

Job Description

Executive Head Chef & Catering Lead

Job title	Executive Head Chef & Catering Lead	Based at	Central
Line Manager	CEO		
Direct Line Management responsibility	Chefs/Cooks	Indirect Line Management responsibility	Catering Assistants, Lunchtime Supervisors
Frequent working relationships	Catering Teams, School Leadership Teams, Central Team, Trust Estates Team Pupils, Families, suppliers		

Main purpose of the role	To lead and manage the Trust's catering provision, delivering high-quality, nutritious and cost-effective meals across all schools. The role is responsible for the strategic development and continuous improvement of the catering service, including menu development, food quality, staff leadership, financial performance and compliance with all relevant legislation, while promoting healthy eating and a positive whole-school food culture.
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Duties & responsibilities

For all roles

- Understand and implement all Safeguarding policies and procedures in relation to working with children and young people
- Adhere to all Trust policies and procedures
- Be responsible for own continuing professional development
- Attend meetings as requested
- Maintain confidentiality at all times
- Undertake other duties as appropriate to the level of the role as required

Duties & responsibilities

1. To lead, support and direct catering teams across all schools, inspiring high standards and promoting a positive catering culture.

2. To provide strategic leadership for catering services across the Trust, working collaboratively with school leaders and catering teams to ensure a consistent, high-quality, compliant and financially sustainable service.
3. To hold regular team meetings and staff briefings, ensuring effective communication across catering teams and liaising with senior school leaders and Trust managers as required.
4. To assist with the recruitment, selection, induction and onboarding of new catering staff, ensuring they receive appropriate training and support.
5. To be responsible for identifying, coordinating and maintaining all catering staff training requirements, ensuring accurate and up-to-date training records are maintained.
6. To train, mentor and develop catering staff, ensuring consistent culinary standards and service across all schools.
7. To lead the preparation and delivery of fresh, nutritious and high-quality meals that meet agreed standards and reflect a passion for healthy food.
8. To develop, review and maintain seasonal menus in line with School Food Standards and the nutritional needs of pupils.
9. To ensure meals are prepared, presented and served in an attractive and appetising manner.
10. To work effectively to deadlines, ensuring meals are prepared and served promptly.
11. To understand and cater for special dietary requirements, ensuring pupils' individual needs are met safely and appropriately.
12. To review, implement and monitor the Trust's Allergy Safety Policy and associated procedures within the catering service.
13. To ensure accurate records of all legally defined allergens are maintained and available when required.
14. To ensure suitable controls are in place to minimise allergen cross-contact during the storage, preparation, cooking, cleaning and service of food.
15. To ensure all catering operations comply with food safety legislation, health and safety requirements and HACCP principles.
16. To ensure all work is carried out hygienically, safely and efficiently and that high standards of cleanliness are maintained at all times.
17. To ensure cleaning schedules are implemented, monitored and completed.
18. To ensure all kitchen equipment is maintained in good working order and that faults are reported and addressed in accordance with Trust procedures.
19. To take all necessary steps to ensure the security of kitchen equipment, stock, supplies and catering areas.
20. To ensure catering resources and finances are managed efficiently, delivering high-quality services and value for money.
21. To develop positive relationships with suppliers and stakeholders to support the effective delivery of catering services.
22. To arrange appropriate staffing cover where necessary to ensure continuity of service.
23. To support the promotion of school meals and initiatives designed to increase meal uptake.
24. To support the schools' commitment to pupil health, wellbeing and healthy lifestyles.
25. To work with schools to identify and support opportunities for food education, curriculum enrichment and pupil engagement in line with local needs and priorities.
26. To deal with feedback in accordance with school and Trust procedures, ensuring issues are investigated and resolved promptly.
27. To undertake any other duties commensurate with the grade and responsibilities of the post as reasonably required by the Trust.

Mandatory training

Prior to starting employment

- Child Protection/Safeguarding
- Online safety
- Prevent
- Cyber security
- GDPR
- Equality & inclusion
- Health & Safety awareness (in induction pack)
- Fire awareness (in induction pack)
- Health & Safety induction

Role specific

- Food Safety/Hygiene Level 3
- Allergen Awareness

Prepared by: An Daras Trust

Date: October 2026

Person Specification

Executive Head Chef & Catering Lead

Qualifications & Training		Essential	Desirable	How identified		For shortlisting only
Criteria				Application form	Interview	Criteria met (application form)
1.	Level 3 (or higher) Food Safety & Hygiene	✓		✓		
2.	HACCP/Food Safety qualification		✓	✓		
3.	Relevant catering, hospitality or professional cookery qualification (Level 3 or above)	✓		✓	✓	
4.	Allergy Awareness/Allergen Management training	✓		✓		
5.	School Food Standards Training		✓	✓		
6.	Catering management qualification		✓	✓		
7.	Management or Leadership qualification (eg: ILM, CMI or equivalent)		✓	✓		
8.	H&S qualification (eg: IOSH Managing Safely)		✓	✓		

Experience		Essential	Desirable	How identified		For shortlisting only
Criteria				Application form	Interview	Criteria met (application form)
1.	Professional catering experience including leading/supervision of catering staff	✓		✓	✓	
2.	Experience of planning, preparing and delivering high-quality meals for large numbers of people	✓		✓	✓	

3.	Experience of ordering, stock control & budget management	✓		✓	✓	
4.	Experience of maintaining high food hygiene & safety standards	✓		✓	✓	
5.	Experience in managing &/or supporting special dietary requirements	✓		✓	✓	
6.	Experience managing food allergies and allergen controls	✓		✓	✓	
7.	Experience in Primary School or other education catering		✓	✓	✓	
8.	Experience of implementing service improvements and increasing meal uptake		✓	✓	✓	

Knowledge		Essential	Desirable	How identified		For shortlisting only
Criteria				Application form	Interview	Criteria met (application form)
1.	Current food safety & hygiene legislation	✓		✓		
2.	Food allergen management including current laws	✓		✓		
3.	School Food Standards & nutritional requirements for children		✓	✓		
4.	Catering procurement & stock management	✓		✓		

Skills	Essential	Desirable	How identified		For shortlisting only
Criteria			Application form	Interview	Criteria met (application form)

1.	Strong leadership & people management skills	✓		✓	✓	
2.	Excellent culinary and food production skills	✓		✓	✓	
3.	Ability to plan, organise and prioritise workloads effectively	✓		✓	✓	
4.	Strong communication and interpersonal skills.	✓		✓	✓	
5.	Ability to analyse performance data and identify improvements	✓		✓	✓	
6.	Problem-solving and decision-making skills	✓		✓	✓	
7.	Ability to work as part of a team & independently	✓		✓	✓	

Other		Essential	Desirable	How identified		For shortlisting only
Criteria				Application form	Interview	Criteria met (application form)
1.	Displays an awareness, understanding & commitment to the protection & safeguarding of children & young people	✓		✓	✓	
2.	Ability to travel between sites	✓		✓	✓	
3.	Ability to work flexibly across multiple sites	✓		✓	✓	