GORSE

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: GORSE Kitchen – Chef/Area Manager
Grade: SO1-SO2
Reporting to: Trust Catering Manager/Deputy Trust Catering Manager
Location: Trust-wide – central team office and academy based (multi-site)

Job Purpose
To lead the practical development and delivery of high-quality, nutritious and appealing food across GORSE Kitchen, with particular responsibility for menu innovation, recipe development, food standards and the training and development of catering colleagues across the trust.

The postholder will work alongside the Trust Catering Manager and academy catering teams to translate trust-wide catering priorities into consistently excellent food. Through hands-on kitchen support, coaching, demonstrations and quality reviews, the Chef / Area Manager will strengthen culinary skills, improve the pupil dining experience and promote a positive food culture across all academies.

Key Responsibilities

Food and Menu Development
- Lead the practical design, testing and continuous improvement of seasonal, nutritious and appealing menus for primary, secondary and post-16 settings, working with the Trust Catering Manager.
- Develop, trial and refine recipes that meet applicable school food standards, reflect pupil preferences and accommodate approved dietary and allergen requirements.
- Produce clear standardised recipes, ingredient specifications, preparation instructions, portion guidance and presentation standards to support consistent delivery across sites.
- Introduce fresh ideas and food trends appropriate to school catering, balancing taste, nutritional quality, kitchen capacity, cost and operational practicality.
- Arrange tasting sessions and gather structured feedback from pupils, staff and catering teams; use findings and meal uptake information to recommend menu improvements.
- Support the development of breakfast, breaktime, lunchtime, hospitality and themed food offers where appropriate.

Training, Coaching and Colleague Development
- Design and deliver a practical programme of culinary training, demonstrations and refresher sessions for Catering Managers, cooks and catering colleagues.
- Provide hands-on coaching in preparation techniques, seasoning, batch cooking, portioning, food presentation and efficient service.
- Identify culinary skills gaps through kitchen visits and work with the Trust Catering Manager to prioritise individual and team development.
- Develop easy-to-use training materials, recipe guides and visual standards; support effective induction of new catering colleagues.
- Mentor colleagues positively, share good practice between academies and help build confidence, capability and pride in food quality.
- Evaluate training effectiveness through observation, feedback and improvements in food quality and consistency.

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Food Quality Assurance and Area Support

- Undertake regular planned visits to academy kitchens, providing visible, practical support during preparation and service.
- Review food quality, flavour, temperature, texture, appearance, portion consistency and the overall presentation of meals; agree practical improvements with local teams.
- Support catering colleagues to deliver menus reliably while adapting methods to the facilities and needs of individual academies.
- Help resolve food-related operational challenges, including recipe execution, product substitutions, production planning and service pressures.
- Promote consistent standards and share examples of excellent practice across GORSE Kitchen.
- Provide temporary practical kitchen support when reasonably required, without displacing the normal responsibilities of academy Catering Managers.

Food Safety, Nutrition and Inclusive Provision

- Model and reinforce excellent food hygiene, safe food preparation, temperature control, allergen awareness and cross-contact prevention in all practical activities.
- Ensure recipe development, ingredient substitutions and training materials support accurate allergen information and agreed processes for individual dietary needs.
- Work with the Trust Catering Manager and relevant colleagues to ensure proposed menus and recipes meet applicable food standards and meet the agreed nutritional requirements.
- Identify and promptly escalate food safety, allergen or quality concerns through established trust procedures.
- Support colleagues in implementing food safety management arrangements, including HACCP-based procedures, within the scope of the role.

Cost Awareness and Continuous Improvement

- Develop recipes and menus with appropriate regard to ingredient costs, portion control, yield, food waste and value for money.
- Work with the Trust Catering Manager to review the practical impact of ingredient choices and supplier products on food quality and kitchen efficiency.
- Identify opportunities to reduce avoidable waste without compromising nutritional quality, safety or pupil experience.
- Use feedback, site observations and relevant performance information to recommend and help implement improvements.
- Contribute professional culinary advice to catering projects and service development; overall budgets, procurement and strategic accountability remain with the Trust Catering Manager.

Stakeholder Engagement and Partnership Working

- Build effective working relationships with Catering Managers, kitchen teams, academy leaders and operational colleagues.
- Engage positively with pupils and staff to understand their food preferences and improve their dining experience.
- Work constructively with approved suppliers and external specialists on product trials, demonstrations and professional learning, in liaison with the Trust Catering Manager.
- Provide clear, timely updates on menu trials, training activity, food quality findings and agreed improvement actions.

Personal Responsibilities:

- To hold positive values and attitudes and adopt high standards of professional conduct in line with the Seven Principles of Public Life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, leadership) and our trust values of Diligence, Integrity, Rectitude and Kindness.
- Carry out the duties and responsibilities of the post, in accordance with GORSE's Health and Safety Policy and relevant Health and Safety Guidance and Legislation.

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- Form positive professional relationships and work in partnership with colleagues throughout GORSE.
- To willingly engage with training as required.
- Treat all aspects of the role with the strictest confidentiality.
- Be aware of and comply with policies and procedures relating to child protection, health, safety and security, confidentiality, equality and diversity and data protection, reporting all concerns to an appropriate person.
- To complete AM, Break, Lunch & PM duties as required by the Principal.

Any Special Conditions of Service:

- The post is subject to a satisfactory enhanced DBS background check, relevant right to work documentation, suitable references and the successful completion of the trust's probationary period.
- Occasionally there may be a requirement to work off-site and undertake work outside normal office hours to meet the variable nature of workloads and deadlines and to support academy events.
- Contribution to the overall ethos/work/aims of GORSE.
- GORSE operates a No Smoking/Vaping Policy.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Criteria	Essential/ Desirable
Qualifications	**E/D**
• Professional cookery qualification at Level 3 or equivalent demonstrable professional culinary competence	**E**
• Food Safety qualification at Level 3 or equivalent	**E**
• Relevant allergen awareness training and sound knowledge of allergen controls	**E**
• Teaching, training, assessing or coaching equivalent	**D**
• HACCP training and/or supervisory health and safety qualification	**D**
Knowledge and Skills	**E/D**
• Excellent practical culinary skills, including high volume meal production	**E**
• Strong knowledge of menu planning, recipe development, nutrition and school food standards	**E**
• Ability to deliver engaging practical training and coach colleagues with different levels of experience	**E**
• Sound understanding of food hygiene, allergen management and prevention of cross-contact	**E**
• Ability to standardise recipes, assess portion yields and maintain consistent food quality	**E**
• Effective communication, planning, organisation and collaborative working skills	**E**
• Ability to use feedback and basic food cost and waste data to inform improvements	**E**
• Competence with common IT applications for recipes, training records and reporting	**E**
Experience	**E/D**
• Substantial experience as a chef or senior cook in a busy professional catering environment	**E**
• Experience of developing menus and recipes and maintaining high food quality standards	**E**
• Experience of training, coaching or mentoring catering colleagues	**E**
• Experience of accommodating special diets and allergen requirements within managed processes	**E**
• Experience of supporting several kitchens, sites or teams	**D**
• Experience in school, education or other high volume contract catering	**D**
Personal Effectiveness	**E/D**

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• Passion for food, creativity and a strong commitment to nutritious, enjoyable school meals	**E**
• Approachable, patient and able to inspire and support colleagues	**E**
• Proactive, practical, adaptable and solutions focused	**E**
• Ability to work independently and collaborate with a trust wide team	**E**
• Willingness to travel regularly between sites and work hands on in kitchens	**E**
Continuous Professional Development	**E/D**
• Evidence of commitment to Continuing Professional Development.	**E**
Other Conditions	**E/D**
• Enhanced DBS Clearance.	**E**
• Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.	**E**
• Right to work in the UK.	**E**

We are committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be subject to full employment checks, including an enhanced DBS disclosure and barring service check. We promote diversity and aim to establish a workforce that reflects the population of Leeds.

Employment is conditional on confirmation of the right to work in the UK – either as a UK or Irish citizen, under the EU Settlement scheme or having secured any other relevant work visa.

Please note that, as a sponsor licence holder, we only provide sponsorship for teacher vacancies.

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