

PEPONI SCHOOLS

Job Description

Executive Chef – Multi-Site Education Catering

Reporting to: Health and Safety Manager

Position Overview

We are seeking a highly experienced and strategic Executive Chef to lead culinary operations across three sites (Kindergarten, Primary School, and Secondary School). The successful candidate will oversee multiple kitchen teams, deliver nutritionally balanced meals for children aged 3–18 years, ensure operational efficiency, and drive cost-effective, sustainable food programs.

This role requires strong leadership, nutritional expertise, multi-site operational management, and a passion for delivering high-quality, child-friendly cuisine at scale.

Key Responsibilities

1. Safeguarding

The post holder's responsibility will be to adhere to and ensure compliance with the School's Safeguarding Policy at all times. This means promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children for whom they are responsible, or with whom they come into contact with. If in the course of carrying out their duties the post holder becomes aware of any actual or potential risks to the safety or welfare of children in the school, they must report any concerns to the school's Designated Safeguarding Leads or to the Head.

2. Multi-Site Culinary Leadership

- Oversee all kitchen operations across three separate campuses.
- Manage, train, mentor, and inspire kitchen managers and staff at each site.
- Develop standardised systems, recipes, and procedures to ensure consistency and quality.
- Conduct regular site visits to maintain standards in food quality, safety, and presentation.
- Implement performance management processes and ongoing professional development.

3. Menu Development & Nutritional Excellence

Design age-appropriate, balanced menus for:

- Early Years (3–5 years)
- Primary School (6–12 years)
- Secondary School (13–18 years)
- Ensure menus align with best practice dietary guidelines for children and adolescents.
- Provide allergen-aware, inclusive menus (vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, halal, etc.).
- Promote healthy eating habits while maintaining appealing, child-friendly flavours.
- Stay up to date with current nutritional science and school food standards.

4. Culinary Expertise (All Cuisines)

- Demonstrate strong knowledge of global cuisines adapted for children.
- Create culturally diverse, engaging meal programs.
- Maintain high standards in: Hot kitchen production, Cold kitchen, Bakery and pastry production & special dietary meals
- Develop innovative yet practical dishes suited for large-scale production.

5. Bakery & Pastry Operations

- Oversee in-house bakery production including breads, muffins, pastries, celebration cakes, and healthy snack items.
- Ensure baked goods meet nutritional standards (reduced sugar, balanced ingredients).
- Standardise bakery production for efficiency across sites.

6. Event Catering & School Functions

Plan and execute catering for school events including:

- Sports days
- Parent evenings

- Graduation ceremonies
- Cultural celebrations
- Staff functions
- Manage buffet, plated, and themed catering concepts.
- Ensure cost control and presentation excellence during events.

7. Sustainability & Cost Management

Create economies of scale across all three sites through:

- Centralised purchasing
- Bulk production strategies
- Standardised recipes
- Reduce food waste through effective forecasting and inventory management.
- Implement sustainable practices such as:
- Seasonal and local sourcing
- Waste reduction programs
- Sustainable packaging
- Maintain strict budgetary control and achieve agreed food cost targets.

8. Compliance & Food Safety

- Ensure full compliance with food safety legislation and HACCP standards.
- Maintain allergen management systems.
- Conduct regular audits and ensure documentation is up to date.
- Lead food safety training for all kitchen staff.

9. Operational & Strategic Planning

- Develop annual culinary strategies aligned with school objectives.
- Prepare budgets and cost projections.
- Analyse performance metrics (food cost %, labour %, waste %, participation rates).
- Work closely with senior leadership teams across all campuses.

Required Qualifications & Experience

- Proven experience as an Executive Chef or Head Chef in multi-site or large-scale catering.
- Experience in school, institutional, or high-volume catering preferred.
- Strong knowledge of child and adolescent nutrition.
- Formal culinary qualifications.
- Food Safety Level 3 (or equivalent).
- Strong financial and budget management skills.
- Demonstrated leadership and team development experience.

Key Competencies

- Strategic leadership
- Operational efficiency
- Nutritional expertise
- Menu innovation
- Cost control and budgeting
- Sustainability-focused thinking
- Excellent communication skills
- High organisational capability
- Problem-solving and adaptability
- Cultural awareness and inclusivity

Personal Attributes

- Passion for feeding and educating children through food.
- Creative yet practical approach to menu design.
- Calm and solution-oriented under pressure.
- High attention to detail.
- Committed to continuous improvement.

Performance Indicators

- Achievement of food cost targets.
- Reduction in food waste.
- Positive student and parent feedback.
- Staff retention and development.
- Compliance audit success.
- Consistent food quality across all sites.
- Positive feedback during ISI inspections.