

Big Picture Doncaster

Advisor - Application Information

Job Start: Easter 2020

37hrs per week, full time

Salary: c £25,000

Background:

Big Picture Doncaster opened in April 2019 and is the first UK school set up under the Big Picture Learning UK charity. It follows the Big Picture ethos developed in the US which focuses the educational experience of the learner in a bespoke and tailored way. It is funded through a social impact bond by Big Issue Invest. One of the key aims of the provision is to develop the young person's skills and abilities through the learning that they complete in order to help them lead fulfilling adult lives and be able to contribute positively to their community. We are led by three principles of relevance, relationships and rigour and work with ten distinguishers that cover all aspects of our work and can be found here;

https://www.bigpicture.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=389353&type=d&pREC_ID=902235

The Big Picture curriculum looks at 'one student at a time' and is shaped by their interests, talents and needs. It has a close focus on real world learning and makes connections to the outside world. Rather than follow a curriculum model that is generic for all students we start with the personal development of the young person and develop readiness for learning, before exploring their interests through project work that draws on the national curriculum and beyond as and when it is relevant and useful to exploring the student driven work.

Our definition of success is encapsulated in this from the co-founder of Big Picture Learning Elliot Washor.

"Most would define it as good grades, great test scores, a high school diploma, and a pathway to postsecondary learning. While we do not argue with those indicators our experience tells us that they are inadequate. We prefer additional indicators from a wider perspective: obtaining enjoyable and productive work with good prospects for growth, raising a family, contributing to the community and figuring out how to navigate life's ups and downs."

Elliot Washor and Charles Mojkowski, *Leaving to Learn*

Job Description:

As we start to look to next year and building our student body we are expanding our advisory team to begin working with a new cohort while they transition from primary school and then begin their time with us. The role of advisor is unique and multi-faceted. Advisors are not traditional teachers and do not work from a deficit model where they are the experts and students come with nothing. They are a guide to enable the student to learn how to learn and open up and explore their own learning. Advisors will work with a relatively small number of students to enable them to foster meaningful and authentic relationships and will be the key architect along with students and families of the learning plan.

Big Picture Learning's advisory model is rooted in four mindsets.

- The first mindset reminds us to keep students at the center by supporting them to develop the agency, skills, dispositions, and abilities needed to take charge of their learning journey.
- The second mindset is about community; advisory is a place where meaningful relationships are intentionally and carefully fostered between advisors and student, students and peers, and with the larger community.
- The third mindset utilizes restorative approaches to turn challenges into learning opportunities.
- The fourth mindset helps advisors remember that we are guides who work alongside students to support them as they explore their passions and interests.

These mindsets inform the work of the advisor which is itself made up of five key domains

- A learning designer who assists students in navigating the complex journey of student-centered learning.
- An internship/out-of-school learning manager who helps students connect their real world experiences to the classroom.
- A family and community liaison who cultivates a well-rounded learning plan team.
- A group leader who connects students, mentors, and families.
- A Non-Cognitive Competencies guide who supports students to develop important life skills that will benefit them long after they leave Big Picture Doncaster

The role will require you to have excellent interpersonal skills in order to develop positive relationships with the students and parents. You will need to be resilient, creative and positive in outlook in order to inspire and motivate the students along their learning programme and to develop positive, trusting and supportive relationships.

You will be based predominantly at the Big Picture Doncaster site in Bentley but your work may also involve home visits and work with students in other settings. You will need to be able to manage your time well, prioritise tasks and meet challenging deadlines. It will require you to work flexibly throughout the day due to the needs of students and flexible student driven nature of our curriculum. The normal working hours will be from 8.15 am to 4pm daily.

To be successful in this role you will need to have good communication skills, both orally and written, in order to develop, monitor and track student learning and record this within their individual personal plans.

As an advisor working with students that may have barriers to learning both cognitively and emotionally you will need to be able to work independently and with confidence in order to solve daily problems and overcome barriers to engagement that the students may face.

You will report to the Principal of Big Picture Doncaster and Lead Advisor. You will know when to ask for their support and when to act independently within the experience and accountability of your role.

Person Specification

Big Picture Doncaster puts a high priority on the personal qualities of the team and has relationships at the heart of all that we do. Prior to application please refer to the person spec for the role that explores the; Education, Qualifications and Experience; Knowledge, Skills and Abilities; and Personal Attributes and Qualities needed to be successful in this position.

Education, Qualifications and Experience	Essential	Desirable
Experience of working with young people and families	x	
Experience of working successfully with disengaged students, including those with challenging behaviour	x	
Experience of working within an educational/multi agency setting		x
Good oral and written communication	x	
Recognition of the need for continuing development and training	x	
Experience of working with alternative educational providers		x
A full UK driving license		x
Evidence of recent professional development relevant to the post.		x
Qualified Teacher Status		x
Experience of connecting learning provision to the 'outside' world through community projects		x
Experience of developing real world learning and career related programmes		x

Knowledge, Skills & Abilities		
Ability to engage constructively with, and relate to, a wide range of young people, parents/carers, from different backgrounds	x	
Ability to relate to young people, within different age groups about attendance and behaviour issues	x	
Ability to develop and implement bespoke behaviour management programmes		x
Competent in the use of IT	x	
Understanding of the education system.	x	
Ability to identify potential barriers to learning and jointly engage in strategies to overcome these barriers	x	
Ability to engage in joint goal setting with an individual student as part of the learning action planning process	x	
Ability to contribute to the monitoring of, and intervention in, cases of unauthorised absence and poor punctuality		x
Excellent communication and interpersonal skills	x	
Able to quickly establish positive working relationships with students, staff and parents	x	
Ability to handle difficult situations with sensitivity, confidentiality and discretion at all times, combined with a calm personality, a practical approach and sound judgement	x	
Ability to be a good role model to young people – demonstrate and promote positive values, attitudes and behaviour	x	
Ability to maintain a non-confrontational approach	x	
Planning and prioritising own workload and managing conflicting demands	x	
A commitment to Equal Opportunities	x	
Knowledge and understanding of safeguarding	x	
Attributes		
Excellent record of attendance and punctuality	x	
Ability to work well in a team and develop positive, trusting and supportive relationships	x	
Commitment to raising achievement and improving the	x	

educational experiences of all students in line with the Big Picture Learning philosophy		
A sense of humour and a positive 'can do' attitude	x	
Resilience and motivated to achieve challenging targets	x	
Confident to work independently and solve problems and know when to ask for support and guidance	x	
Ability to think originally and creatively and overcome barriers	x	
Positive attitude	x	
Energy and enthusiasm	x	
Warmth and sensitivity	x	
Excellent rapport with students and families	x	
Commitment to the school and the students we serve	x	
Ability to work confidentially and with discretion	x	

Professional Development

Professional development is one of the ten distinguishers of Big Picture Learning which states that;

“Regular advisor PD is conducted at each school by principals, other school staff, and BPL staff and coaches. A Big Picture School is a community of lifelong learners who embrace continuous improvement.”

At Big Picture Doncaster the lead advisor and principal act as advisors to the advisors and the staff team is an advisory in and of itself, working together to explore ways to better support our students and develop ourselves and our interests.

As well as daily advisory sessions at the start or end of the day each member of staff has a one to one with a leader to discuss their developmental needs and as part of a coaching process.

On top of this, at Big Picture Doncaster we work closely with our friends at XP school in Doncaster to support staff development, and have close links with Big Picture US through a colleague based in Belfast who visits us regularly to help us develop the Big Picture model.

Recently we have also been part of an Erasmus project and staff have linked with Big Picture colleagues in Holland, Ireland and Italy and we also seek opportunities for staff to visit Big Picture schools in America as we have managed with our whole team in February 2020.

How to apply

Applications should include:

1. Your CV including any breaks in service and an account of those
2. Two references including one from your most recent employer
3. A covering letter telling us why you have what it takes to be our next Big Picture advisor

This post will have a rolling closing date for applications as we may choose to interview early should we receive outstanding applications. The final closing date for applications will be 9am Friday 8th February with any subsequent interviews the week after.

Please submit applications to Colin Goffin, Principal Big Picture Doncaster via colin@bigpicturedoncaster.org

Any questions about the school or the role should be directed to the same address or by telephone to 01302 875808

As an organisation we are committed to safeguarding all young people in our settings. Enhanced criminal record and safeguarding checks will take place as part of our recruitment process, and appointments will be subject to satisfactory reference checks.