

Pioneer Educational Trust
PIONEERING PROMISES

The bottom left corner of the page features a series of overlapping, stylized mountain-like shapes. These shapes are composed of various shades of blue, teal, and purple, with dark brown outlines. They are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and movement, resembling a modern, abstract landscape.

We commit to the following 10 promises

1. Alignment to National Pay and Conditions

We honour all national guidelines in relation to pay and working conditions and ensure that we reward staff fairly. We accept the annual cost of living increase for teachers. We work in partnership with trade unions and professional associations in an open and transparent way.

2. Beating National Pay and Conditions

We continuously explore where we might be able to beat national pay and conditions to further support our staff. Examples include:

- Applying the same annual cost of living increase that teachers receive to support staff pay.
- Enhanced leave of absence
- Innovative flexible working practices including bespoke flexible job design

3. Staff voice: WorkWell Committee

In delivering on our Pioneering Promises, we seek to work in partnership and collaboration with all colleagues through the WorkWell Committee. Working together, the WorkWell Committee and trust and school leaders contribute positively to the implementation of our strategy and these promises, and collaborate to co-construct ways of working and making positive changes. The WorkWell Committee is there to advocate for all staff in relation to workload and wellbeing, provide a link between colleagues and leaders, provide a listening ear and signpost individuals to collect channels for raising issues or for appropriate advice and support.

4. Measuring the impact of our Pioneering Promises: engagement survey

We are committed to continually seeking work-load conscious ways of working and to be the employer of choice. To do this, we promise to undertake a range of activities to measure the impact of our Pioneering Promises, including:

- Completing an annual Engagement Survey. The survey outputs are shared with colleagues and governors across the organisation, including actions to be taken in response to findings. To ensure that the actions are appropriate, we undertake further discovery exercises where needed.
- Engaging the WorkWell Committee in annually appraising the impact of the Pioneering Promises through reporting to governors / trustees as part of our Pioneer Roadmap: quality assurance model.



5. Adopting workload-conscious ways of working

Colleagues at all levels are supported to identify workload-conscious ways of working. On whole-school activities, the following solutions have been co-constructed with colleagues to support this aim:

- i. **Lesson planning.** To ensure that teachers have the best opportunity to teach well, we have changed the school day to provide an additional hour every week for collaborative planning. This enables teams to engage in purposeful curriculum planning, to innovate and share best practice.
- ii. **Marking and feedback.** A team of experienced and effective teachers have created a feedback strategy that minimises marking that does not impact on pupil progress. The strategy details a comprehensive, intelligent, creative approach to support teachers, teaching assistants and HLTAs in reflecting on and deepening their feedback practices.
- iii. **Data collection.** Schools have a maximum of three data drops staged throughout the year at times responsive to the school's reporting needs. All data drops seek to collect the minimum high-quality data that can then be used by leaders at all levels to inform school improvement activities. Individual schools determine how to report to parents according to their school's context. Where teachers teach a large number of students, full written reports have been abandoned.
- iv. **Emails.** We do not expect colleagues to read or respond to emails outside of normal working hours. We trust colleagues, as professionals, to make decisions as to how they wish to organise their work-life balance, and, as such, the Email Protocol, co-constructed by a team of colleagues, enables staff to choose to send and read emails at a time that works for them with no expectation of responses outside of the working day.

6. Calendar and school year

We provide a two-week October half term to support colleagues in what is the longest term of the academic year. In line with regulations, maintained schools are required to provide 190 days of education to pupils and teachers are required to work for 195 days. As an academy, we can choose to extend or reduce the number of days. As a trust, we never exceed the number of days education for pupils and provide two INSET days plus the Pioneer Summit. These total 192 days for teaching staff. The other three days (18 hours) in the academic year are accounted for through the 18 hours of self-directed CPDL (18R). Although school dates may be different than other schools, we fulfil the same expectations as maintained schools reflecting our commitment to provide a first-class education to our pupils. Trust and school calendars are planned and published in advance of the school year beginning so as to provide clarity for all. Wherever possible, pinch points are identified and mitigated, and Reflection Weeks, in which no meetings are scheduled, take place every six weeks to provide time for colleagues to get through their to-do lists, take back their productivity and mindfulness, use the time to catch up on all the jobs we love to put off by providing uninterrupted time to do your work.

7. Quality Assurance: internal quality assurance / Trust Reviews / External Inspection

We trust our colleagues, as professionals, to always be prepared for quality assurance and inspection. There should be no need for additional work – it is for the trust, senior and middle leaders to be prepared for such events. Our twice yearly Trust Reviews are developmental in purpose and focus on providing an evaluation of leaders' progress

against the SDP priorities. Our Pioneer Roadmap: quality assurance model has been co-constructed with leaders and delivers on the following promises:

- 'Owned' by middle leaders
- No grading of lessons or individuals
- Separation of quality assurance (accountability) and quality improvement (development) with quality assurance is focused on the performance of teams
- A commitment to undertaking the minimum quality assurance will be completed to provide a robust understanding of the quality of the provision all timetabled into the school year
- A 30:70 ratio of quality assurance to school improvement is applied



8. Appraisal and Professional Development

To support colleagues to be professionally fulfilled and to ensure that all colleagues have a meaningful experience of appraisal, we have embedded a system that:

- Is focused on development rather than accountability
- Ties together systems in place to support an individual's professional development, e.g. CPDL offer and the QI entitlement
- Is designed in line with the calendar and six-week cycles
- Has six-weekly reflection time built in so that appraisal is an ongoing process rather than an event
- Provides automatic pay progression (unless there is evidence to suggest otherwise)
- Is completed in line with the academic year allowing pay increments to be applied from the September of the following year (where applicable)

In addition, we seek to support colleagues to WorkWell through our CPDL Offer that includes:

- CPDL Wednesday providing an additional hour of time for professional learning with colleagues in teams and across the school and trust.
- A Quality Improvement entitlement that provides the opportunity to engage in self-directed professional development facilitating pupil voice, open-door learning visits, lesson observations and 18 hours of research and training
- Our Pioneer Summit with an opportunity to learn from brilliant keynote speakers and colleagues
- A CPDL library that can be accessed by all

9. Leading the way with flexible working

We have been at the forefront of pioneering a flexible working strategy across our trust since 2019, focusing on five key strands: leadership (embedding flexible working as a core element of our schools, supporting our values); flexible working arrangements (offering a balanced range of creative working options that meet both school and individual needs, underpinned by trust and fairness); flexible hiring; flexible progression (ensuring flexibility is available at every career level and stage); and flexible advocacy (championing flexible working and embedding these practices across our MAT). To achieve this, we have embedded a flexible working design process that established a transparent and inclusive approach to enhancing flexibility, enabling colleagues to request on an annual basis, small flexibilities that don't affect their pay.

10. Total benefits package

Alongside the above, we offer a full benefits package for our colleagues. The full list can be found on our website. This includes:

- Priority admission for children of staff
- Employee Assist Scheme
- Reward Gateway
- Enhanced employer pension contributions via excellent Defined Benefit Pension Schemes
- Enhanced leave, including, maternity, paternity, adoption, parental bereavement
- Health-care benefits, including flu clinic and subsidised private health care and eye care vouchers



What we expect in return

In return for our Pioneering Promises, expectations of our colleagues are:

Working in partnership and collaboration, we support all colleagues to be professionally fulfilled within an encouraging, positive and inclusive working environment. As professionals with agency, we encourage all colleagues to practise self-care and, as such, make informed decisions about how and when they work in order to organise their own work-life balance.

In return for our Pioneering Promises, our expectation is that colleagues:

- **Demonstrate a commitment to working in collaboration and partnership**

As one of our core values, we aim to inspire collaboration. We know that working in schools is both challenging and rewarding. Through working in partnership and collaboration, we support one another to be flexible and adaptable, be resilient and achieve collective success. We collectively strive to embrace the Pioneering Promises whilst individually developing our own ways of making good lifestyle choices in line with our needs and contexts.

- **Demonstrate high levels of professionalism**

Our colleagues are treated as professionals and act as professionals. As role models to the children and young people in our family of schools, we demonstrate what it means to be engaged and fulfilled in our professional roles. We demonstrate our commitment to professional development, to get the most out of available opportunities and show a desire to keep growing. We embrace the values and ethos of our schools and trust

- **Demonstrate unconditional positive regard and respect for self and others**

As public servants, we have high regard for the Nolan Principles of Public Life and, as such, demonstrate integrity, openness, selflessness, honesty and accountability, and embed these in our working practices and professional relationships. We embrace that belief that 'everyone is trying their best' and, in doing so, demonstrate unconditional positive regard for all within our community. We seek to listen to understand and to demonstrate respect for ourselves and others through our relationships and conduct.

