

CANDIDATE PACK

DEPUTY HEADTEACHER



Letter from the Headteacher

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in joining Pathways Learning Centre (PLC). We are a unique, compassionate and deeply values-driven provision in South Gloucestershire, dedicated to supporting children and young people who have experienced some of the most significant challenges in their educational journey. Our pupils join us having faced barriers such as permanent exclusion, disrupted relationships with learning, and complex social, emotional, or mental health needs. At PLC, they find something different, a place of safety, belonging, and possibility.

As the first setting in South Gloucestershire to be accredited by Trauma Informed Schools UK, our practice is rooted in connection, relational safety, and emotional availability. Our pupils often describe PLC as “a family,” and we embrace this wholeheartedly. We prioritise connection before correction, and our whole approach is shaped by an unwavering belief that every child deserves to feel seen, heard, valued, and held, especially when life or education has taught them to expect the opposite.

We work within a Trauma Recovery Model, guided by the principles of Protect, Relate, Regulate, and Reflect. This approach shapes every aspect of our curriculum, our environment, and our relationships with pupils. Recovery is not linear, and we therefore design personalised pathways that honour each young person’s readiness, needs, and strengths, Regulate, Relate or Reflect, ensuring that every pupil has the right support at the right time.

As Deputy Headteacher, you will play a critical role in maintaining the culture of psychological and emotional safety that defines PLC. You will champion our relationship policy, which moves beyond traditional behaviour management and into a model of attuned, responsive, and inclusive practice. You will help sustain a curriculum that is purposeful and personalised, with a strong emphasis on resilience, social and emotional learning, and building self-worth.

Our team is exceptional, a group of emotionally available adults who show up every day with kindness, compassion, and high aspiration. Staff are supported through reflective supervision, daily debriefs, and ongoing professional learning including PACE and trauma-informed approaches. Their ability to form safe, regulated, and trusting relationships is at the heart of our success.

We are looking for a leader who shares our belief that every child can flourish when the right relationships surround them. Someone who is resilient, reflective, and able to think adaptively in a complex and emotionally rich environment. Someone who recognises that leadership in a trauma-responsive setting is both a privilege and a responsibility.

If you are driven by purpose, grounded in compassion, and excited by the opportunity to lead within a truly transformative educational community, we would be delighted to receive your application. We warmly encourage you to visit us, speak with our team, and experience the ethos of PLC for yourself.

Daniel Walton
Headteacher



Contextual Information

Enable Trust Schools				
School	Designation	Location	No. of Places	Date
Culverhill	Complex Learning Difficulties	Yate	145	Founding Member 2018
New Siblands	Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties & Severe Learning Difficulties	Thornbury	125	Founding Member 2018
Pathways Learning Centre	Alternative Provision	Downend	170	Joined Enable Trust 2025
Two Bridges Academy	Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties & Severe Learning Difficulties	Alveston	112	New School Opened 2024
New School	Complex Learning Difficulties	Cheltenham	200	Opening 2028
Trym Valley	Complex Learning Difficulties	Southmead	164	Opening Date TBC



Joining Pathways Learning Centre means..

- Being part of a compassionate, trauma-informed community built on safety, connection and belonging.
- Working with pupils who need highly relational, personalised support to re-engage with learning.
- Collaborating with skilled, reflective staff who use PACE and trauma-responsive approaches every day.
- Supporting pupils through the Trauma Recovery Model to rebuild confidence, trust and self-worth.
- Contributing to a culture where wellbeing, emotional safety and strong relationships change lives.





About Enable Trust

Enable Trust is a specialist SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Trust with a vision to deliver the best quality provision for children with a range of complex co-existing special educational needs, and for children and young people who need short term provision as they may be temporarily unable to attend their mainstream school for a variety of reasons.

'Achieving More Together'

The systems that our schools exist in – education, health and social care, need to work together to provide everything that our pupils and families need in order for children to flourish. As a Trust, we are innovative and proactive in this space at the interface of education, health and social care, in order to advocate for our children and their families, pressing forwards in purposeful, authentic strategic system leadership that is needed to pioneer positive change and improvement for all our children.

We are a values-based organisation, with collaboration at the heart of our approach. We value inclusion and diversity, strong relationships within our communities and foster a sense of belonging for all. We will challenge systems that need improving, and advocate for our children and families. Having a rich, holistic and inquiry-led approach to learning is a value that puts pupils' outcomes at the centre of what we do, along with valuing evidence-based practice.

The work of our staff transforms the lives of our pupils and their families. We value the talent, commitment and care that every member of our team brings to their role. We foster a culture of respect, trust and mutual support where diversity is celebrated, and every voice has the power to shape our HR strategy and priorities.

Staff well-being matters deeply to us, and our policies are designed to be compassionate, fair and supportive. We also recognise that career aspirations differ. Through high quality professional development and clear career pathways we create an environment where everyone is able to reach their full potential. We are proud to be a people-centred organisation – always learning, evolving and striving to do better for our pupils, our people and the communities we serve

Investing In Our People

We are committed to the growth, well-being and excellence of our staff. Our dedicated and highly skilled workforce is growing to support our expansion. We have over 400 talented employees, we are proud of our team culture, home-grown talent, SEND expertise, cross-trust working, and our employee retention.

At Enable Trust, we are deeply invested in cultivating a positive and supportive culture where everyone can thrive both professionally and personally. We take immense pride in our staff and are investing heavily in professional development and succession planning. This ensures our talent management is aligned with our strategic needs and provides all team members with access to meaningful career progression opportunities and high-quality CPD.

Staff well-being is a key priority for us. We actively listen to our employees to understand what matters most and continuously enhance our offer to support their needs. In line with our strategic objectives and growth trajectory, we are also updating our Workforce Plan to ensure we have the capacity and capability to deliver on our vision effectively.



Job Description

As the Deputy Headteacher you will play a central role in leading a large and complex Alternative Provision (AP) short-stay school, supporting some of the most vulnerable learners across the region. You will provide strategic and operational leadership that ensures high-quality education, strong safeguarding, and effective therapeutic and multi-agency practice.

You will support the Headteacher in shaping and implementing the vision, culture, and strategic direction of PLC, while leading the day-to-day operation of the school with confidence, compassion, and professional expertise.

Your responsibilities will include:

Strategic Leadership

- Supporting the Headteacher in developing, implementing, and evaluating the school's strategic priorities and long-term improvement plan.
- Contributing to the Trust wide AP strategy, ensuring PLC remains an exemplar of high-quality short stay provision.
- Overseeing the strategy related to the design, development, and implementation of a curriculum tailored to the needs of pupils with complex trauma, SEMH needs, and disrupted educational experiences.
- Overseeing the strategy related to leadership across SEND, safeguarding, behaviour, and inclusion to ensure equitable access and strong outcomes for all pupils.
- Overseeing the strategy related to staff Continued Professional Development (CPD) strategy ensuring whole school consistency and accountability
- Overseeing the strategy related to multi-agency and partnership working
- Overseeing the strategy related to systems oversight, to ensure the effective assessment, monitoring and reporting of pupils' progress and for the reporting and analysis of key data to LGB and associated groups
- Supporting the Headteacher in the development of the strategic direction of PLC and be open to flexibility in terms of role responsibilities. For example, Trust wide responses to strategic direction, as a result of any changes to national standards and / or statutory requirements (eg. Schools White Paper - Feb 2026).

Trauma-informed and Therapeutic Leadership

- Championing a trauma-informed, relational, and attachment aware approach across the school.
- Ensuring all staff understand and use appropriate strategies for pupils affected by trauma, ACEs, and SEMH needs.
- Maintaining oversight of pupil wellbeing, therapeutic interventions, and multi-agency support packages.

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

- Overseeing the design and ongoing development of an adaptive, flexible, and needs-led curriculum suitable for short- and longer stay AP.
- Ensuring assessment approaches accurately identify pupils' academic, behavioural, SEMH, and safeguarding needs on entry, during placement, and on transition.
- Leading quality assurance processes across teaching and support provision.
- Overseeing the development of personalised pathways, reintegration plans, and transition support into mainstream, specialist, post-16, or vocational settings.

Referral Pathways and Journey of the Student

- Leading the referral, admissions, and reintegration/exit processes for pupils entering or transitioning from PLC.
- Overseeing capacity management, placement timelines, and case prioritisation.
- Ensuring decision-making is transparent, fair, and aligned with Trust and LA protocols.
- Working with referrers to ensure needs are understood and provision is appropriately targeted.

Operational Leadership

- Leading the complex day-to-day running of the school, ensuring systems, processes, and routines are robust, consistent and responsive.
- Overseeing the effective implementation of duty rotas, staff deployment, timetables, enrichment programmes, and cover arrangements.
- Maintaining oversight of the effective implementation of risk assessments for individuals, cohorts, and activities, including dynamic risk management for vulnerable or high-risk pupils.

Staff Development, Wellbeing, and Performance

- Leading staff wellbeing and workforce support, ensuring a healthy, safe, and resilient working culture.
- Oversight of the provision for high quality coaching and mentoring to staff at all levels.
- Supporting line management structures, including supervision, professional development and staff support and monitoring, where required.
- Embedding a culture of high performance, relational practice, and reflective professionalism.

Safeguarding

- Serving as Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), or DSL if required.
- Supporting the DSL in ensuring safeguarding systems are robust and compliant, including accurate recording, information sharing, and action planning.
- Supporting the Headteacher in managing complex and high-risk safeguarding cases.
- Promoting a safeguarding culture where all pupils feel safe, understood, and well supported.

Professional Standards and Trust Responsibilities

- Upholding the values, aims, and ethos of the Trust and PLC.
- Actively contribute to trust wide AP and SEND initiatives, reviews, and professional networks.
- Modelling exceptional professional conduct, confidentiality, and integrity.
- Deputising for the Headteacher as required

Other

- You will be responsible for your own health and safety at work and ensure others have received adequate training for any activities they undertake as part of their job role
- There may be some requirement for duties to be undertaken outside of the normal working day

The job description will be reviewed regularly and may be subject to amendment or modification at any time after consultation with the successful post holder. It is not a comprehensive definition of the post but sets out the main expectations of the Trust in relation to the post holder's professional responsibilities and duties.

Person Specification

Category	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	<p>Degree level qualification (or equivalent).eg PGCE</p> <p>Evidence of substantial and relevant professional development in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trauma informed and/or attachment aware practice - Behaviour, SEND, inclusion, or SEMH related specialisms <p>Safeguarding (at least to DSL or DDSL level, or willingness to undertake immediately)</p>	<p>Leadership training or accreditation appropriate to senior leadership (e.g. NPQSL, NPQH, or equivalent professional leadership qualification).</p> <p>Postgraduate qualification - eg MA/MSc in education, psychology, SEND</p> <p>Certified training in therapeutic and/or trauma informed approaches (e.g., trauma recovery model, PACE, NVR, Thrive, attachment-based practice, Team Teach).</p> <p>Additional specialist qualifications (e.g., SENCO qualification, mental health lead training, behaviour & inclusion frameworks).</p>
Experience	<p>Substantial, successful leadership experience in AP, SEMH, SEND, specialist or inclusion-based provision.</p> <p>Demonstrable experience leading teams through complex, high needs, or multiagency environments.</p> <p>Proven experience in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Designing or leading a flexible, needs led curriculum - Conducting robust assessments of pupils' progress and achievement, including against SEMH, trauma, SEND and safeguarding need. - Implementing intervention pathways tailored to vulnerable learners - Experience overseeing complex day to day school operations (e.g., timetabling, staff deployment, behaviour systems, rotas, attendance, case management). <p>Significant involvement in safeguarding, including managing complex or high-risk cases.</p>	<p>Experience in senior leadership of LA commissioned AP or Academy short stay schools.</p> <p>Experience managing admissions, referrals, reintegration or exit processes.</p> <p>Experience in leading whole school initiatives linked to behaviour culture, wellbeing, safeguarding or trauma-informed practice.</p> <p>Experience supporting staff development, wellbeing and reflective practice (e.g., supervision models).</p>

	<p>Experience working with multiple agencies, including social care, CAMHS, health services, and Local Authorities.</p> <p>Experience contributing to or leading SEND processes (EHCPs, annual reviews, multi disciplinary assessments).</p> <p>Proven ability to improve outcomes for children with disrupted educational experiences.</p>	
<p>Knowledge</p>	<p>Deep understanding of trauma, ACEs, attachment needs, and SEMH related behaviours.</p> <p>Strong knowledge of AP curriculum expectations, statutory responsibility, and effective alternative provision models.</p> <p>Detailed knowledge of the SEND Code of Practice and whole school SEND leadership.</p> <p>Understanding of multi-agency processes, safeguarding legislation, and thresholds for intervention.</p> <p>Knowledge of behaviour regulation, therapeutic approaches, and inclusive strategies for complex profiles.</p> <p>Familiarity with risk assessment processes, dynamic risk management, and safeguarding escalation.</p> <p>Understanding of reintegration pathways, managed moves, and approaches to transition for vulnerable pupils.</p>	<p>Understanding of local and regional inclusion systems and the commissioning role of LAs.</p> <p>Knowledge of restorative practice, family support models, and community safeguarding.</p>
<p>Skills and Attributes</p>	<p>Exceptional relationship building skills with pupils, staff, families, and external partners.</p> <p>Ability to lead, inspire and develop multidisciplinary teams.</p> <p>Strong analytical skills in interpreting a wide range of pupil, safeguarding, SEND, and behaviour data.</p> <p>Ability to plan strategically and operationally with equal confidence.</p> <p>Excellent communication skills (written, verbal, multi-agency reporting).</p> <p>Strong organisational skills to manage daily operational complexity.</p>	<p>Ability to deliver training and professional development to staff and partners.</p> <p>Skills in developing operational systems and whole school processes.</p>

	<p>Ability to manage challenging or crisis situations calmly and professionally.</p> <p>Skilled in coaching, mentoring and providing supportive staff supervision.</p> <p>High degree of emotional intelligence, resilience, and reflective capacity.</p>	
<p>Professional Attributes</p>	<p>A commitment to the vision and values of inclusive education and Alternative Provision.</p> <p>Highly child centred, with a passion for improving outcomes for vulnerable learners.</p> <p>Demonstrates integrity, empathy, and professional discretion at all times.</p> <p>Positive, solution focused, and able to navigate complexity.</p> <p>Willingness to continuously learn and model reflective practice.</p> <p>Commitment to promoting equality, diversity and anti-discriminatory practice.</p> <p>Ability to deputise confidently for the Headteacher and represent the school professionally at a senior level.</p>	<p>Experience in demonstrating innovation, creativity, and the ability to drive change.</p> <p>Commitment to Trust wide development and collaborative leadership.</p>



How To Apply

We recommend that you speak with Daniel Walton (Headteacher) before applying. To arrange a conversation, please email Kim.Harmsworth@pathwayslearningcentre.org (Headteacher's PA).

Please apply via E-Teach, including a supporting statement. In your statement, ensure you outline your reasons for applying, how your skills and experience equip you for the role, and how your application aligns with the job description and person specification.

The closing date is Monday 20 April 2026 at 09:00, with interviews taking place on Thursday 30 April 2026 at Pathways Learning Centre, Overndale Road, Downend, BS16 2RQ

We are an equal opportunity employer that values and promotes diversity. We do not discriminate and embrace individuals from any background, gender identity, race, age, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, ethnicity, or any other aspect that makes them unique. Enable Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults. We expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment all appointments will be subject to appropriate vetting, including enhanced DBS check.

Further information about Pathways Learning Centre and Enable Trust can be found on our websites.



[Pathways Learning Centre](https://www.pathwayslearningcentre.org)



[Enable Trust](https://www.enabletrust.org.uk)

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

Enable Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Suitability to work with children and young people will form part of the selection process.

You will be asked to account for any gaps or discrepancies in your employment history. Short-listed applicants will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children and young people. We will carry out online searches on all short-listed applicants, in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part 3, Safer Recruitment.

Where given permission to do so, references will be requested for short-listed candidates prior to interview. Referees will be asked about their relationship to you, your current post and salary, your performance history and conduct, any disciplinary action involving the safety and welfare of children, details of any substantiated allegations or concerns relating to the safety and welfare of children, and whether they have any concerns about your suitability to work with children.

Candidates attending an interview should expect the interview panel to explore issues relating to safeguarding, and at least one member of the panel will be trained in Safer Recruitment.

All successful applicants will be required to undergo security and vetting checks appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and an enhanced DBS check. Applicants must be aware that it is an offence to apply for a role if barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children and young people

