Starting Strong

Your Guide to The Charter Schools Educational Trust

Charter.

Nice to meet you!

Charter.

Contents

Welcome 5
Our Trust in Numbers 6
Mission & Vision 8
Values 10
Values in Action 12
Staff Benefits 14
Your Professional Development 16
Safeguarding 18
Your Induction Plan 20
Your Charter 27
Contacts 28



Better Futures for Children & Young People

Charter.

A welcome from our Chief Executive

Cassie Buchanan



Welcome to Charter. Whether you have joined one of our schools as a teacher, a teaching assistant, or a member of the office, premises or catering team, or you are working in our central team, you now share in the same work: the education and care of children across Southwark and Lambeth. I am very glad you are here.

We are a trust of nine schools across two boroughs, educating children from age two to eighteen. Our mission is simple and demanding, and our ambition is best described in terms of impact rather than size. Four values describe how we work: **we are evidence informed, we achieve together, we act with integrity, and we are inclusive**. They shape how we make decisions, how we spend money, and how we treat each other – and within your first few weeks you should be able to see them in action in your school.

What we expect of you is equally simple. Firstly, keep children and young people safe – nothing is more important than this, which is why safeguarding training comes before almost everything else in your induction. Secondly, work at your own practice, whatever your role, because children and young people get a better deal when all the adults around them keep improving. And finally, contribute to the team around you. Achieving together is part of our DNA; a single school can only do so much, and the point of being a trust is that we do not leave anyone to struggle with difficult work or challenges alone.

That is also where the opportunity lies for you. Charter is home to a DFE Teaching School Hub, an Early Years Stronger Practice Hub and an EEF Research School, which means the professional development on your doorstep is unusually strong – from early career support, through NPQs, to the chance to work directly with research evidence and the colleagues who generate it. Wherever you are in your career, there is a next step here, and we will expect you to take it.

This booklet is designed to help you navigate your first few months: your induction programme, the safeguarding training everyone completes, and how the trust works – who does what and where to go with a question. It also signposts you to Your Charter, which sets out in one place the offer we make to you as a member of staff.

The first term anywhere new is demanding. Ask questions, and ask them early – we want you to be a brilliant success!

Cassie Buchanan

Chief Executive, The Charter Schools Educational Trust

Our Trust in numbers:

9

Schools

THE BELHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

CHARLES DICKENS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Lyndhurst Primary School & Nursery

Streatham Wells Primary School & Nursery

Loughborough Primary School & Nursery

Dulwich Hamlet Junior School

The Charter School Bermondsey

The Charter School East Dulwich

The Charter School North Dulwich

5545
Children & Young People

702
Brilliant staff

100%
Schools are good or outstanding

524
ECTs trained in 2025

5
Regional hubs of excellence

Charter.



What we are here to do

Our Mission

Our mission is better futures - our work will improve the lives of children and young people, now and in the future. It covers the two-year-old starting in one of our nurseries and the eighteen-year-old leaving our sixth forms, and everything we do, from how we teach to how we spend money, traces back to it.

Our Vision

Our vision describes what the mission looks like when it is being achieved:

- **schools that excel**
- **people who inspire**
- **partnerships that make a difference.**

The three belong together. Excellent schools are built by adults who keep improving at their work, and no school, however strong, can do everything alone - which is why we work as a family of nine schools.

Charter.





We are evidence informed

We are ambitious for all and seek to close attainment gaps through better use of evidence.



OU

VAL

We achieve together

We strive for excellence, working collaboratively to respond to, learn from and embrace change.





We act with integrity

We lead by example, approaching our work with care, pride and humility.

JR



LUES

We are inclusive

We contribute to building a welcoming and healthy culture.



Values in Action

We are evidence informed

What this looks like:

- We set stretching targets for all in the knowledge we can reach them
- We use data to focus on causes not symptoms, so that solutions accurately match challenges
- We critically engage with evidence and apply it to improve outcomes for Children and Young People
- We undertake our own research to drive innovation and improvement, in partnership with our Educational Endowment Foundation Research School and other organisations
- We evaluate rigorously, to be sure that our work is having a positive impact
- We engage widely, sharing best practice and developing relationships which motivate and stimulate discussion and involvement
- We are committed to strong and consistent performance that can be relied on

What this doesn't look like:

- Allowing a fear of failure to prevent a good idea from being explored
- Being dismissive of other approaches and learning
- Not engaging with the evidence of 'best bets' for education as outlined by the EEF
- Having different aspirations for different groups of pupils
- Not pursuing our own professional development
- Believing that we no longer need to improve or develop.

We achieve together

What this looks like:

- We are a high performing organisation, and we understand what is expected of us and from those we work with
- We are committed to working across key stages
- We believe in getting things done and helping each other be better
- We actively build strong relationships with those who we work with, rooted in respect
- We offer and ask for help when needed
- We listen to each other and ensure all voices are heard.
- We are outward facing and we are committed to working with our local communities – families, local schools, local organisations.

What this doesn't look like:

- Working in silos and keeping information to ourselves.
- Assuming we know best and making others work to our preferences
- Being overly forceful with our own views.

We act with integrity

What this looks like:

- We look after the wellbeing of all our people and students.
- We make long-term decisions based around achieving our mission and living our values
- We abide by the standards for public life
- We work professionally and fairly
- We do what we say we are going to do, when we say we are going to do it
- We are open about decision making processes.
- We work respectfully with external stakeholders and the wider local community.

What this doesn't look like:

- Blaming others or failing to take accountability of our own actions
- Lacking openness and honesty where we don't achieve our goals
- Being afraid of speaking up and challenging inappropriate behaviours
- Disrespecting our Trust values.

We are inclusive

What this looks like:

- We contribute to building a culture that is true to the Trust values
- We embrace openness and honesty.
- We understand and strive for conscious inclusion.
- We are aspirational for all our staff, the children and young people
- We are kind to ourselves and look after our own wellbeing
- We call out inappropriate behaviour
- We encourage and welcome constructive feedback from others
- We feel safe to challenge and be challenged
- We seek to recognise and overcome our biases in any decision making process
- We actively seek to engage with out local community.

What this doesn't look like:

- Assuming we are getting it right
- Being overly or hastily judgmental
- Deliberately excluding others.
- Ignoring feedback on how to be more inclusive.

Staff Benefits

Employee Assistance Programme
We partner with CIC Wellbeing for our employee support. This is a confidential, professional support service that helps employees navigate personal or work-related challenges that may affect their wellbeing and performance. It begins with a confidential questionnaire and the platform is then tailored to your needs.
https://tcset.elewellbeing.co.uk/

The username are password are in **Your Charter** which you can access here:

The platform includes the following:

- Live chat with qualified counsellors
- A personalised wellbeing dashboard
- Interactive health checks
- Behaviour change tools and resources
- Over 6,500 videos, podcasts and articles
- A directory of 10,000+ verified support organisations
- Webinars and custom playlists – parenting, stress, depression, LGBTQ+, domestic violence etc.
- A 'quick escape' button for privacy and safety

There is more information on each of these on Your Charter.

Flexible Working
including part-time working, varied hours and in-year flexibility.

Find out more here:

Bike2Work
This Scheme is a HMRC approved scheme provider of the Governments Green Transport Plan which aims to reduce environmental pollution, promote healthier lifestyles, and make cycling to work cost-effective by offering tax savings on bikes and cycling equipment.

If you are interested, please scan the qr code below where you will find a calculator and a step-by-step guide on how to register for the scheme.

Travel Loan

The Trust will fund the purchase of a Season Ticket (up to a maximum value of £2,500) by way of an interest-free loan.

The Trust will make a payment for the season ticket directly to the employee via payroll. This will not affect your PAYE payments. There are no tax benefits to the loan.

Under this agreement, the season ticket does not become your property until it has been paid in full.

Find our more here:

Pensions

We enroll all our teachers into the Teachers Pension Scheme (TPS) and our support staff into the Local Government Pension Scheme. Both are defined benefits schools which include a substantial employer contribution decided on by the schemes and the government. If you wish to opt out, you will need to inform the payroll department.

Conference Day

This takes place annually and is a full day of training and workshops which you pick from and if you feel confident, lead! Our staff tell us that the staff conference day is also an opportunity for all staff to meet new people, hear from experts and reflects away from the busyness of schools and offices.

Read more abuot the Charter Conference here:

Leading Family Friendly Policies

We offer maternity, paternity and familiy leave policies which are higher than nationally agreements We also provide paid dependents' leave to support in organising care for your family. All schools also ensure staff can attend children's milestone events such as school plays and sports days – please do ask your line manager about these.

You can access the maternity guide and policies on YourCharter:

Your professional development

From your first day with us, we ask you to work at your own practice, whatever your role. Our commitment to your professional development is how we support you in your pursuit of better. We invest in our adults because that is how children get a better deal: every pupil in a Charter classroom deserves to be taught and supported by people who are still learning themselves.

Our professional development includes a wide range of programmes and coaching, some of which are in partnership with our teaching and research hubs.

Trainees and Early Career Teachers

You will be assigned with a mentor who will support you in navigating your training and ensuring that you are able to exemplify the teaching standards at the level needed. Our training programme is delivered by lead schools from across the trust and beyond who form part of our teacher training partnership – this means you will visit other schools and get to meet other trainees working in Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark who are training in our hub. We also arrange visits to local sites of educational interest such as the Houses of Parliament in order that your teaching can make the most out of working in the best city in the world.

Impact Leaders

a programme for teachers with more than 2 years of classroom experience to learn about evidence-informed approaches for closing the disadvantage gap. You will work in a community of practice on a shared challenge and develop a research project which to improve outcomes in your school.

Find out more:

Stronger Together Secondary Groups

Subjects leaders and faculty leaders join these cross trust groups which work together on shared professional development as well as making decisions about assessment, curriculum etc. Most groups are informal and also meet on the conference day. Ask your line manager about how to join these groups. You can also contact Alexa Davies, the Associate Deputy Headteacher for the trust who oversees the groups.

Subject Networks – Primary

all primary teachers are invited to join a subject network which meets termly to share practice and work together on projects. Subject leads join the subject they are leading and if you are leading more than one subject, you will be invited to join the one most aligned to your school priorities. You can also contact Lucy Ellis, Primary director

SENCO Network

all the Sencos meet half termly for shared work and CPD. This is led by Will Cannock, the Trust SEND lead.

DSL Network

all the DSLs meet half termly for shared work and CPD. This is led by Cassie Buchanan, the Trust DSL and CEO.

Early Years Network

all the Early Years staff meet termly for shared work and CPD. This is led by Daniela Jamois, Early years lead practitioner.

Headteacher Networks

headteachers and the central team leaders meet weekly online with a termly agenda of briefings, training and shared projects.

Finding Out About Bespoke and External Training

Wherever you are starting from, there is a pathway - mentoring for trainees and early career teachers, subject and phase networks, national professional qualifications, and leadership development for those ready for more. And the offer is not only for teachers; your line manager will map the right programme with you.

We communicate with all staff on a fortnightly basis via the staff newsletter – you will be automatically signed up to this. The newsletter includes training, events, news and access to staff vacancies and opportunities across the trust. If you don't receive the newsletter, please contact Sophy Geering, sgeering@tcset.org,uk

We are also home to three national designations: London South, the DfE Teaching School Hub for Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham; an EEF Research School; and an Early Years Stronger Practice Hub. They deliver initial teacher training, early career programmes, NPQs and evidence-informed training to hundreds of schools across South London. For you, the advantage is proximity and the brilliant team who run those national programmes work alongside our own teachers, so the distance between a question about your practice and the colleague who knows the evidence is unusually short - often a corridor and not a conference.

Useful Links

Your Charter.

www.yourcharter.org.uk

London South Teaching School Hub

www.londonsouthtsh.org

London South Learning Partnership

www.londonsouthlp.org

London South Research School at Charles Dickens

Supported by the Education Endowment Foundation

researchschool.org.uk/londonsouth

Your line manager will discuss your development with you in your first term; go to that conversation with a next step in mind. The full offer is set out in Your Charter.

Safeguarding

"It could happen here."

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. If a child tells you something that worries you, you must pass it to the DSL or DDSL as soon as possible.

Code of conduct
Know how it applies to you

Reporting process
CPOMS / MyConcern / LA

Concerns about an adult
Know how it applies to you

Listening to a child - the basics

Do
- Keep an open mind
- Reassure them
- Listen, don't interrogate
- Work at their pace
- Record in their words
- Pass to DSL immediately

Don't
- Promise confidentiality
- Interrupt or interrogate
- Make assumptions
- Show shock or anger
- Send them elsewhere

What happens when a child tells you something

Child discloses to you directly → **Listen & record** using do / don't → **Pass to DSL** same day → **DSL decides** LA / LADO

Recording on CPOMS

- Clear sequence, date & time
- Actions taken or needed
- Facts, not opinions
- Direct quotes
- Attach supporting files
- Review before submitting

Always pass your concerns to the DSL.



Understanding abuse

Your training covers the definitions of abuse set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children and KCSIE, the specific forms it can take, and the possible signs and symptoms to look out for.



Concerned about another adult?

Report it under the whistleblowing policy. This may be a low-level concern, or one serious enough to refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) — your DSL will guide you on which.

Yearly training

Autumn
INSET refresher, or The Key online

Spring
Online safety, safer recruitment

Summer
School-chosen, context-specific

Good to know



Retaining evidence

If a case is likely to go to court, keep any paper-based documents you've scanned in — for example a paper disclosure form. Speak to your DSL if you're unsure what to retain.



Contacts

Full contacts for local authority safeguarding teams, your DSL, DDSL and governors are avaialable in your school staff handbook.

Charter.

Your induction plan

About you

Your name

Your school / team

Your role

Start date

Before you join and your first week

My line manager is

My induction 'buddy' is

Before you join and your first week

On the first day: I am arriving by this time (when)

On the first day: I am arriving at (where)

On the first day: I am asking for (who)

Staff member responsible / notes

Before you join and your first week: Training

Complete the following training (you will need a school email)

- [x]
- [ ] Working with display screen equipment (to read from HSE)
- [ ] Fire safety awareness for school staff – The Key (30 minutes)
- [ ] The Equality Act 2010 – The Key (45 minutes)

Staff member responsible / notes

Before you join and your first week : Get set up

Set up your:

- [x]
- [ ] IT/intranet account
- [ ] Access to all relevant school platforms (e.g., CPOMS (all except Bermondsey), Insight (primary only), Bromcom (all except Bermondsey and Loughborough), SIMS (Loughborough and Bermondsey only), Classcharts (secondary only), MyConcern (Bermondsey)), photocopying and printing
- [ ] Email account
- [ ] Your Charter
- [ ] ID/security pass and access to the signing in/out system
- [ ] Laptop/tablet/phone (if applicable)
- [ ] Working space (if applicable)
- [ ] Parking permit/space (if applicable)
- [ ] Confirmation you have been added to the school SCR
- [ ] Confirmation you have been added to the school MIS system (Bromcom/ SIMS)
- [ ] Access to The Key online training platform

Staff member responsible / notes

Before you join and your first week: Meet your team

Arrange meetings with relevant colleagues and make sure you have time to attend them:
List who and when:

Before you join and your first week: Staff handbook

☑

☐ I have received the school's staff handbook and code of conduct and I have read it through

Staff member responsible / notes

Before you join and your first week: Policies

Policies to be given (by HR onboarding team) all policies can be found on Your Charter

- [x]
- [ ] Safeguarding
- [ ] Trust Staff Code of Conduct
- [ ] Device and Technology Acceptable use agreement – to read and sign
- [ ] Link to KCSIE for that year and London Safeguarding Children Procedures March 2026
- [ ] Trust AI policy
- [ ] Sickness absence
- [ ] Disciplinary procedures
- [ ] Appraisal
- [ ] Pay
- [ ] Whistleblowing
- [ ] Data Protection
- [ ] Health and Safety
- [ ] Privacy Notice
- [ ] Bullying and Harassment

Staff member responsible / notes

Your first day

Meet with your immediate line manager to be welcomed and to discuss your role.
Do you know:

- [x]
- [ ] the school timetable, including timings of staff meetings, assemblies and registration
- [ ] the signing in and out procedures for the building
- [ ] and have read, the school's code of conduct
- [ ] and have you signed the acceptable use agreement
- [ ] and have you signed the disqualification declaration (safeguarding)

Staff member responsible / notes

Your first day: familiarise yourself with your surroundings

- [x]
- [ ] Take a tour of the school with introductions to key staff

Staff member responsible / notes

Meet the DSL

(If your start date is not September) Meet the DSL and complete safeguarding training – including how reporting systems work and school-specific safeguarding procedures

Meeting arranged for:

Your first week: rewards

☑

☐ Your buddy to explain the school's behaviour and rewards system

The end of your first week

At end of first week, meet with line manager to:

☑

☐ Complete a wellbeing check

☐ Identify initial training and development needs

☐ Explain the appraisal and performance review process – targets will be set after the first month

What additional training does this staff member need to fulfil their particular role? (please list and arrange this training)

Between weeks 2 and 4

Attend the meetings with the relevant colleagues arranged above.

You have completed your induction training from The Key – if you attended the induction day, these courses are completed. If not, the following need to be completed. This must include:

- [x]
- [ ] Safeguarding and Child Protection essentials
- [ ] Preventing radicalisation
- [ ] H&S in Education: Staff awareness
- [ ] A Guide to UK Data Protection
- [ ] Allergy and emergency response (Benedicts Law)
- [ ] Sexual harassment training
- [ ] Cybersecurity (from the NCSC) (video shown on the day)

Staff member responsible / notes

After 1 month

Meet with your line manager to:

- [x]
- [ ] Evaluate how your induction is going
- [ ] Identify any additional training you need (or any refresher training)
- [ ] Agree your appraisal targets
- [ ] Check your understanding of safeguarding procedures
- [ ] Find out about any relevant CPD opportunities
- [ ] Confirm your ongoing support and supervision arrangements

Staff member responsible / notes

Your Charter.

Everything you need. All in one place.

- Staff benefits
- Policies & forms
- Training opportunities
- Trust news
- Your pay
- Wellbeing support
- & more

Your Charter is your go-to platform for benefits, policies, wellbeing support, news, and more. Register as soon as you can:

yourcharter.org.uk

(using your work email)

Charter.

chartertrust.org.uk

Better futures for children & young people

Contacts

Trust safeguarding

Role	Name	Contact
Trust DSL	Cassie Buchanan (CEO)	cbuchanan@tcset.org.uk
Trust DDSL (Primary)	Lucy Ellis	lellis@tcset.org.uk
Trust DDSL (Secondary)	Gary Phillips	gphilips@tcset.org.uk
Chair of Trustees	Jonathan Slater	chair@tcset.org.uk
Trustee Responsible for Safeguarding	Karen Robinson	info@tcset.org.uk

Other useful safeguarding contacts

Area	Contact
Southwark Safeguarding (MASH)	020 7525 1921 / 020 7525 5000 (out of hours) / mash@southwark.gov.uk
Southwark Schools Safeguarding in Schools Lead	Emma Geiringer, emma.geiringer@southwark.gov.uk / 020 7525 5377 / 07860 354934
Southwark Schools Safeguarding Coordinator	Apo Çağırıcı, apo.cagirici@southwark.gov.uk / 020 7525 2715 / 07946 453527
Southwark LADO	Eva Simcock, 020 7525 0689
Lambeth Safeguarding (Integrated Referral Hub)	020 7926 3100 (Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm) / 020 7926 5555 (out of hours) / helpandprotection@lambeth.gov.uk
Lambeth LADO	Andrew Zachariades, lado@lambeth.gov.uk / 020 7926 4679 or 07720 828 700
Lewisham Safeguarding	mashagency@lewisham.gov.uk / 020 8314 6660
Bromley Safeguarding (MASH)	mash@bromley.gov.uk / 020 8461 7373
Police, Southwark Safer Schools Team	020 232 7273

HR, Payroll and Recruitment Contacts

Team	Contact
HR Admin	HRAdmin@tcset.org.uk
Payroll	payroll@tcset.org.uk
Recruitment	recruitment@tcset.org.uk
Pensions	sroberts@tcset.org.uk

FAQs

When will I get paid?
Salaries are paid on the 20th of each month. For payroll questions, contact payroll@tcset.org.uk.

Will I automatically be enrolled in the pension scheme?
Yes, but if you're under 22 and earning under £10,000 a year, you typically won't be automatically enrolled. You can still choose to join at any time by opting in, and you can opt out at any time too. You don't have to pay into the workplace pension if you'd rather not.

I haven't received my P45 from my previous employer, does that matter?
No. Let HR know and they'll give you an HMRC Starter Checklist to complete, so you're on the correct tax code.

How do I find out about my holiday entitlement?
It'll be set out in your contract. You can also check with your school's business lead or the HR team.

How do I access company policies and resources?
Everything's on Your Charter. You can also ask your manager or HR for any specific documents or information you need.

Starting a new job comes with a lot of questions, please don't hesitate to ask for help.

Notes

Notes

Charter.

tcset.org.uk