



Position: Human Resources & Employee Experience Manager
Department: Office of the Head of School
Reports to: Head of School
Supervises: none
Status: 12-month exempt contract, Full-Time
Location: On-site, Downers Grove, Illinois

The statements in this job description are intended to represent the key duties, essential nature, and level of work being performed. They are not intended to reflect all responsibilities or qualifications of the job.

Position Summary

The Human Resources & Employee Experience Manager plays a central role in attracting, welcoming, supporting, engaging, and retaining the exceptional faculty and staff who advance the mission of The Avery Coonley School. Reporting directly to the Head of School, the Manager serves as the primary day-to-day human resources support for employees and supervisors and oversees key aspects of the employee lifecycle, including recruitment, hiring, onboarding, employee leave and benefits, retention, performance processes, documentation, policy administration, and offboarding. This is a highly relational and highly organized role. The successful candidate will combine exceptional emotional intelligence with disciplined follow-through and meticulous attention to detail. They will know where every search stands, ensure candidates and employees receive timely communication, follow up on commitments and concerns, maintain clear and accurate documentation, anticipate next steps, maintain high degrees of confidentiality, and help ensure that employee matters do not fall through the cracks. The manager will be approachable and trusted while also understanding the importance of boundaries, confidentiality, consistency, accountability, and sound judgment. They will be visible throughout the School, build strong relationships across departments and divisions, and develop a deep understanding of the people and culture of ACS. This is a hands-on, campus-based position. Regular and consistent on-site presence is essential to the success of the role.

Core Responsibilities

Recruitment & Talent Acquisition

- Manage the full recruitment process for faculty and staff positions in partnership with the Head of School and hiring supervisors.
- Develop and maintain organized recruitment plans, timelines, candidate pipelines, interview schedules, and search documentation for every open position.
- Draft, update, and maintain accurate, compelling, and mission-aligned job descriptions and postings.
- Post positions through appropriate school, professional, university, and external recruitment channels.
- Identify new sources and partnerships that strengthen the school's candidate pipelines, particularly for hard-to-fill and anticipated positions.
- Review applications and support hiring manager/associates in identifying qualified candidates.
- Coordinate interview schedules, candidate communications, reference checks, and other components of the selection process.
- Ensure every candidate receives timely, professional, and thoughtful communication throughout the process.
- Maintain accurate records of candidate status and ensure hiring manager/associates complete necessary follow-up.
- Support hiring manager/associates with structured interview practices, candidate evaluation, and consistent documentation.
- Coordinate offers and employment documentation with the Head of School and appropriate school offices.

- Track recruitment data and identify trends related to candidate sources, time to fill, acceptance rates, and recurring hiring challenges.
- Build relationships with promising candidates even when an immediate vacancy may not exist, helping ACS develop a stronger long-term talent pipeline.

Onboarding & Employee Experience

- Design, manage, and continually improve a thoughtful and welcoming onboarding experience for all new employees.
- Ensure new employees receive timely information, complete required documentation, and understand key policies, expectations, systems, and resources before and during their arrival.
- Administer Employee Navigator for employee onboarding, offboarding, benefit elections, open enrollment, and related employee communications.
- Coordinate onboarding activities across departments so that each new employee experiences a consistent and well-organized transition to ACS.
- Conduct or coordinate new employee orientation and provide ongoing support as employees become acclimated to the School.
- Establish structured check-ins with new employees at meaningful intervals, including approximately 30, 60, and 90 days and later during the first year of employment.
- Follow up on concerns, questions, or needs identified during onboarding and ensure appropriate individuals complete agreed-upon actions.
- Gather feedback from new employees about their onboarding experience and use that information to improve systems and practices.
- Help employees navigate school policies, processes, resources, and workplace expectations.
- Ensure employee milestones and transitions are handled thoughtfully and consistently.

Employee Support, Relations & Follow-Through

- Serve as an accessible, responsive, and confidential first point of contact for employees seeking guidance or support related to workplace matters.
- Build trusting relationships across the School through regular presence, active listening, thoughtful communication, and reliable follow-through.
- Respond to employee questions and concerns with empathy, discretion, professionalism, and appropriate urgency.
- Help employees and supervisors navigate workplace concerns, interpersonal challenges, difficult conversations, and emerging issues.
- Determine when an issue can be resolved through routine support and when it should be escalated to the Head of School or another appropriate leader.
- Support supervisors in preparing for and documenting employee conversations related to expectations, feedback, attendance, performance, conduct, or other employment matters.
- Maintain clear, factual, timely, and confidential documentation of significant employee matters and agree upon next steps.
- Track follow-up commitments arising from employee or supervisor meetings and ensure actions are completed in a timely manner.
- Assist with workplace investigations and information gathering as directed by the Head of School and, when appropriate, legal counsel.
- Help ensure employees experience HR processes as fair, consistent, responsive, and respectful.

Retention, Engagement & Culture

- Make employee retention an intentional and ongoing component of the school's people's practices rather than something considered only when an employee resigns.
- Develop regular opportunities to understand employee experience, engagement, concerns, and professional needs.
- Conduct periodic employee check-ins or stay conversations, particularly with new employees and individuals in roles that are historically difficult to recruit or retain.
- Identify employees who may require additional support or attention and ensure concerns are appropriately communicated and followed through.
- Track retention and turnover trends and identify recurring themes, organizational concerns, or opportunities for improvement.
- Conduct thoughtful exit interviews and maintain consistent documentation of the reasons employees leave.
- Provide the Head of School with periodic summaries of meaningful retention and employee experience trends while protecting individual confidentiality.
- Recommend practical improvements to onboarding, communication, recognition, professional support, workplace practices, and other areas affecting employee experience.
- Help develop opportunities to recognize and celebrate faculty and staff contributions, milestones, and accomplishments.
- Support efforts that strengthen connection, belonging, collaboration, and community across departments and divisions.
- Seek opportunities to make ACS an increasingly attractive place for talented professionals to build meaningful and lasting careers.

Performance Management & Supervisor Support

- Coordinate annual employee goal setting, evaluation, and performance-review processes in partnership with the Head of School and supervisors.
- Maintain a master calendar of employee review cycles, deadlines, required documentation, personnel files, and follow-up.
- Ensure supervisors receive timely reminders, resources, and support necessary to complete evaluations thoughtfully and on schedule.
- Support supervisors in establishing clear expectations and providing timely, constructive feedback.
- Help supervisors prepare appropriate documentation when performance or conduct concerns arise.
- Track performance improvement plans, agreed-upon goals, timelines, and required follow-up.
- Ensure documentation is complete and appropriately maintained.
- Help establish a culture in which feedback, accountability, professional growth, and recognition are routine parts of the employee experience rather than isolated events.

Human Resources Administration & Documentation

- Maintain accurate, complete, organized, and confidential employee records in accordance with School policy and applicable requirements.
- Establish and maintain consistent systems for personnel documentation so records are reliable, current, and easily retrievable when needed.
- Maintain a comprehensive HR calendar covering recruitment, onboarding, evaluations, required training, employee agreements, policy reviews, and other recurring responsibilities.
- Coordinate new hired documentation, background checks, employment eligibility requirements, and other pre-employment processes.
- Maintain current employee job descriptions and organizational records.
- Prepare employment-related correspondence, documentation, and reports as needed.

- Track changes in employment status and ensure relevant information is communicated promptly to the Director of Finance and others responsible for implementation.
- Maintain appropriate records related to employee training, policy acknowledgments, performance matters, and other HR requirements.
- Conduct periodic reviews of employee records to identify missing or outdated documentation.
- Maintain strong data integrity within HR systems and records using platforms such as Employee Navigator and Paylocity.
- Develop checklists, templates, workflows, and other tools that improve consistency, efficiency, and accountability.
- Approach HR administration with a mindset of continuous improvement, identifying processes that can be simplified, clarified, or strengthened.

Policy, Compliance & Employment Practices

- Maintain working knowledge of federal, Illinois, and local employment requirements applicable to the School.
- Support consistent administration and communication of School employment policies and practices.
- Coordinate the annual review and update of the Employee Handbook in partnership with the Head of School and legal counsel when appropriate.
- Monitor required employee acknowledgments, certifications, and employment-related training.
- Coordinate required background checks and other employment screening processes.
- Support compliance with leave, accommodation, workplace safety, anti-harassment, and other employment requirements.
- Administer and coordinate employee leaves and accommodations, including FMLA, STD/LTD, workers' compensation, and other applicable leaves, in coordination with employees, benefit carriers, and Payroll.
- Recognize matters requiring specialized legal, benefits, or financial expertise and ensure they are referred promptly to the appropriate professional.
- Handle all employee information with the highest degree of confidentiality, discretion, and care.

Partnership with Payroll Manager and the Director of Finance

Payroll and benefits administration are managed within the Finance function. The Human Resources & Employee Experience Manager will partner closely with the Payroll Manager and the Director of Finance and the employee responsible for payroll and benefits to create a coordinated employee experience.

Responsibilities include:

- Communicating approved hires, salary changes, employment status changes, departures, and other personnel actions accurately and promptly.
- Coordinating onboarding and offboarding processes that involve both HR and Finance.
- Helping employees understand where to direct HR, payroll, and benefits questions and ensuring they receive appropriate follow-up.
- Partnering on leave or employment matters that have payroll or benefits implications.
- Coordinating benefits communications and employee education while Finance maintains responsibility for benefits administration and financial reconciliation.
- Establishing clear, documented workflows between HR and Finance so responsibilities are understood and important employee matters are not missed.

What Success Looks Like

Success in this role will be evident when:

- Faculty and staff view Human Resources as accessible, responsive, organized, trustworthy, and supportive.
- Every open position has a clearly managed recruitment process, and candidates receive consistent and timely communication.
- Hiring Manager knows where their searches stand and what actions are required of them.
- New employees arrive feeling welcomed, prepared, and connected to ACS.
- New employees receive meaningful follow-up throughout their first year rather than only during their first days.
- Employee concerns are acknowledged, appropriately documented, addressed, and followed through to resolution.
- Supervisors receive useful support navigating people and performance matters.
- Personnel records and HR documentation are accurate, current, confidential, and complete.
- Evaluation and performance processes occur consistently and on schedule.
- Exit and retention information is collected systematically and used to identify meaningful trends.
- The Head of School has reliable information about recruitment, retention, employee experience, and emerging people-related needs.
- Employees trust that when HR says something will be done, it gets done.

Professional Qualities & Competencies

The successful candidate will bring an unusual combination of **exceptional organization and exceptional emotional intelligence**.

They will demonstrate:

- **Relentless follow-through:** Takes ownership of commitments, tracks next steps, closes loops, and does not allow important matters to disappear after a meeting or conversation.
- **Exceptional organization:** Creates clear systems, manages multiple priorities effectively, anticipates deadlines, and maintains meticulous records.
- **High emotional intelligence:** Reads situations well, listens carefully, demonstrates empathy, adjusts communication appropriately, and builds trusting relationships with a wide range of people.
- **Sound judgment:** Understands nuance, maintains appropriate boundaries, recognizes when an issue requires escalation, and makes thoughtful decisions in sensitive circumstances.
- **Discretion and confidentiality:** Handles employee information and conversations with exceptional care and professionalism.
- **Responsiveness:** Communicates promptly and ensures employees, candidates, and supervisors know what to expect next.
- **Attention to detail:** Produces accurate work and recognizes that seemingly small administrative details can have significant consequences for employees.
- **Warmth and approachability:** Creates an environment in which employees feel comfortable asking questions or seeking guidance.
- **Accountability:** Supports people while maintaining clear expectations, consistency, and professional standards.
- **Clear communication:** Communicates complex or sensitive information with clarity, diplomacy, and empathy.
- **Initiative:** Notices what needs attention and acts without waiting to be directed at every step.
- **Continuous improvement:** Regularly asks how systems, communication, and employee experiences can be made more effective.

Qualifications & Experience

Required

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent combination of education and relevant professional experience.
- At least three years of progressively responsible experience in human resources, talent management, employee relations, people operations, or a closely related field, with an HR certification such as SHRM-CP, PHR, or an equivalent credential.
- Demonstrated experience managing recruitment, hiring, and onboarding processes.
- Experience supporting employees and supervisors with workplace and performance-related matters.
- Demonstrated ability to maintain accurate, confidential documentation and manage multiple processes simultaneously.
- Strong working knowledge of contemporary HR practices and employment compliance.
- Exceptional organizational, interpersonal, written, and verbal communication skills.
- Demonstrated ability to establish trust and work effectively with individuals across different roles and levels of an organization.
- Proficiency with HR information systems and contemporary office technology.

Preferred

- Experience in an independent school, educational institution, nonprofit organization, or similar mission-driven environment.
- Experience developing recruitment pipelines, employee retention initiatives, onboarding systems, or employee engagement practices.
- Experience using HR data and employee feedback to identify trends and improve organizational practices.

On-Site Presence

ACS is a highly relational school community, and the Human Resources & Employee Experience Manager must be an active and visible presence within it. This is an on-site position requiring regular interaction with faculty, staff, administrators, and other members of the school community.

Being present on campus is essential to developing relationships, understanding the day-to-day employee experience, recognizing emerging needs, supporting employees in real time, and building the trust necessary for effective Human Resources work.

Occasional evening or weekend attendance may be required for School events, employee programming, or other responsibilities associated with the position.

Physical Requirements

The position requires the ability to perform the essential functions of a professional school-based administrative role, including prolonged periods of computer and desk work; regular movement throughout campus; attendance at meetings and School events; effective in-person and electronic communication; and occasional lifting and carrying of materials associated with office operations.

Reasonable accommodation will be provided in accordance with applicable law.

Equal Employment Opportunity

BENEFITS: Full-time employees who work at least 30 hours per week are eligible for benefits the first day of the month following their date of hire.

GROUP HEALTH INSURANCE: Full-time employees (who work at least 30 hours per week) and their dependents are eligible to enroll in health benefits provided by Blue Cross Blue Shield of IL. There are 6 medical plan options including a Health Savings Account (HSA) compatible plan. In addition, a Dental PPO plan is available as well as a Vision plan utilizing the EyeMed network. Additional offerings include option to setting up a Flexible Spending Account and an employee discount program through Blue 365.

EMPLOYER PROVIDED LIFE/AD&D INSURANCE: Avery Coonley provides Term Life Insurance coverage equal to the full-time employee's annual salary (\$150,000 max). The school will contribute 100% of the cost of the Life Insurance Policy.

EMPLOYER SPONSORED DISABILITY BENEFIT: Short (STD) and Long-Term Disability (LTD) insurance is an employer-provided benefit and provides protection from loss of income in the event that a full-time employee is unable to work due to illness, injury, or accident for a long period of time. This benefit is paid entirely by Avery Coonley School and has no cost to the employee.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: Full-time Employees may utilize the Employee Assistance Program through ALL One Health to assist themselves and their immediate family with convenient resources to help address emotional, legal and financial issues. EAP provides support, counseling as well as work-life resources.

403(b) PLAN: Avery Coonley School provides a retirement program through TIAA. Eligible employees may participate in the program on a voluntary basis during their first year of employment. ACS will match the full-time employee's contribution and the match percentage is based on the employee's years of service.

PAID TIME OFF POLICY: Avery Coonley School provides a competitive paid time off policy for all of their regular employees. All 10- month full time employees receive 13 days of sick leave and 5 personal days. All 12-month full- time employees receive 13 days of sick leave, 7 personal days, and vacation leave that begins at two weeks annually and increases based on years of service to the School. Part-time regular employees will accrue one (1) hour of paid leave for each forty (40) hours actually worked. Part-time regular employees can begin to use accrued paid leave ninety (90) days after hire date. In addition, the School may grant paid time off for professional development activities.

PARENTAL LEAVE: Avery Coonley School will provide six-week maternity/paternity adoption leave at full salary. The six weeks of leave must be taken immediately after the birth/adoption of the child(ren).

COMPENSATION: 65K - \$85K depending upon experience and credentials

Interested candidates should submit a cover letter, resume and three professional references to mvalek@averycoonley.org.

OR apply through the link:

<https://recruiting.paylocity.com/recruiting/jobs/All/482ade98-bbf0-4df8-9920-a422c631b67e/AVERY-COONLEY-SCHOOL>