

As agreed by Trust Board 14.12.18



AD ASTRA ACADEMY TRUST PEOPLE STRATEGY 2019 - 2022

This People Strategy is designed to support the Trust's values and aims, specifically from the perspective of retaining and developing staff who make an outstanding contribution to Ad Astra. Staff will be supported to flourish and in turn provide an innovative, first class education to inspire our children to achieve their full potential.

Ad Astra meaning 'to the stars' and our strapline; 'STARS IN THE MAKING' is equally resonant with employees as with our pupils, they can all be the best they want to be within Ad Astra.

Our purpose is a singular statement that defines what we do and why we do it. It forms the basis from which all communications should stem. Our purpose has been defined and agreed as:

WORKING TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN

We have identified the following values that are the tenets, stars or "cornerstones" of our brand - the foundations on which the Ad Astra brand is built, and which helps us to simplify and articulate our ethos. In July 2018 the new STARS values were launched at our annual conference attended by the Regional Schools Commissioner, they are equally important to our employees as they are to our pupils;

SUPPORT

All employees, pupils and other stakeholders in our Trust will be given the support needed to not only achieve their ambitions but to enjoy and thrive within our Trust.

TOGETHERNESS

Togetherness is hugely important to us; it unites us and provides a community of support and challenge.

We share the same beliefs and values', there is a moral fibre and ethical strength that binds us together.

We have a genuine ambition to build something together. Schools help shape the Trust through collaboration and reciprocity. We are a collective 'talent pool' that shares best practice and drives the Trust forward.

ACHIEVE

Children are at the heart of everything that we do, and pupil achievement is our primary focus. Equally, we recognise and are driven to achieve success for all stakeholders across our Trust.

RESPECT

We operate within a culture of respect and integrity; qualities that make for a successful organisation.

We value everyone in the Trust, treating them with dignity.

We foster inclusivity by respecting and recognising individuals and giving each stakeholder a voice and a chance to help shape the direction of our organisation.

SUCCESS

We provide an innovative, first class education to inspire our children to reach their full potential.

A belief that every pupil matters and deserves the best education is what drives us.

Ad Astra – The next chapter for our people

As a Trust, over the next three years, we will strive to create a highly skilled and motivated workforce who feel empowered to deliver our vision. Ad Astra will continue to develop a culture where we are all accountable for the delivery of our personal, team, school and trust-wide objectives. Continuously improving the pupil experience is at the heart of everything we do.

Ad Astra realise that we are in a competitive market for talent and, over the next three years, the Trust will develop its position as an “Employer of Choice” through effective recruitment practices, which includes the promotion and appreciation of attractive terms and conditions of employment which are available to both teaching and support staff. Ad Astra will continue to develop its welcoming culture, which values and supports every member of staff and will also recognise individual and collective excellence. We wish to establish a culture and an organisation which people want to work, and aspire to work, for.

Ad Astra will continue to develop outstanding staff by recognising and rewarding our achievements through effective leadership and management and by providing a dynamic and supportive environment in which to work. Ad Astra will foster innovation so that ideas can flourish, embrace new ideas, encourage continuous improvement and will provide professional development to support career aspirations. Ad Astra wish to invest in employees learning, growth and well-being.

Ad Astra recognise that an effective People Strategy will not only attract and retain staff, but through the talents and strength of its people will also transform the lives of the pupils in our schools.

Over the next three years the Trust will focus on the following five objectives:

- **Objective 1** – Attract and retain excellent staff which results in the delivery of an outstanding provision for all of our pupils.
- **Objective 2** - Achieve potential and establish collaborative approaches to improvement across the Trust.
- **Objective 3** – Leadership and Management will be excellent, and succession planning across the Trust will be effective in developing and securing leaders of the highest quality.
- **Objective 4** – Welcome the staff from schools converting into Ad Astra and ensuring those staff are fully integrated into the work of the Trust.
- **Objective 5** – Reduce the Trust’s sickness absence rates to that of the Public Sector rate of absence in the Office for National Statistics “Sickness absence in the labour market: 2016” of 8.3 days per employee.

Objective 1 – Attract and retain excellent staff which results in the delivery of an outstanding provision for all of our pupils

We will attract and retain excellent staff who make an outstanding contribution through:

- Being an Employer of Choice
- Rewarding and recognising excellence
- Enabling leaders and managers to facilitate innovation
- Listen carefully to the views and feedback from our employees
- Valuing everyone in the Trust and treating all with dignity and respect

Strategies:

- Recruitment and selection processes, through the Trust's Safer Recruitment Policy, will support the recruitment of excellent staff
- We will ensure jobs are attractive to excellent candidates
- We will have a consistent approach to induction and the probation of new employees to enable them to quickly perform in their new roles to an excellent standard
- Career pathways will be clear
- We will invest in the growth and well-being of each employee
- Excellence will be recognised through both formal and informal mechanisms

What will success look like:

- Employees newly recruited to posts will report positively about their experience of the recruitment process and their first term in post. Initially at 75% satisfaction but increasing to 95% satisfaction during the three years of this plan
- For each vacancy advertised, it will attract candidates who meet, or exceed, the essential criteria requirements in the person specification
- The number of staff resigning their posts in the first two years of their employment will be less than 5%
- Evidence of continued delivery of an outstanding provision for all of our pupils within the Trust

Milestones and Timeline

Activity	2019	2020	2021
Undertake a check of each schools Safer Recruitment practices in accordance with the Trust's Policy			
Introduce a short anonymised employee survey for new employees asking questions about recruitment and induction processes			
Continuously check Job Descriptions and Person Specifications of posts to be advertised to ensure the job content is appropriate			
Continuously check with recruitment panels that candidates which meet the essential criteria have applied for each role.			
In accordance with appropriate HR Policy and Procedures put in place arrangements to ensure a consistent induction and probation arrangements across the Trust			
The Trust will ensure that career paths, throughout the Trust, are clear			
The Trust will ensure that the growth and well-being of each employee is included in the appraisal process			
The Trust will establish a formal mechanism for recognising employee excellence			

Objective 2 - Achieve potential and establish collaborative approaches to improvement across the Trust

We will support staff to enable them to achieve their potential through:

- Striving for excellence in all that we do
- Developing a workplace culture in all of our schools that enables high performance
- Attempting to break down barriers to success
- Creating a culture of lifelong learning for all
- Recognising and respecting the mutuality of expectation between employee and employer
- Providing focused and relevant CPD activities to support individual and school/trust growth and performance
- Encouraging collaborative approaches, both formal and informal across the Trust, to achieve our aims
- Celebrating and sharing best practice
- Achieving high levels of staff engagement within a supportive culture
- Monitoring the quality of teaching across the trust to support schools to provide lessons for pupils that are consistently good
- Building capacity to accelerate and sustain the quality of teaching across the Trust, through the creation of high quality CPD programmes, where our outstanding teachers are trained to coach and support others
- Trust/school improvement continues to be delivered

Strategies:

- Develop and ensure a consistent approach to the Trust's appraisal policies, so that all staff are able to articulate how they contribute to meeting the Trust's vision and strategic goals
- Appraisal cycle that links into the trust/school improvement plan
- Ensure staff development activity at both Trust and school level is targeted, focused and relevant, designed to enhance specific job-related skills, address advances in technology and equip staff to meet changing school/Trust expectations
- Equip leaders and managers with the necessary leadership skills to meet the existing and future needs of the school/Trust

What will success look like:

- High quality CPD programmes in place which is focused and relevant
- Both formal and informal collaborative approaches in place across the Trust
- High levels of staff engagement
- 100% of employees to have their appraisal formally reviewed annually (*as set out in the Trust's Key Performance Indicators 67 & 68*).
- An action plan put in place for every employee assessed as having performance needs to assist them achieve the required standard of performance
- Talented staff will be recognised, developed and retained to enable career development and succession planning
- High quality professional development of staff will mean that our trust and schools will attract and retain staff
- Quality of teaching continues to be sustained and improved

Milestones and Timeline

Activity	2019	2020	2021
Check and ensure a consistent approach to both the Trust's Teaching and Support Staff Appraisal schemes			
All employees within their appraisal cycle to outline how they contribute to the Trust's vision and strategic goals.			
The Appraisal cycle links into the Trust/School improvement plan			
All staff development activity at trust and school level is designed to enhance specific job-related skills, address advances in technology and equip staff to meet changing school/Trust expectations			
Trust leaders and managers are provided with leadership skills in order to meet existing and future needs of the school/trust			

Objective 3 – Leadership and Management will be excellent, and succession planning across the Trust will be effective in developing and securing leaders of the highest quality.

There will be excellence in leadership and management across the Trust, supported by effective development opportunities, and this will drive forward the achievement of the Trust aims and vision through:

- The embedding, by leaders and managers, of a culture of high performance at individual, team, school and Trust level
- Effective talent management and succession planning across the Trust
- Prioritising, with Trust and school leaders, the annual focus for leadership development across the Trust, that meets the needs of both the Trust and each school
- Middle and senior leaders being well trained and accredited in the latest theory and practice of excellent leadership, bringing this expertise into their practice
- Developing and deliver future leaders for our schools at every level of the Trust through high quality CPD opportunities
- Facilitating secondments and exchanges that share skills and develop capabilities that add value to the learning of pupils across the trust
- Tailored management CPD activity designed to meet individual needs and promote excellence

Strategies:

- Strengthen our approach to supporting leaders and managers so that they can lead and motivate teams
- Leaders and managers will be able to articulate the vision with clear expectations of performance, both individual and team, that enable the delivery of strategic goals
- Talented staff will be recognised, developed and retained to enable career development and succession planning

What will success look like:

- All leaders will be competent and confident to provide outstanding school leadership
- Trust and school leaders being perceived as delivering sustained high performance across the Trust
- Managers continually assess performance and measure it against organisational goals, activities or areas that will require support to improve
- Effective talent management and succession planning that ensures an internal talent pool of candidates for each management post within the Trust and strong resilience is guaranteed for trustees.
- Inspirational leadership is shared across the Trust
- Management and Leadership CPD is in place that meets the needs and expectations of both individuals and the schools/Trust
- High quality professional development of staff will mean that our Schools/Trust will attract and retain staff

Milestones and Timeline

Activity	2019	2020	2021
The Trust strengthens its approach to supporting Trust leaders and managers, so they can lead and motivate teams			
Trust leaders and managers are able to articulate the vision with clear expectations of performance, both individual and team, that enable the delivery of strategic goals			
Developing and deliver future leaders at each and every level of the Trust through high quality CPD opportunities			
The Trust will ensure that career paths, throughout the Trust, are clear			

Objective 4 – Welcome the staff from schools converting into Ad Astra and ensuring those staff are fully integrated into the work and culture of the Trust.

We will ensure staff converting into Ad Astra have a good experience of the Trust through the TUPE process, feel welcomed at the point of conversion and are fully integrated into the work and culture of the Trust through:

- Ensuring an effective TUPE Action Plan is in place and Ad Astra will attend all staff and trade union formal consultation meetings that we are invited to
- At the point of conversion all staff will receive a welcome to Ad Astra letter from the CEO
- Staff engagement pre and post conversion
- Collaborative working commences before conversion and is formally in place for the new school from the point of transfer
- Staff are encouraged to feel “part of the family” within the first term of the conversion

Strategies:

- For each conversion we will ensure a bespoke TUPE Action Plan is in place which meets the needs of all stakeholders
- Key employees will be fully up to date with the TUPE Regulations and established case law
- Leaders and Managers are able to articulate the Trust’s vision.

What will success look like:

- Staff recognising the strengths of Ad Astra and wanting to work for Ad Astra before the formal TUPE Action Plan commences
- Positive comments regarding the Trust from staff and trade unions at formal consultation meetings
- Staff engaging in collaborative working across the Trust before conversion
- High staff engagement post conversion
- Staff retention following conversion

Objective 5 – Reduce the Trust’s sickness absence rates to that of the Public Sector rate of absence in the Office for National Statistics “Sickness absence in the labour market: 2016” of 8.3 days per employee.

We will continue to develop an environment that encourages high levels of attendance at work, maintains a healthy workforce and eliminates unnecessary absences in order to contribute to the highest standards of service delivery within the Trust through:

- Working with headteachers, employees and Trade Unions with the Trust’s Absence Management Policy
- Developing school sickness absence information
- Regular monitoring of absence rates
- Supporting the positive health of employees
- Celebrate and share good practice within the Trust.
- The introduction of staff wellbeing policies
- Proactively supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of Ad Astra employees
- Reviewing top reasons for sickness absence in each school and providing targeted activity to address

Strategies:

- Constantly seek out best practice in respect of absence management
- Highlighting the importance of attendance at work at trust and school levels
- Encourage a healthy workforce
- Equip leaders and managers with the necessary skills to manage absence management

What will success look like:

- Absence rates reduce to that of the Public Sector rate of absence in the Office for National Statistics “Sickness absence in the labour market” (*as set out in the Trust’s Key Performance Indicator 63*).
- Support the positive health of employees, with lower levels of sickness absence and greater engagement with work
- Established relationship between work and improved health and well-being
- Creating a culture of a healthy workforce

Milestones and Timeline

Activity	2019	2020	2021
The Trust seeks out national best practice in respect of absence management			
The Trust introduces a new Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy			
Initiatives introduced to highlight the importance of attendance at work at trust and school levels			
Initiatives introduced to encourage a healthy workforce			
Trust leaders and managers are provided with leadership skills in order to manage absence management			