

Teaching Assistant

Salary - £25,000 per annum (agreed funding from Hampshire CC)

- Initially a 1 term (full time) contract (Oct half term - Feb half term) with the potential to extend.

About the role

We are looking for a kind, patient and emotionally attuned Teaching Assistant to provide dedicated 1:1 support to a young person within a school environment (KS3).

This is a rewarding opportunity for someone who is passionate about helping young people develop confidence, independence and self-advocacy skills. The successful candidate will build a trusting relationship with the student and work alongside teaching staff, pastoral teams and other professionals to provide consistent, respectful and individualised support throughout the school day.

The role will involve supporting the student both in the classroom and during less structured parts of the school day, helping them to develop skills that enable them to feel more confident, secure and independent in school.

Key responsibilities

The successful Teaching Assistant will:

- Develop a warm, trusting and consistent relationship with the student, providing a reliable point of support throughout the school day.
- Provide discreet support during lessons, group work and peer interactions, using modelling, prompting and encouragement to help skills transfer into everyday situations.
- Support the development of social communication skills, including:
 - initiating, maintaining and ending conversations;
 - understanding different viewpoints and perspectives;
 - recognising and understanding body language;
 - managing disagreements and resolving social difficulties;
 - recognising appropriate responses in different situations;
 - developing confidence when interacting with adults and peers.
- Use appropriate visual and practical approaches to help the student reflect on social situations, consider different perspectives and develop problem-solving strategies.
- Support the student to identify and develop positive relationships and friendships, including opportunities to interact with like-minded peers and participate in suitable clubs and activities.
- Provide mentoring and reflective opportunities to discuss successful and challenging social interactions and explore alternative strategies where appropriate.
- Help the student develop self-advocacy skills, including communicating their likes, dislikes, strengths, needs and preferred ways of learning.

- Encourage the student to communicate when they need help, ensuring that requests for support are always responded to positively and respectfully.
- Support the development of emotional literacy, including recognising, naming and understanding emotions, identifying triggers and developing appropriate strategies for managing feelings.
- Help the student recognise internal body signals and sensory needs and develop a personalised regulation toolkit.
- Support the use of appropriate regulation strategies, including movement breaks and agreed sensory strategies, to help the student remain comfortable, regulated and ready to learn.
- Recognise when demands may need to be reduced or adapted and when the student is ready for greater challenge and independence.
- Support the student when they experience feelings of overwhelm or "shutdown", using agreed coping strategies and problem-solving plans.
- Help the student develop flexible thinking and explore the relationship between thoughts, feelings and behaviours, where appropriate.
- Provide opportunities to practise newly developed skills in real-life school situations, helping the student to generalise their learning rather than relying solely on formal sessions.
- Maintain clear and consistent communication with teaching staff so that agreed strategies and approaches are used consistently across the school.
- Contribute to monitoring the student's wellbeing, engagement, progress and growing independence.
- Work collaboratively with the SENCO, teachers, pastoral staff, parents/carers and relevant professionals as appropriate.

About you

We are looking for someone who is:

- Warm, patient, calm and nurturing, with a genuinely respectful approach to young people.
- Able to build trusting relationships while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries.
- Attuned and responsive, able to recognise when a young person needs reassurance, space, reduced demands or additional challenge.
- Flexible and adaptable, with the ability to adjust their approach according to the student's needs on any given day.
- A strong communicator who can work collaboratively with colleagues and share information clearly and sensitively.
- Comfortable supporting social communication, emotional regulation and self-advocacy.
- Able to encourage independence without creating unnecessary dependence on adult support.
- Respectful of neurodiversity and committed to supporting the young person's individual communication style and preferences.
- Able to remain calm and constructive when situations become challenging.

- Creative and willing to use practical, visual and structured approaches to support learning.
- Reliable and consistent, recognising the importance of predictability for a young person who is developing trust with adults.

Experience and qualifications

Experience of working with children or young people with social communication differences, SEMH needs, autism or sensory/regulation needs would be highly desirable.

Knowledge or experience of approaches such as the following would be advantageous:

- Zones of Regulation
- Comic Strip Conversations/Reflections
- Social communication programmes such as Talkabout
- Emotional literacy and emotional regulation strategies
- Self-advocacy and person-centred planning
- Cognitive behavioural approaches for children and young people
- Sensory regulation and movement strategies