



PIONEER LEARNING TRUST

Pursuing Excellence and Equity

Catering Service Manager
Required for February 2026

About Us

Pioneer Learning Trust is a growing Multi Academy Trust of 7 primary schools based in Luton and Bedford. The Trust is committed to the pursuit of excellence and equity, ensuring that all pupils have the best possible opportunities and the highest quality of education possible. Schools and their staff are committed to the vision of the Trust and work collaboratively to achieve this.

Within the Trust there are currently 7 schools and the trust works closely with a number of other schools outside of the organisation. Currently one of our partner schools purchases the Catering Management Service and marketing the Catering Service to other potential schools is part of this role.

Our school kitchens offer a comprehensive catering offer to schools and the Trust, built around the core provision of school meals but also including the provision of meals for staff in all schools and a catering offer for school and trust events, such as training sessions hosted in our schools and other local venues.

About the role

Pioneer Learning Trust is looking for a Catering Service Manager to provide and promote our catering services to the wider community whilst overseeing our Trust and external kitchens. You will be a creative person and competent in all aspects of kitchen management, with excellent customer service and staff management skills.

The successful candidate will be the primary point of contact and represent the Pioneer Learning Trust in the organising of catering functions, enhancing our reputation and developing the service. This is an exciting opportunity for an ambitious professional to join a fast growing Multi Academy Trust, at a key stage of their development.

Terms of employment

37 hours per week - specific hours to be negotiated.

Term Time plus 2 weeks.

Level 7 - £33,146 – £35,688 (actual salary)

Some out of hours working will be required, with advance notice, including: school events, parents' evenings, governor meetings and/or Trust Board, etc. (time offset against the 2 additional weeks)

Job Description

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| Job Title | Catering Support Manager |
| Level | Level 7 |
| Reports to | Trust School Business Partner/CFOO |
| Responsible for | Kitchen Managers, Cook and General Kitchen Assistants |
| Liaison with | All Stakeholders including Staff, Headteacher, Pupils, Parents, Suppliers, Service Users and Contractors |
| Job Purpose | <p>The post holder will have a proactive, comprehensive role in ensuring that management and delivery of our Catering Services within set budget targets are maintained and monitored to The Pioneer Learning Trust's standards.</p> <p>In addition, the post holder will be responsible for liaising with external service users purchasing the service from the Trust and for presenting the service to potential new clients.</p> <p>Whilst the main purpose of the catering service is to our pupils, providing fresh, high quality, balanced meals, adhering to the school food standards, the schools' kitchens also provide a wider catering service offer to schools and the Trust, catering events and activities, as required.</p> |
| Catering Provision | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary point of contact for service users. • Promote and develop the service, including working with schools to promote the service to parents. • Ensure the efficient and effective running of the catering service. • Maintain budgetary control and provide quality catering services. • Create and manage supplier and service user relationships. • Liaise with schools in responding to catering needs for occasional events or hospitality. • Work closely with school leaders to plan culturally appropriate theme menus as part of the annual catering menu cycle. |
| Managing Staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly line manage the Kitchen Managers, in accordance with the Trust's Staff Appraisal Policy. • Ensure that Kitchen Managers provide effective guidance and line management of their kitchen teams. • Support kitchen managers in ensuring that food quality is of a high standard. • Work directly with Headteachers to support the recruitment of sufficient skilled staff in each kitchen to meet the needs of the service. • Liaise with Headteachers to consider options to provide continuation of staffing during periods of staff absence or to manage gaps in staffing due to outstanding vacancies. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out induction, on-job and internal training ensuring all staff receive required training and skills to achieve high standards of service. |
| Managing Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design menus in collaboration with schools to ensure meals are attractive to children and provide a balanced diet to meet the required school food standards within the agreed 'per meal' cost range. • Work within budgets to ensure that high quality meals are provided within agreed 'per meal' cost ranges. • Ensure best value in food supplies, liaising with providers to ensure the best quality and price. • Ensure all kitchens are supplied with sufficient catering equipment and cleaning materials. • To liaise with Kitchen Managers to ensure all equipment is regularly maintained and that working environments are safe and adequately stocked to provide services. |
| Health and Safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure compliance with agreed Health and Safety policy and COSHH Regulations with regard to food, equipment, materials and general safety, within all kitchens. • Promote customer and staff safety. • Carry out regular kitchen inspections. • Create and manage all relevant policies and procedures in kitchens to ensure that these remain robust and compliant with legislative requirements. |
| General | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uphold and represent the Trust's values. • To work as part of the Trust and school team, adhering to all Trust policies and the Code of Conduct. • To actively contribute to development initiatives to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service, including new ideas and food policies to support the raising of standards in school and aspects of commercial viability. • Enhance customer choice and satisfaction. |

This role will involve travelling between sites and will require a 'hands-on' approach; providing practical support for schools.

All staff are part of a trust wide team and are required to support the values and ethos of the trust and trust priorities as defined in individual School Improvement Plans and the overall Trust Development Plan. This will mean focussing on the needs of colleagues, parents and pupils and being flexible in a busy pressurised environment.

Because of the nature of this job, it will be necessary for the appropriate level of criminal record disclosure to be undertaken. Therefore, it is essential in making your application you disclose whether you have any pending charges, convictions, bind-overs or cautions and, if so, for which offences. This

post will be exempt from the provisions of Section 4 (2) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders 1974 (Exemptions) (Amendments) Order 1986. Therefore, applicants are not entitled to withhold information about convictions which for other purposes are 'spent' under the provision of the Act, and, in the event of the employment being taken up, any failure to disclose such convictions will result in dismissal or disciplinary action by the Authority. The fact that a pending charge, conviction, bind-over or caution has been recorded against you will not necessarily debar you from consideration for this appointment.

Disclosures are handled in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice which can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice>

Physical Effort: The Catering Service Manager post will require physical effort, eg. lifting light catering equipment such as cutlery, crockery, boxes of prepared food in and out of a vehicle.

Working Environment: Occasional work in a kitchen environment, where temperatures are likely to be higher than normal, especially during hot weather

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff to share this commitment. Applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

CVs will not be accepted for any posts based in schools.



Person specification

The ideal candidate would be expected to show evidence of many of the following skills and qualities. The following information demonstrates the qualities that would be considered essential or desirable and how these will be tested during the recruitment process.

| Experience and knowledge (tested in covering letter, application form, skills tests and at interview) | Essential | Desirable |
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| In depth experience of large-scale catering management | ✓ | |
| Some experience of cash handling procedures | ✓ | |
| Experience of school meals provision | | ✓ |
| Skills and abilities (tested in covering letter, skills tests and at interview) | Essential | Desirable |
| Able to manage and motivate teams of people | ✓ | |
| Demonstrable level of communication skills, verbal and written at all levels | ✓ | |
| Able to work within and monitor strict budget control | ✓ | |
| Able to organise workload and delegate tasks meet demand deadline and targets and to train others on and off job | ✓ | |
| Current UK Driving licence. | ✓ | |
| Able to converse with ease with members of the public and provide effective help or advice in accurate and fluent spoken English | ✓ | |
| Some marketing skills | | ✓ |
| Knowledge of modern administrative methods and IT | ✓ | |
| Specialist Knowledge (tested in covering letter, application form and at interview) | Essential | Desirable |
| In depth knowledge in practical & theoretical catering | ✓ | |
| Demonstrable knowledge of Health and Safety and Catering related legislation | ✓ | |
| An understanding of cashless payment procedures | | ✓ |
| Some knowledge of school meals provision | | ✓ |
| Education and Training (Proof of Qualification) | Essential | Desirable |
| Minimum NVQ Level 3 or equivalent in Catering or food production and cooking | ✓ | |
| Knowledge of Health & Safety and COSHH regulations with regard to all areas of catering i.e. food preparation, equipment etc. | ✓ | |
| Other Requirements | Essential | Desirable |
| Able to travel daily to multiple sites (car user) | ✓ | |
| Attitudes (tested at interview) | Essential | Desirable |
| A positive attitude towards education and young people. | ✓ | |
| Awareness of and ability to recognise and respond to forms of discrimination | ✓ | |
| Ability to keep calm under pressure when necessary. | ✓ | |
| Flexible and adaptable | ✓ | |
| Respect and maintain confidentiality | ✓ | |