JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Director of Digital Strategy
Grade: DIR 52.5
Reporting to: Deputy Chief Executive Officer (DCEO)

Job Purpose

The Director of Digital Strategy holds a pivotal role within The GORSE Academies Trust, providing strategic leadership, innovation, and oversight across all aspects of digital technology. This position drives the trust's digital transformation agenda, ensuring infrastructure, cybersecurity, digital learning, and creative services are aligned with organisational goals. The Director also has overarching responsibility for IT infrastructure, networking, and digital service provision across all academies, along with leadership of in-house creative functions such as web development and design.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership and Digital Transformation

- Develop and deliver a trust-wide Digital Strategy aligned with organisational and educational aims.
- Lead cross-functional digital transformation initiatives to enhance teaching, learning, and operational efficiency through technology.
- Represent the trust in strategic negotiations and partnerships with external agencies, suppliers, and national bodies, following compliant purchase procedures to secure the best value and consistent service delivery.
- Champion digital safeguarding and security, ensuring safeguarding colleagues remain informed of emerging risks and technologies.
- Oversee the trust's approach to IT expenditure, for example in relation to IT lifecycle and capital projects ensuring best value for money and a highly effective IT provision.
- Guide the professional development and performance of the IT and Digital Services teams to maintain high-quality support and innovation.
- Work in partnership with other senior colleagues to ensure all aspects of the trust's work that involve IT or digital aspects are highly effective, including working with the Senior Trust Director to ensure effective integration between systems, data platforms and reporting solutions.

Technical Oversight and Governance

- Provide strategic and technical leadership for all core infrastructure, including networking, server technologies, and cloud platforms.
- Oversee the trust's cybersecurity, data protection, and IT disaster recovery strategies, ensuring robust controls and clear communication of key metrics to leadership teams.
- Maintain oversight of compliance with IT governance frameworks and relevant UK legislation, including GDPR.
- Ensure that GORSE specific technical platforms such as Trackle are highly effective and fully compliant.

Infrastructure and Systems Management

- Direct the development and maintenance of scalable, resilient, and cost-effective IT infrastructure across all academies.
- Manage procurement and deployment of infrastructure and services, ensuring effective use of partnerships and value-driven investment.

- Lead the Central IT Services team in delivering a secure, high-performing, and responsive IT environment through clear KPIs and service standards.

Creative and Digital Services Leadership
- Lead the in-house creative team in delivering web development, branding, digital communications, and marketing aligned with the trust's identity.
- Collaborate with the Senior Designer to ensure high-quality, consistent digital assets for internal and external audiences.
- Work with the Lead Developer to ensure all digital platforms, including academy websites, are secure, robust, and aligned with branding and performance expectations.
- Promote innovative digital design and marketing practices that reflect the trust's values.

Operational and Team Management
- Line-manage senior IT and Digital Services staff, fostering a high-performance culture built on collaboration, accountability, and service improvement.
- Provide strategic input and technical guidance on capital projects across all sites.
- Define and monitor performance indicators for digital services, operational efficiency, and user satisfaction.

Financial Planning and Resource Management
- Oversee substantial IT and digital services budgets, ensuring financial accountability and alignment with strategic goals.
- Lead long-term planning for technology lifecycle refreshes, service innovation, and sustainable delivery models.
- Evaluate supplier performance and manage high-value contracts with vendors and consultants.

Personal Attributes and Responsibilities
- Commit to safeguarding, equality, and health and safety policies in line with trust expectations.
- Treat all aspects of the role with the highest level of confidentiality and discretion.
- Foster a culture of digital maturity and resilience across all trust establishments.

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.
- 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.

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.

The GORSE Academies Trust
c/o John Smeaton Academy, Smeaton Approach, Barwick Road, Leeds, LS15 8TA
T 0113 487 8888 | **E**: info@tgat.org.uk | **W** www.tgat.org.uk

GORSE

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Criteria	Essential/ Desirable
Qualifications	**E/D**
Grade C/4 and above in GCSE English and Mathematics (or equivalent).	**E**
Level 6 qualification or the willingness to work towards	**E**
Relevant technical certifications (e.g., CCNA/CCNP, MCSE, AWS/Azure Architect, CISSP)	**E**
Full UK Driving Licence	**E**
Postgraduate qualification in digital leadership, business strategy, or IT management	**D**
Knowledge and Skills	**E/D**
Proven experience delivering organisation-wide digital and infrastructure projects.	**E**
Experience in cloud platforms (AWS, Azure),	**E**
A proven track record of budget management within an educational establishment	**E**
Expertise in procurement methods and contract negotiation with suppliers, contractors and hardware vendors	**E**
Expertise in networking protocols (TCP/IP, DNS, VLANs), and virtualization (VMware, Hyper-V).	**E**
Strong leadership, mentoring, and stakeholder management skills	**E**
Experience with infrastructure monitoring and observability tools	**E**
Strong workflow management skills	**E**
Strategic thinking and the ability to align digital strategy with organisational goals	**E**
Ability to evaluate and implement digital tools to improve teaching, learning and business operations	**E**
Excellent understanding of digital governance, data protection, and regulatory compliance	**E**
Experience leading digital transformation and change management initiatives	**E**
Knowledge of cybersecurity frameworks and cyber risk management	**E**
Experience	**E/D**
Experience in a senior digital/IT leadership role in a multi-site organisation	**E**
Strong technical background in IT infrastructure, cloud computing and networking	**E**
Experience in multi-discipline leadership and project management	**E**
Experience collaborating with executive leadership and governing bodies	**E**
Experience of being the Cybersecurity leader for a large organisation	**D**
Experience of managing multiple conflicting priorities at the same time	**D**
Evidence of measurable impact on digital maturity within a complex organisation	**D**
Continuous Professional Development	**E/D**
Evidence of commitment to Continuing Professional Development	**E**
Active involvement in national or regional digital networks or forums	**D**
Other Conditions	**E/D**
Enhanced DBS Clearance	**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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