



HR services for schools

Employment and Human Resources

**Browne
Jacobson**



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Employment and human resources

Helping you do what is fundamentally right for your pupils and your organisation

When complex staffing issues arise, schools need immediate advice that gives a clear analysis of the risks and a strategic plan of action. That could be anything from devising a long-term strategy for dealing with an entrenched trade union situation across a large multi-academy trust, to resolving a complex employment tribunal claim from an ex-employee against a community primary school.

Our clients receive quick, pragmatic advice and are safe in the knowledge that, as sector specialists, we ensure they aren't tripped up by missing the latest Government guidance, best practice or changes to legislation.

Our team provides specialist advice to our education clients and have a long history of advising schools and academies. Working in tandem, our education HR consultants and our employment lawyers provide our 'HR Services for Schools', designed specifically for schools and academies, offering a complete package of support ranging from managing day-to-day HR issues to guidance on strategic organisational changes.

We regularly provide training on topics such as recent employment law updates and best practice training for leaders on effective people management.

Whether it is a routine question interpreting the Burgundy Book rules on maternity leave or a strategic review of staff resulting in a whole school restructure, our team has the experience to ensure our clients achieve the result they are looking for.

What we do...

- Strategic HR and employment law advice to schools and academy groups.
- Team restructures, bespoke contracts and terms of employment.
- Dealing with complex grievances and disciplinaries.
- Managing allegations against staff.
- Referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency.
- Exit agreements and compliance with the Academy Trust Handbook.
- Discrimination issues.
- TUPE transfers and indemnities on outsourcing.
- Supporting you with trade union issues – from collective negotiation to injunctions on industrial action.
- Specialist reward consultancy, e.g. advice to remuneration committees regarding executive pay, salary benchmarking, redesign of pay and reward structures.
- Bespoke and off-the-shelf training for all levels of staff (including governors and trustees) on HR matters.



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About us

In a constantly changing education landscape, it is more important than ever that you can rely on a specialist team of dedicated and trusted lawyers and HR consultants that understand the competitive, challenging environment in which you operate.

We pride ourselves on helping you to do what is fundamentally right for your pupils and organisation. Always ahead of the curve, we provide fresh ideas and out-of-the-box thinking to ensure that your school or trust is prepared, and able to take advantage of sector developments and opportunities.

As one of the largest legal and HR specialist education teams in the country we have a wealth of education knowledge and experience and come highly commended. We are consistently featured in Band One of the Legal 500 and Chambers UK listings.

Ensuring we are providing you with a high-quality, ethical service that meets your individual requirements means you can be confident that we will be honest, fair and open in all that we do, both internally and externally.

Our advice will be straightforward, practical, friendly and accessible. Our people are clear about what we expect of them and we trust them to deliver against clear principles, not policies. We are also committed to supporting you in the most cost-effective way.

This is why we are chosen and are trusted by over 1,570 schools and academies across the country every year, and we have been recognised as seven-time winners of the Education Investors Award for Legal Advisors to Education Institutions.

Our firm also enjoys strategic partnerships with the Association of School and College Leaders, the Confederation of School Trusts, the National Association of Head Teachers and the National Governance Association.

Our commitment to the sector is entrenched in everything we do. We utilise our experience and connections to unify our country's approach by supporting key initiatives taking place from time to time. Examples are:

- Foundation for Education Development – a group established to develop a long-term education vision and plan that best serves the needs of our country and its people; and
- Timewise Foundation – a project aimed at improving access to flexible working at a more systemic level.

Being so immersed in the education sector enables us to add real value. We host a range of events and forums throughout the year to enable our clients the opportunity to engage with, and learn from our team and each other.



Our services



Our HR Services

Tailored solutions and high-quality advice



Your people are your most valuable asset and are essential in delivering the highest quality education for your students. It is vital that you have a motivated and effective workforce and any HR processes and issues are managed and dealt with quickly and efficiently. Dealing with such issues requires expert knowledge and can be time-consuming, draining your own and your senior team's time, energy and resources.

That's where we can help. Whatever your need or issue, our HR Services offer you tailored solutions and high-quality advice specifically designed around the needs of your organisation.

Benefit from having access to our dedicated HR experts and employment lawyers with proven experience of advising on the day-to-day and strategic challenges faced by schools and academies.

Our team includes professionals whose careers have centred on providing HR services to the education sector.

This includes operating as part of school and academy trusts' senior leadership teams, as well as working within local authorities as HR professionals providing consultancy services to a number of schools and academies. Our hands-on experience gives us a sound insight and understanding of your needs, the policies you work with, and the ever-changing landscape of employing staff in schools.

Whatever services we supply, you can guarantee that our fees will be transparent.

“Browne Jacobson have taken the time to understand our needs and preferred approach, one impressed client remarks, adding: They are always accessible and we've never had to wait for a response, email or return call.”

Chambers and Partners



HR Core

Unlimited day-to-day HR support for a fixed, annual fee

Be prepared for whatever comes your way with unlimited access to our award-winning HR experts and employment lawyers. With proven experience of advising on the day-to-day and strategic challenges faced by schools and academies, we are here to help you.

Each year, over 450 different schools and academy trusts across England benefit from HR Core, saving time and reducing risk.

Key features

- Initial familiarisation meeting from a HR Consultant so that they can get to know you and the specific issues in your organisation, allowing us to support you from day one and making for a smooth transition from your existing provider.
- Unlimited access to support and advice from a named and dedicated HR Consultant via email or telephone (8am to 6pm Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays) in relation to absolutely any day-to-day HR and employment law issues including (but not limited to):
 - Disciplinary and grievances.
 - Performance management and capability.
 - Sickness absence.
 - Trade union relations including support with negotiating and drafting settlement agreements.
 - Terms and conditions advice including maternity, paternity and redundancy.

- One (≤ 67 employees) or two (≥ 68 employees) half-day on-site visits per academic year, tailored to your needs. Typically, these are used for meetings or training but how you use them is up to you. You can also buy more of these on a pay-as-you-go basis.
- Attendance at all hearings and resulting appeals where employee dismissal is a possibility. We advise the panel giving peace of mind and confidence as well as drafting outcome letters.
- Access to a comprehensive range of school specific HR policies, contract templates, letters and procedure guides.
- Regular 'HR Essentials' email bulletins to ensure that you keep updated with employment-related changes.

Pricing

Annual costs are based on staff numbers (head count excluding casual or contract staff).

Stand-alone school or single academy trust

You pay the lesser of either:

- £3,000 + £50 per employee plus VAT.
- £100 per employee plus VAT (a minimum charge of £4,000 applies).

Multi academy trust

£4,000 + £50 per employee plus VAT.



HR Options

Bespoke support, to meet your needs



Schools and trusts are all individual in their requirements and we've therefore created a service that allows you to tailor a HR package to meet your specific needs. With HR Options, you can select the number of advisory hours and half day visits that best meet your needs and budget.

Our team of expert HR Consultants tailor their advice based on your specific culture, ethos and values. With HR Options, you don't need to worry about trying to 'fit in' with one of our services, you can design your very own HR service that works for you. With HR Options, the more hours and half days visits you purchase, the cheaper they become. You can top up throughout the year and any hours or half days left can be used for training or other proactive projects.

Key features:

Access to support and advice from a HR Consultant via email or telephone (8am to 6pm Monday to Friday excluding Bank Holidays) in relation to absolutely any day-to-day HR and employment law issues including (but not limited to):

- Disciplinary and grievances.
- Performance management and capability.
- Sickness absence.
- Terms and conditions advice including maternity, paternity and redundancy.
- Regular 'HR Essentials' email bulletins to ensure that you keep updated with employment related changes.
- You can further tailor your HR Options service by adding everything from bundles of settlement agreements to coaching plans through to training packages.

Pricing

20 – 349 hours
£170 per hour plus VAT

350 – 499 hours*
£165 per hour plus VAT

* 350 hours+ includes access to a comprehensive range of school specific HR policies, contract templates, letters and procedure guides.

HR Consultancy

A pay-as-you-go service for one-off projects or complex matters

Benefit from the reassuring support and guidance of our award-winning HR and employment experts with a fully scoped consultancy service specific to your project or matter.

HR Consultancy is a pay-as-you-go service for one-off projects or matters that you may require assistance with. Whether you need support on a complex case or you want additional onsite assistance, this can be provided on a consultancy basis.

This may include:

- Complex absence, capability, grievance or disciplinary issues (from investigations through to advice for panels at hearings).

- Support with restructures, TUPE transfers and changing terms and conditions, from advice on process through to hands-on support in developing structures and implementing the change.
- Training sessions for senior leadership/middle managers/governors/trustees on any HR/people management related issue, including safer recruitment.
- Policy reviews and drafting.

You do not need to buy other services from us to purchase an HR Consultancy package, which can be purchased at any time.

Pricing

HR Advisor

£175/hour

HR Consultant

£190/hour

Senior HR Consultant

£240/hour

Head/Deputy of HR Services /Partner

£335/hour

“The team is not just professional but proactive.”

“Responsive, yet happy to suggest different approaches.”

“Innovative and approachable.”

Client quotes – Legal 500 2026



Policies

Consistent, current, high quality policy documents that give you peace of mind

Developed by our national award-winning education lawyers and HR experts, our ready-to-use terms and conditions, policies and procedures have been designed to provide you with a cost and time effective way to keep your trust's documents up to date.

Supplied in individual editable Microsoft Word documents, the education and HR policy templates reflect best practice and ensure that your trust is legally compliant. Drafted in line with national terms and conditions, the suite of documents can be applied across multiple geographical regions for larger trusts with academies located across the country.

Each template can be adapted in accordance with your own existing policies or can be implemented with little editing by each of your academies.

The comprehensive pack of over 40 core education and HR policies can be purchased as a one-off package and will be sent directly to your inbox within two working days. You can purchase education or HR policies separately too.

Our HR policy templates also work excellently with our template document bundles.

You can subscribe to our annual update service which means that, at the start of the new academic year, you will automatically receive a reviewed set of policies reflecting any changes in legislation and best practice developments.

You are under no obligation to subscribe to this additional service but, if you do not, it will then be your responsibility to ensure that your documents remain up to date and compliant with revised legislation as and when appropriate.

Pricing

Education & HR policies
One off package
£1,995 plus VAT

Subscription
£1050 plus VAT (additional to one-off)

Education / HR only policies
One off package
£1,600 plus VAT

Subscription
£895 plus VAT (additional to one-off)

Other policies (bought individually)
£595 plus VAT



Template documents

Resources to raise standards and make your job easier



Developed by our national specialist experts, our ready-to-use template document bundles have been designed to provide you with a cost and time effective way to keep your employment documents up to date.

Access hundreds of top quality templates, supplied as individual editable Microsoft Word documents; these HR resources reflect best practice and include a collection of guidance documents and scripts. Drafted in line with national terms and conditions, the suite of documents can be applied to ensure consistency in HR management.

After years of supporting schools and trusts we have developed a wealth of valuable HR resources to support your teams in managing cases, and we are pleased to offer these bundles to you at very affordable rates.

Our template document bundles also work excellently with our HR policy templates.

Pricing

Platinum solutions

Recruitment & SCR
£600 plus VAT

Gold solutions

Disciplinary
£500 plus VAT

Appraisal and capability
£500 plus VAT

Redundancy/ Restructure
£500 plus VAT

Silver solutions

Absence
£400 plus VAT

Grievance
£400 plus VAT

Full access to all
£1,850 plus VAT

The HR Pathways Academy

Helping you to create great places to work and thrive

The HR Pathways Academy continuous professional development (CPD) programmes have been designed to equip professionals operating within an educational setting with the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to proactively manage employees in accordance with HR best practice and employment legislation.

We have three definitive Pathways programmes:

Foundation pathway is designed for those new to HR or just beginning their HR journey within the education sector to equip you with the essential knowledge and practical skills to thrive.

Intermediate Pathway is designed for newly-appointed head teachers, school leaders, managers or those

aspiring to move into a leadership role, together with HR professionals new to education and school business or operations managers who don't have any formal HR or employee relations experience or training. Providing the skills, knowledge and confidence to proactively manage employees in accordance with best practise and the law.

Visionary Pathway is tailored for strategic leader such as CEOs, COOs, HR directors or managers, executive directors, executive principals and experienced principals. It blends HR expertise with executive insight to enhance strategy, improvement, efficiency, and the future vision of your organisation.

Pricing

Foundation pathway

£825 plus VAT per delegate, or £1,450 plus VAT for two delegates from the same school/trust.

Intermediate Pathway

£825 plus VAT per delegate, or £1,450 plus VAT for two delegates from the same school/trust.

Visionary Pathway

£1,200 plus VAT per delegate, or £2,100 plus VAT for two delegates from the same school/trust.



Coaching

Developing leaders for schools and trusts

Coaching is a powerful method of ensuring people achieve their full potential. All too often, coaching is only proposed when there is a specific issue to be addressed and an individual has asked for (or has been advised to get) support. Coaching can be so much more than this.

Coaching can help leaders to find the space and time to prioritise, re-energise and to reflect on what they have learnt, how they see the future for their organisation and the opportunities and risks the broader landscape presents.

Our coaching service is ideal for:

- Executives who want to ensure that they're working to their full potential and want clarification on their priorities.
- CEO/trust leader designates as part of their development journey.
- New trustees who are experienced in other sectors but are new to education and want to quickly get to grips with their new role.
- Chairs of Trustees – particularly prior to periods of significant change.

- Headteachers who need space away from the busy day to day running of school to build strategies that work on the priorities ahead.
- Leaders who may be struggling with their personal growth and require both room for reflection and opportunities to push themselves to improve.

Emma Hughes, Iain Blatherwick and Nick MacKenzie are individually accredited EMCC Global Practitioners and they make up our qualified and experienced executive coaching team. Qualified with the Academy of Executive Coaching (AoEC) to Practitioner Diploma level, our coaching team receives regular coaching supervision and is committed to their own continuous professional development.

They will work with you to provide the support and challenge you need to move forward with your goals. Our approach helps ambitious leaders drive forward with increased awareness and focus.

Coaching sessions are usually 60 to 90 minutes in duration but can be tailored to best meet your needs. A mix of face-to-face and online sessions are offered.

Pricing

We have a range of programmes we can offer as well as providing bespoke approaches tailored to your needs.

- **Termly arrangement (Four coaching sessions)**
- **Yearly arrangement (12 coaching sessions)**

Please contact us to arrange a call with Emma, Nick or Iain to discuss a tailored approach to your needs.

For arrangements for more than one person or bespoke programmes – pricing on request.

All programmes include a 'chemistry' session at the outset.



Our team



Our team



“Emma is a hugely knowledgeable HR professional. She uses her expertise incisively and with thoughtfulness and sensitivity.”

Leora Cruddas
CEO, Confederation of School Trusts

Emma Hughes
Partner and Head of HR Services (FCIPD)

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[View bio](#)

Emma has 20 years' experience in generalist HR in both the private sector and the public sector.

Emma has worked as HR Director and regional HR Business Partner for two large, national MATs and regularly networks with other HR leaders in the education sector. This enables Emma to keep abreast of the challenges that schools and school trusts are facing today.

Emma hosts a number of our collaborative forums for clients and non-clients. Well networked, Emma is able to bring insights and great practice from organisations across the sector to help inspire new approaches to HR.

Whilst at Browne Jacobson, Emma has carved out expertise supporting Boards with executive pay setting and reward redesign.

Emma has led on many business transformation projects, including complex national whole organisation restructures. Emma has also worked with trade unions at a national level, covering everything from policy negotiation to terms and conditions through to more tricky industrial disputes involving ACAS conciliation and strike action.

Emma forms a part of our executive coaching team, all of whom are individually accredited EMCC Global Practitioners. This team is dedicated to helping leaders progress towards their goals with clarity and enhanced focus.

Emma is a regular speaker at education conferences across the country and will often take part in sector-wide webinars and other HR commentary. Until recently, Emma was the Chair of Trustees at a school trust comprising sixteen primary academies. This role gave Emma great insight into the challenges that Boards face.

Emma is currently a Trustee for the Institute for Employment Studies, a research organisation that works to bring about sustainable improvements in employment policy and HR management in the UK. She is also a Trustee for Education Support, the only UK charity dedicated to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of teachers and education staff in schools, colleges and universities. Both charities, the Institute for Employment Studies and Education Support, align closely with Emma's dedication to enhancing workplace environments and supporting the wellbeing of educational professionals across the UK.

Our team



Tom Wallace MCIPD
Partner and Deputy Head
of HR Services (MCIPD)

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[View bio](#)

Tom is Deputy Head of HR Services in our Education Team and has over 15 years' experience working with schools and trusts, including working for a number of years with one of the largest Multi Academy trusts. Tom is experienced in all levels of HR management including complex union negotiations, high level safeguarding cases and large scale restructures.

Tom specialises in pay and reward initiatives and has supported numerous trusts with executive pay and structure reviews, including creating trust-wide pay scales/job families and R&R incentives. Tom is extremely passionate about improving education through proactive HR strategies and has supported many schools and trusts in developing HR initiatives and 5-year plans to achieve this.



Hannah Bingham,
Senior HR Consultant
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[View bio](#)

Hannah is a Senior HR Consultant who understands the education landscape both strategically and operationally. Hannah works with leaders and other key stakeholders to resolve a range of employment related challenges, such as complex disciplinary or grievance investigations, whistleblowing, reorganisations, training and under-performance.

Having worked within a large multi-academy trust, Hannah understands the often-conflicting priorities of school life and will support leaders in navigating statutory and regulatory guidance, policy and employment law to ensure sound decisions are reached. Hannah gets to the point, using both common sense and subject knowledge to provide a solution-focused service to our clients.



Tanya Jackson
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[View bio](#)

Tanya is a Senior HR Consultant, having previously spent 13 years as a Regional HR Partner of a large multi-academy trust. Tanya has significant experience of school structures and operations, having also held operations director roles before focusing her career on HR. Tanya can be relied on to deliver practical solutions that are founded with a solid understanding of school environments.

Tanya also specialises in supporting schools and academy trusts with HR-related safeguarding advice. Tanya has carried out several single-central record audits and has delivered training to teams to ensure that they are fully equipped to maintain excellent HR-related safeguarding administration.



Sarah Ashley, MCIPD
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[View bio](#)

Sarah is a Senior HR Consultant in our Birmingham office within the HR Services team. Sarah has over 13 years' experience advising schools and academies and is a Chartered Member of the CIPD. Sarah has significant experience of supporting senior leaders with a wide range of employee relations issues.

Having previously worked at a local authority HR team for schools, her main areas of expertise lie in managing complex casework and advising on national terms and conditions.

Sarah has delivered a large number of training sessions for clients and spoken at external seminars and conferences on a wide variety of HR issues.

Our team



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