Job Description

Assistant Head (SENCO)

In Toto Ed | London

Job title	Assistant Head (SENCO) – Lead on Inclusion
Location	Cambridge
Salary	£53,585-£57,700 L1-L4
Working hours	Full time, term-time only (39 weeks), 8.30am to 4.30pm
Contract type	Permanent
Reports to	Head of School
Responsible for	Support Staff, Therapy Teams
Start date	As soon as possible

Purpose of the Role

In Toto Ed is an independent special school. We offer an alternative to mainstream education for students whose needs are not met elsewhere, teaching in small groups and building individual learning packages, so that every student feels safe and happy, achieves their potential and has a bright future.

The Assistant Head (SENCO) is the school's lead on inclusion. As a member of the senior leadership team, the postholder sets the strategic direction for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) provision, carries the operational SENCO role, and makes sure that every student's identified needs are understood, planned for and met — with ambition, and without compromising their dignity or chronological age.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic leadership

- Contribute as a member of the senior leadership team to school self-evaluation, improvement planning and the strategic direction of the school.
- Lead the development, implementation and annual review of the school's inclusion and SEND strategy, policies and improvement priorities.
- Report to the Head of School and to the advisory body on the quality, impact and value of inclusion provision, using evidence and student outcomes.
- Manage the SEND budget and resources, including the deployment of learning support staff, in agreement with the Head of School.
- Deputise for the Head of School and take a share of senior leadership duties as required.

Leading on inclusion

- Champion an inclusive culture in which every student is known, valued and held to high academic and personal expectations.
- Lead whole-school work to identify and remove barriers to learning, including those relating to attendance, engagement, behaviour, communication, sensory needs and emotional regulation.
- Lead on accessibility planning and on reasonable adjustments, in line with the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- Monitor the progress, attendance and destinations of students with SEND, identify gaps and lead action to close them.
- Oversee transition arrangements for students joining and leaving the school, including transition to post-16 provision and adulthood.
- Lead on the use of adaptive and assistive technology, identifying what individual students need, securing it and ensuring staff are trained and confident in using it.
- Lead, develop and quality-assure the work of the inclusion team.

SENCO responsibilities

- Act as the school's SENCO, working in line with the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years and the Children and Families Act 2014.
- Coordinate the identification, assessment and provision for all students with SEND, leading the graduated approach of assess, plan, do, review.
- Ensure that Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan outcomes, and the provision specified in Section F, are implemented in every lesson, and monitor this through quality assurance.
- Ensure that all pen portraits, Assess, Plan, Do, Review (APDR) cycles, individual education plans (IEPs) and annual reviews are recorded, tracked and monitored on Provision Map.
- Organise and schedule annual reviews within statutory timeframes, ensuring that paperwork is prepared, completed and circulated as required.
- Oversee EHC plans: contribute to assessments and reassessments, track progress against outcomes, and gather and quality-assure the supporting evidence.
- Oversee and review all interventions, ensuring each is appropriately targeted, delivered as planned, and evaluated for impact.
- Oversee the collation of evidence for access arrangements, ensuring arrangements are properly assessed, evidenced and in place for assessments and examinations.
- Maintain an accurate SEND register and provision mapping, and ensure that provision is costed, evidenced and reviewed for impact.
- Liaise with local authorities, commissioners and placing officers, ensuring that reporting obligations and deadlines are met.
- Ensure individual learning packages, targets and support plans are in place, understood by staff, and reviewed at agreed intervals.
- Ensure that the Independent School Standards are met within the remit of the SENCO, maintaining the evidence required to demonstrate compliance.

Teaching, learning and staff development

- Quality-assure teaching, planning and assessment across the school, with a particular focus on adaptation and inclusive practice.
- Lead and deliver professional development for teaching and support staff on SEND, adaptive teaching and inclusive practice.
- Coach, mentor and support colleagues, including early career teachers and newly appointed support staff.
- Line manage the therapy team, ensuring therapeutic provision is integrated with classroom practice and aligned to EHC plan outcomes.
- Commission external assessments and reports as necessary, managing quality, cost and timeliness.
- Line manage, appraise and develop the Assistant SENCO and teaching assistants, in line with school policy.
- Contribute to the recruitment and induction of staff within the inclusion team.

Working with families and external agencies

- Build strong, respectful working relationships with parents and carers, and ensure they are genuine partners in planning and review.
- Work with external professionals, including educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, CAMHS, health colleagues, social care and virtual school teams.
- Attend and contribute to multi-agency meetings, including those relating to safeguarding, care planning and placement reviews.

Safeguarding and student welfare

- Promote and safeguard the welfare of all students, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education and the school's safeguarding and child protection policies.
- Act as a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead [confirm – delete if not applicable], including recording, escalating and following up concerns.

- Contribute to pastoral support, risk assessments and positive behaviour support plans, ensuring these are proportionate and regularly reviewed.
- Complete all required safeguarding and child protection training and keep it up to date.

Records, compliance and confidentiality

- Maintain accurate, timely and secure records relating to SEND provision, assessment and student progress.
- Handle student, family and staff information in line with UK GDPR and the school's data protection policy, using only the minimum personal data necessary.
- Support the school's preparation for inspection and for compliance with the standards applying to the school.
- Follow the school's health and safety policies and ensure risk assessments relating to inclusion provision are in place and current.

General

- Participate in and contribute to school events, clubs and educational visits.
- Undertake other reasonable duties appropriate to the grade and seniority of the post, as requested by the Head of School.

Person Specification

Applications will be assessed against the criteria below. Essential criteria must be met at the point of appointment.

Area	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	• Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). • National Professional Qualification for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (NPQ SENCO). • Evidence of recent and relevant continuing professional development in SEND and/or leadership.	• A further leadership qualification, for example NPQSL or NPQH. • Designated Safeguarding Lead training. • Accredited training in positive behaviour support or physical intervention. • Level 3 Paediatric First Aid.
Experience	• Substantial successful teaching experience, including teaching students with SEND. • Experience of coordinating SEND provision, including EHC plans, annual reviews and liaison with local authorities. • Experience of leading and line managing a team, with evidence of improving outcomes for students. • Experience of working in partnership with parents, carers and external agencies.	• Experience of working in an independent special school. • Experience at senior leadership level. • Experience of alternative provision or of working with students who have disengaged from mainstream education. • Experience of preparing for and responding to inspection. • Experience of line managing a therapy team, or of commissioning specialist assessments and reports.

Area	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge and understanding	• The SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years and the duties arising from the Children and Families Act 2014. • Duties under the Equality Act 2010, including reasonable adjustments and accessibility planning. • Keeping Children Safe in Education and the school's safeguarding responsibilities. • Evidence-informed approaches to adaptive teaching and high-quality SEND provision. • Assessment and progress tracking for students working below age-related expectations. • The Independent School Standards, as they apply to the remit of the SENCO.	• EHCP funding and commissioning arrangements. • Specialist knowledge of autism, SEMH needs, or speech, language and communication needs.
Skills and attributes	• Able to lead, influence and hold others to account with warmth and professionalism. • Strong written and verbal communication, including with families and external professionals. • Highly organised, able to manage competing statutory deadlines and a complex caseload. • Confident use of data to evaluate provision and drive improvement. • Able to use SEND provision management systems, such as Provision Map, to record, track and report on interventions. • Sound professional judgement, discretion and the ability to handle confidential information appropriately.	• Experience of coaching or mentoring colleagues. • Working knowledge of adaptive and assistive technology for students with SEND. • Experience of managing a devolved budget.
Personal qualities	• A genuine commitment to inclusive education and to the dignity and ambition of every student. • Calm, consistent and resilient, particularly when supporting students in distress. • Committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. • Willing to undergo an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, including a check of the children's barred list.	–

Safeguarding

In Toto Ed is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects everyone who works in our school, and everyone who visits it, to share this commitment. We take all safeguarding and welfare concerns seriously and encourage our students to talk to us about any worries they may have. We will always act in the best interests of the child. The successful applicant must be willing to undergo child protection screening, including checks with previous employers and an enhanced DBS check.

Review

This job description sets out the main duties of the post at the date it was drawn up. It is not exhaustive and may be amended from time to time, in consultation with the postholder, to reflect the changing needs of the school.

Postholder	Line manager	Date