



Operations Manager Candidate Pack

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Welcome – From the Trust CEO

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for considering joining the LIFE Education Trust. LIFE was established in 2016 with two schools and now comprises fourteen schools in Havering and Essex which serve a student community of nearly 3000 pupils. The Trust has a growing core team in addition to all our school-based colleagues, totalling almost 500 employees. The organisation as a whole works collaboratively to ensure that everything we do can positively impact the lives of our pupils and employees.

I became the CEO of LIFE July 2016, having previously been Head Teacher of The Frances Bardsley Academy for Girls for 5 years, and before that, Deputy Head Teacher at Chelmsford County High for Girls. I chose to lead LIFE because I genuinely believe in its core purpose ***“to build great learning communities where children flourish”***. To accomplish our purpose, we use our 3 core beliefs: ***‘Courageous Optimism’, ‘Boundless Creativity’*** and ***‘Heartfelt Compassion’***. As a Trust we believe in helping colleagues and pupils achieve their personal best and are keen to recruit the very best talent for our Trust.

This is a varied and rewarding role at the heart of a thriving secondary school. You will lead across finance, HR, site management and strategic planning, working closely with the Executive Headteacher, Headteacher and our central team. You’ll make a real difference to how the school runs, and you’ll be supported to keep developing your skills and career within a growing Trust.



Yours sincerely,

Julian Dutnall

CEO – LIFE Education Trust



About Us – Our Way of LIFE



OUR PRIORITIES

OUR VISION

Everyone Flourishes

OUR PURPOSE

To build great learning communities where children flourish.

Great People

Great Pupil Outcomes

Sustainable Systems

OUR VALUES



Courageous Optimism

It takes courage to hope for a better future. We champion a 'can do' attitude and encourage our pupils and colleagues to tackle challenges with resilience and perseverance as they reach for ambitious targets.



Boundless Creativity

Through captivating discoveries in the classroom and eye-opening adventures in the outside world, we give pupils freedom and promote varied learning experiences which stimulate innovation and develop adaptability.



Heartfelt Compassion

We show love and respect to each member of our community as we nurture a powerful collective spirit. In humility we embrace difference and individuality, show forgiveness when necessary, and are united by compassion.

About Us – Our Schools

We are a multi academy trust currently consisting of 12 Academies and 2 Independent school across Havering and Essex grouped into 3 regional hubs.



Havering Hub

1. Frances Bardsley Academy For Girls
2. The Bridge
3. Dame Tipping Primary School
4. Benhurst Primary School



West Essex Hub

5. Ford End Primary School
6. Roxwell Primary School
7. Margaretting Primary School
8. Dr Walker's Primary School



North East Essex Hub Colchester

9. Chappel Primary School
10. Fordham Primary School
11. Holy Trinity Primary School
12. Langenhoe Primary School



Harwich

13. Spring Meadows Primary School
14. The Haefen



About Us – Harwich

Spring Meadow Primary School and The Haefen form part of LIFE Education Trust's North East Essex Hub. Together, they provide high-quality education and specialist support for children and young people within a caring, inclusive and ambitious learning community.

Located in the historic coastal town of Harwich, the two schools bring together mainstream primary education and specialist provision, ensuring that all pupils are supported to achieve their full potential. Whilst each school has its own distinctive identity, both share LIFE Education Trust's commitment to building great learning communities where children flourish.

About Harwich

Harwich is a vibrant coastal town in north-east Essex, rich in maritime history and community spirit. Situated on the Essex coastline, the town offers a unique blend of seaside living, historic character and excellent local amenities.

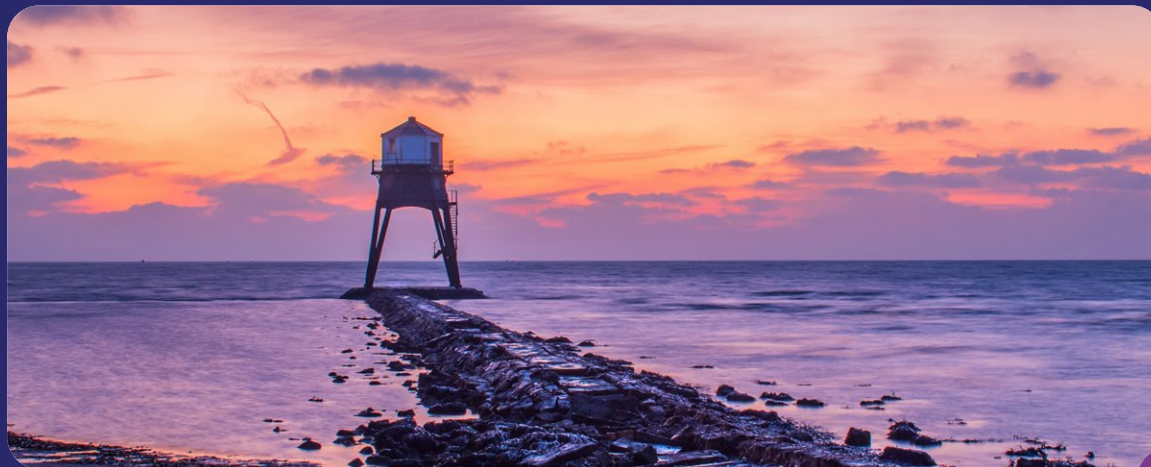
The area benefits from convenient transport links, including direct rail services to Colchester and London Liverpool Street, with easy access to the A120 and A12 connecting Harwich to Colchester, Chelmsford and beyond. Residents also enjoy access to beautiful beaches, nature reserves and scenic coastal walks, making the area an attractive place to live and work.



Spring Meadow Primary School is a welcoming and inclusive school where every child is known, valued and encouraged to achieve their best. Through a broad and engaging curriculum, pupils are supported academically, socially and emotionally, developing the skills and confidence needed for lifelong success.



The Haefen is a specialist provision supporting children and young people with social, emotional and mental health needs. Through tailored learning programmes, therapeutic support and positive relationships, pupils are empowered to re-engage with education, develop resilience and build successful futures.



About Us – Our Mascot



MEET ZOE BEAR

This is Zoe Bear, our Mascot.

The name 'Zoe' was chosen because it means 'life' in Greek.

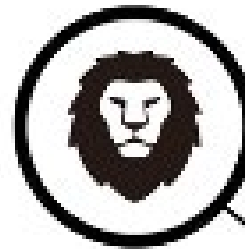
Zoe's rainbow colours match the LIFE logo and demonstrate the Trust's commitment to inclusivity.



As well as awards, Zoe can often be found attending events, school trips and dressing up for celebrations!

**Pupils are encouraged to treat her with respect and as a friend. She is often tagged on X:
@LIFEZoeBear**

WHY DO WE HAVE ZOE?



Zoe represents the Trust wherever she goes.



Zoe is designed to embody our beliefs and make them more tangible for pupils throughout the Trust to understand and engage with.



She is especially compassionate with younger children and is available for cuddles if they are upset.

Schools are encouraged to keep an 'Adventures of Zoe' book, where photos are put each term, labelled with how we are developing the children socially, morally, spiritual and culturally.



Every school has their own Zoe Bear and pupils can receive awards and certificates from Zoe for displaying the Trust's Beliefs of Boundless Creativity, Courageous Optimism and Heartfelt Compassion in their everyday school life

Job Description



We are looking
for brilliant people
who share and
demonstrate our
beliefs to join us

Job Title: Operations Manager – Harwich

Salary Range: Grade 7 Spine point 30–34 (£42,123 –£46,579)

This post could attract a recruitment and retention allowance, paid in addition to the salary.

Reporting to: Chief Finance & Operating Officer

Location: Harwich and Manningtree

Type: Permanent

Start date: As soon as possible

Hours: 36 hours per week, 52 weeks per year

Liaison With: Chief Executive Officer, Executive Headteachers, Headteachers, SLT, colleagues, the LIFE Central team, contractors, the public and other agencies.

Line Management: Administrative Support Officers, Site Manager and Catering.

Purpose:

The Operations Manager plays a pivotal role in making sure the two schools run smoothly and efficiently every day. They will do this by putting operational best practice in place and managing resources effectively, in line with the Trust's purpose, values and priorities.

Main Responsibilities:

Operational Oversight

- Ensure all services, structures and systems in the schools comply with current legislation and Trust policies.
- Ensure the Trust's services, systems and structures work effectively and efficiently in the two schools.
- Identify and resolve operational challenges, and streamline processes.
- Contribute to strategic planning, and develop and implement operational action plans.
- Manage and oversee the school's administration function, including line management of the Administrative Support Officers, Site Manager and Catering.



Operational Cohesion

- Promote effective communication and collaboration between LIFE Central and the schools in the two schools.
- Coordinate the implementation of LIFE Central's IT and marketing strategies and initiatives across the schools.

Financial Management

- Prepare and manage monthly budgets and long-term budget plans for the Executive Headteacher and the CFOO.
- Prepare monthly forecasts, analyse budgets and forecasts, and explain variances clearly to SLT and other stakeholders.
- Ensure systems are in place for the smooth running of financial management.

Human Resources

- Oversee employee contracts, monthly payroll submission, recruitment, DBS and medical checks, the Single Central Record, annual salary verification letters, and the personnel database and confidential files.
- Act as the first point of contact for HR matters in the two schools, working closely with the central People team.

Site Management

- Ensure the two schools comply with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and other relevant legislation.
- Manage lettings and community use of the two school sites.
- Manage the catering team and any associated tenders.

Other

- Attend Local Governing Committee meetings, and Trust Board and committee meetings as required, including some outside normal working hours.
- Travel to and work at any LIFE school or LIFE Central as required.



General:

- Undertake training appropriate to the post.
- Take part in the Trust's Flourishing People Process, taking personal responsibility for identifying learning and development opportunities with your line manager, and attend INSET days.
- Take responsibility for health and safety in line with the role, identifying, evaluating and minimising risks in the immediate working environment.
- Work in line with the Trust's values, culture, ethos and equality and inclusion policies, actively promoting anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-discriminatory behaviour.
- Ensure all duties and services are delivered in line with the Trust's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Support the ethos of the Trust.
- The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

The duties above are neither exclusive nor exhaustive. The post holder may be asked by the Chief Finance & Operating Officer to carry out other appropriate duties within the context of the job, skills and grade.

This job description is current at the date shown. In consultation with the post holder, it may be changed by the Chief Finance & Operating Officer to reflect or anticipate changes in the job that are in keeping with the grade and job title.



Person Specification



We are looking for someone who has the following qualifications, experience and demonstrates the following behaviours to be truly successful in the role...

Key Criteria	Essential (E)	Desirable (D)
Qualifications		
Have a certificate or diploma in School Business Management or a relevant professional qualification in financial management/HR		•
Evidence of continuing professional development	•	
Experience		
Experience at Senior Operational Level in a school or education setting or in Financial Management	•	
Managing and developing a team	•	
Making a significant contribution to projects or initiatives with a demonstrable impact	•	
HR, payroll and Single Central Record compliance	•	
Site, health and safety, or contract management		•
Skills and knowledge		
Strong organisational and problem solving skills	•	
Able to analyse budgets and explain variances clearly to non finance colleagues	•	
Able to build effective working relationships at all levels	•	
Confident using a range of IT systems and software	•	
Knowledge of safeguarding and safer recruitment		•
Experience of Bromcom or other school MIS and finance systems		•
Behaviours to uphold the purpose and beliefs of the Trust and lead by example		
Humility – Recognising your strengths and limitations, listening so that you really hear, and committing to continual self improvement.		
Bravery – Taking personal responsibility, having courageous conversations, and embracing creativity and innovation.		
Teamwork – Working collaboratively, treating others with dignity and respect, and being committed to great pupil outcomes.		



How to Apply

The closing date for all applications is: 18th November 2026

Start date: As soon as possible

Please note that we reserve the right to close this vacancy earlier than the advertised closing date should a sufficient number of suitable applications be received.

If you wish to discover more about this exciting opportunity, need any further information or would like to have an informal discussion, please contact Will Bridge at Academicis, our recruitment partner, on wbridge@academicis.co.uk or by phone on 07825 346535 / 01223 907979

School visits are welcomed and encouraged.

Please contact wbridge@academicis.co.uk to arrange a visit.



Brentwood Road, Romford RM1 2RR
T. 01708 447368
info@lifeeducationtrust.com

Appointment Process

- Suitable applications will be shortlisted for interview as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, we are unable to give feedback if you do not get shortlisted.
- If you are successful, you will receive either a phone call and/or email inviting you to attend for interview. If you require any assistance in attending for interview, please let us know the nature of that assistance in good time so that we may make appropriate arrangements.

References and DBS Checks

All offers of appointment will be subject to receipt of satisfactory references. LIFE Education Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the DBS.

Inclusion

As a Trust, we are committed to equality of opportunity and to a proactive and inclusive approach to equality, which supports and encourages all under-represented groups, promotes an inclusive culture, and values diversity. We will ensure that the selection process is fair and without discrimination for or against any candidate based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. The person specification sets out the criteria used to assess candidates through the selection process.

Why Choose LIFE Education Trust

For more information on why to choose LIFE, head to the website [here](#).