Act as the primary strategic contact for Local Authority commissioners and SEND leads, ensuring OHS maintains strong, influential professional relationships. Develop a structured approach to stakeholder engagement, ensuring regular contact with existing and potential commissioners.
- **Partnership & Stakeholder Engagement:** Lead strategic engagement with prospective parents and families, ensuring a compassionate, transparent, and responsive experience from initial enquiry through to placement. Cultivate wider stakeholder networks, including community organisations, parent advocacy groups, and relevant professional bodies, to enhance OHS's local profile and reputation beyond existing commissioner relationships.
- **Commercial Oversight:** Partner with the Director of Finance, under the oversight of the CGSO, to set fee structures based on comprehensive understanding of pupil need, provision costs, market rates, market segmentation, and location. Monitor pupil turnover and conduct impact assessments on placement profitability and revenue sustainability.
- **Strategic Reporting:** Work with the Data and Outcomes Analyst to provide the Board and SLMT with data-driven insights on placement trends, referral gaps, and market opportunities. Ensure referral data is used effectively to understand trends, barriers to conversion, and opportunities for growth.
- **Departmental Compliance:** Ensure the admissions and off-rollers registers are accurate and that all statutory returns (e.g., School Census/SLASCs) are completed with absolute precision.
- **Systemic Optimisation:** Lead the continuous improvement of referral tracking, response times, and follow-up systems. Ensure the admissions process is responsive, professional, and aligned with available capacity across all schools.
- **Placement Stability & Retention:** Oversee a proactive, solution-focused framework for pupils at risk of placement breakdown. Collaborate closely with site leadership to facilitate creative, sustainable pathways and provide strategic support to site-based staff teams when managing complex situations. Actively foster collaborative relationships with key school leaders to ensure placement continuity, strict adherence to placement deadlines, and the reduction of avoidable leavers.

EXPECTATIONS AS A MEMBER OF HEAD OFFICE & ELT

- **Strategic Development:** Work with the Chief Growth and Strategy Officer, Finance Team, and People Team to ensure admissions pipelines enable the broader business model. Actively support and champion growth and change, facilitating the successful transition of new sites into the OHS network.
- **Financial & Operational Oversight:** Partner with the Director, Finance, under the oversight of the CG&SO and the CEO, to set budgets, adhere to financial goals, and plan long-term expenditure for the admissions department. Ensure growth activity is aligned with OHS's values, quality expectations, and long-term strategy.
- **Leadership Presence:** Act as an ambassador for OHS, fostering a culture of collaboration across both internal schools and external partnerships. Professionally, compassionately, and effectively support and challenge SLMT colleagues to strive to achieve their KPIs and demonstrate the highest levels of relevant practice quality.
- **People and Culture:** Partner with the People Team on all people matters, workforce planning, and safer recruitment to create a positive, people-centric culture. Serve as an effective People and Performance Manager, holding regular performance management and career development conversations. Advocate for engagement surveys and lead meetings, investigations, interviews, and disciplinaries in line with OHS policy.
- **Communications:** Contribute to the OHS communications strategy and adhere to branding guidelines, utilising appropriate OHS templates and assets for all internal and external communications.
- **Professional Conduct:** Understand the positive intent of colleagues, actively seek feedback, listen to people, and enable the transition from a blame culture to collaboration and resolution.
- **Governance & Confidentiality:** Positively contribute to ELT meetings and development programmes, reporting to Committees and the Board as necessary. Understand and apply GDPR, data privacy, and the confidentiality of pupil, colleague, and business information. You acknowledge that all colleagues have a contractual responsibility not to access, share, or discuss confidential and sensitive information.

OHS BEHAVIOURS

We expect all OHS colleagues to demonstrate the following behaviours at all times towards pupils, colleagues and families: accountable, adaptable, collaborative, communicative, creative, empathetic, proactive, resilient.

SKILLS, TRAITS, KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING

- **Strategic Leadership:** Proven experience leading admissions/enrolment strategy in an independent special school environment. Strategic thinker with the ability to translate vision into deliverable plans.
- **People Management:** Demonstrated ability to lead, mentor, and performance-manage a team of operational colleagues.
- **Negotiation & Credibility:** High-level communication skills with the ability to influence and build consensus with external Local Authority commissioners. Confident communicator with the ability to represent the organisation externally.
- **Data-Driven:** Advanced ability to interpret complex data sets (provided by the Analyst) to identify trends and pivot strategy. Highly analytical with the ability to make evidence-informed recommendations.
- **Operational Oversight:** A high-level understanding of the "mechanics" of admissions, the SEND Code of Practice, and the ISI standards, allowing you to design efficient systems and troubleshoot bottlenecks.
- **Values Alignment:** A commitment to the therapeutic, people-centric culture of Octavia House Schools.
- **Personal Presentation:** Exceptional presentation, punctuality, and the ability to maintain a professional manner under pressure.
- **Collaborative Mindset:** Strong ability to work constructively and collaboratively as part of a team. Excellent written communication skills, including the ability to produce Board-level papers.
- **Diplomacy & Resilience:** Ability to respond with tact and diplomacy to people at all levels, both face-to-face and over the telephone, to resolve contentious or difficult situations. Ability to manage workload, work under pressure, and use initiative in a constantly changing environment.
- **SEND Knowledge:** A strong understanding of child development, learning, and the specific needs of pupils with ACEs, SEMH, and associated SEND. Creative and imaginative thinker; solution-focused and proactive.

QUALIFICATIONS, TRAINING & EXPERIENCE

- Significant, successful experience of managing complex placement/admissions processes in the specialist education sector or an equivalent field.
- Proven track record of managing staff and achieving growth targets.
- Evidence of strategic business planning and budget management experience.
- Degree-level education or equivalent relevant professional qualification.
- Experience of recruiting, building, and leading teams. Safer Recruitment trained and certified (or willingness to complete upon appointment).