

Job description: Head of Employee Relations

In this key role, you will provide strategic direction and leadership for all employee relations matters, lead negotiations and manage relationships with recognised trade unions, develop and support your Regional People Partner Team, drive HR change management initiatives, leverage HR systems and drive insight through people data analytics and reporting, oversee the performance management framework, and champion Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in everything you do.

This role requires significant experience and expertise in employment law, strategic leadership, HR change management and relationship management, ensuring a fair and consistent approach to employee relations across our trust which aligns with our values. In addition to significant employment law experience, this role requires strong expertise in the national terms and conditions for education staff, including the Green Book and Burgundy Book frameworks.

Your work will directly contribute to our mission of ensuring every child has excellent learning opportunities, inside and outside of the classroom, which enrich their lives and afford them choice and opportunity in the future.

Department: People and Communications

Manager: National Director of People and Communications

Flexible working: Home based with regular attendance required at our central Birmingham office as well as regular travel to our schools and other locations as necessary.

Grade: OAT HO 32 - 34

Key responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Develop and implement our employee relations strategy, ensuring alignment with Ormiston goals and values.
- Act as a trusted advisor to senior leaders in our schools on all employee relations matters, including high-risk and sensitive cases and strategic workforce planning.
- Drive initiatives to build a positive employee relations culture, promoting fairness, inclusivity, and engagement across all Ormiston schools.
- Influence organisational decision-making through data-driven insights and strategic recommendations on workforce trends and employee relations matters.
- Lead initiatives to foster a positive employee relations climate, ensuring consistent practices across all academies.

Trade Union and JCC Engagement

- Lead high-level engagement with recognised trade unions, fostering strong, collaborative relationships while maintaining Ormiston's strategic objectives.
- Engage with the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC), ensuring productive dialogue on key organisational issues and change initiatives.

- Lead on negotiations and collective bargaining agreements, ensuring outcomes are fair, compliant, and aligned with Ormiston's strategic priorities.
- The role requires expertise in national terms and conditions for education staff, including the Green Book and Burgundy Book frameworks.

Employee Relations

- Oversee and manage complex and high-profile employee relations cases, including grievances, disciplinary actions, capability, and workplace conflicts, ensuring consistent and legally compliant resolutions.
- Provide expert guidance and support on all aspects of employee relations for HR teams and school leaders.
- Act as the Ormiston's lead representative in employment tribunals, working closely with legal advisors to manage cases effectively and mitigate risk.

People Change Management

- Provide senior leadership for HR change management initiatives, including restructuring, redundancy and TUPE processes.
- Develop and implement change management strategies that ensure staff engagement, effective communication, and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.
- Work closely with school leaders and HR teams to support change initiatives, providing expert guidance to mitigate risks and address employee concerns.
- Act as the senior point of contact for organisational change consultations, balancing operational needs with employee wellbeing and compliance requirements.
- Ensure that change processes are handled with sensitivity and professionalism, upholding the Ormiston's values and commitment to fairness.
- Lead the onboarding of any new academies joining Ormiston, ensuring the requirements of TUPE are met and that any new employees are appropriately inducted into the organisation. Liaise with relevant systems providers to plan the transfer of staff data and training for school-based teams. Represent the Ormiston at the consultation meetings working with the OAT project team and Legal Team as appropriate

Job Evaluation and Pay Structures

- Working with the Head of Recruitment and Retention, lead our job evaluation processes to ensure fairness, consistency, and compliance with relevant frameworks.
- Oversee the development and maintenance of clear and transparent pay and grading structures, ensuring alignment with organisational objectives and market benchmarks.
- Provide expert advice to senior leaders on job evaluation outcomes and implications for pay policies.
- Manage job evaluation appeals and reviews, ensuring transparency and trust in the process.

Policy Development and Compliance

- Work with the Head of People Policy, Process and Systems to develop, review and implement employee relations policies and procedures, ensuring compliance with UK employment law and best practice.
- Ensure governance and consistency in policy application across Ormiston, with clear frameworks for accountability and provide training and support to managers where required.

- Stay updated with legislative changes to inform the work of you and your team and provide proactive advice for senior leaders in our schools on potential impacts and required actions.

Capacity Building and Leadership Development

- Work with the learning team to design and deliver HR related training for senior leaders and managers on employee relations topics, including topics such as handling disciplinary and grievance processes, and employment law updates.
- Coach and mentor HR colleagues both in schools and the central team, building expertise and consistency in employee relations handling.

HR Information Systems (HRIS)

- Oversee the effective use of HRIS to support employee relations and workforce management.
- Leverage HR technology to monitor employee relations metrics, case management, and compliance, ensuring data integrity and accuracy.
- Collaborate relevant teams to enhance HRIS functionality, improving reporting capabilities and user experience.
- Drive digital transformation initiatives within HR to streamline processes and improve efficiency.

Data Analysis and Reporting

- Lead on the analysis of employee relations data, identifying trends and risks to inform strategic decision-making.
- Provide insights from HRIS data to inform strategic decisions, identifying trends, risks, and opportunities across the workforce.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

- Act as a senior advocate for EDI, embedding inclusive practices in all employee relations and workforce policies.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to identify and address barriers to inclusion, promoting equity and representation.
- Ensure compliance with equalities legislation and support leaders in embedding EDI within their schools and teams.
- Champion diversity, equity, and inclusion within employee relations practices, ensuring the Ormiston remains an inclusive employer of choice.

Delivering Excellence Performance Culture

- Work collaboratively with school Principals and leadership teams to promote a high-performance delivering excellence culture.
- Lead on the Delivering Excellence framework in relation to personal development and objective setting and associated process and policies.
- Act as a senior ambassador, representing its values and vision internally and externally.

Qualifications and Experience

Essential:

- MCIPD qualified (or equivalent experience)
- Public sector experience
- Significant experience in a senior employee relations role, preferably within the education sector or a similarly large and complex organisation.
- In-depth knowledge and expertise of UK employment law and proven experience in managing complex employee relations issues.
- Proven track record in leading trade union negotiations and managing relationships with recognised unions and consultative bodies at a senior level.
- Demonstrated expertise in representing organisations at employment tribunals, including preparation, representation, and risk management of high-level cases.
- Strategic leadership experience in HR change management including restructuring, redundancy and TUPE transfers.
- Strong leadership skills with a track record of delivering results in a challenging and fast-paced environment.

Desirable:

- Experience in a multi-academy trust setting.

Skills and attributes

- Excellent communication, negotiation, and influencing skills, with the ability to build trust and credibility at all levels.
- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to make informed decisions under pressure.
- A collaborative and inclusive leadership style, with a commitment to fostering a positive and supportive workplace culture.
- Resilient and decisive, with the ability to manage competing priorities and deliver results under pressure.
- Experience with HRIS platforms and leveraging HR technology to support workforce planning and employee relations.
- Strong knowledge and experience of job evaluation frameworks and developing pay structures.
- In-depth understanding of the Green Book and Burgundy Book frameworks and their application within education settings.
- High levels of integrity, discretion, and professionalism.
- Ability to develop creative approaches to problem solving.
- Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils.
- Self-motivated and proactive, able to take initiative and lead by example.