

Job Description

Job Title	Enrichment and Animal Care Teaching Assistant
Location	Chestnut Hill School, Holywell, CH8 9DX
Hours	40 hours per week, Mon-Thur 8am – 5pm / Fri 8am – 3pm
Accountable to	Head of School / Curriculum Lead
Working with	Pastoral Support, Food Technology, Outdoor Education, teaching staff and support staff
Eligibility	UK Applicants only (no sponsorship offered)
Additional working requirement	Holiday animal care cover will be required by arrangement and will be paid as overtime.

Purpose of the Role

The Enrichment and Animal Care Teaching Assistant will support high-quality enrichment provision for autistic learners aged 8–19. The postholder will work under the direction of the Head of School and Curriculum Lead to help learners access meaningful, practical and enriching learning experiences that promote wellbeing, independence, communication, confidence and life skills.

The role includes supporting pupils in structured sessions and wider enrichment opportunities, maintaining safe and purposeful learning environments, and taking day-to-day responsibility for the care, welfare and routines of animals on site. The postholder will contribute to the school's inclusive ethos and support outcomes aligned with Estyn inspection areas, including wellbeing, teaching and learning, care, support, safeguarding and continuous improvement.

Key Responsibilities (Aligned to Estyn Focus Areas)

1. Wellbeing and Personal Development

- Promote a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment for all learners, in line with the school's autism-specific approaches and safeguarding policies.
- Support learners' emotional, social and physical wellbeing through enrichment activities.
- Build positive, trusting relationships with learners, recognising individual communication needs, sensory profiles, triggers and regulation strategies.
- Encourage learners to develop confidence, resilience, independence and positive risk awareness through practical, real-world tasks.
- Support pupils to develop communication, teamwork, self-regulation and social interaction skills during enrichment activities and daily routines.
- Promote dignity, respect, empathy and responsibility when learners are working with animals, food, tools, outdoor spaces and shared school resources.

2. Teaching, Learning and Enrichment Support

- Support the pastoral team and enrichment instructors in preparing, delivering, and evaluating engaging learning activities.
- Assist learners during animal care, outdoor education and pastoral sessions, adapting support to meet pupils' cognitive, communication, sensory and social needs.
- Reinforce learning objectives set by teachers and leads, helping pupils to participate, practise skills, complete tasks and reflect on their progress.
- Support cross-curricular learning opportunities, including literacy, numeracy, science, health and wellbeing, life skills, independence and vocational awareness.
- Use observation and feedback to help staff monitor learner engagement, participation, independence and progress.
- Contribute to the preparation of resources, visual supports, practical materials and differentiated activities that enable learners to access sessions safely and meaningfully.

- Support learners to transfer skills between classroom learning and practical contexts, including routines, following instructions, safe tool use, hygiene, teamwork and problem solving.

3. Animal Care and Site-Based Animal Welfare

- Take day-to-day responsibility for agreed animal care routines on site, including feeding, watering, cleaning, checking welfare and maintaining suitable habitats or enclosures.
- Support learners to engage safely and respectfully with animals, modelling calm handling, appropriate interaction and high standards of care.
- Maintain accurate animal care records, including feeding routines, cleaning schedules, welfare checks, incidents, concerns and any required medication or veterinary information, where applicable.
- Monitor animal health and welfare, reporting concerns promptly to the appropriate lead and supporting agreed follow-up actions.
- Ensure animal care resources, equipment, feed and bedding are stored safely, hygienically and appropriately.
- Contribute to risk assessments, hygiene procedures and safe systems of work for animal care activities and learner involvement.
- Provide agreed holiday animal care cover by arrangement. This will be paid as overtime and will be organised in line with school procedures and operational need.
- Promote and develop the animal care provision.

4. Outdoor Education and Enrichment Support

- Support with outdoor education, and the preparation and delivery of activities.
- Help learners access outdoor spaces safely, encouraging curiosity, stewardship, confidence, physical wellbeing and positive engagement with the environment.
- Support positive risk-taking within agreed risk assessments, ensuring pupils are supervised and safeguarding remains paramount.
- Assist with practical outdoor tasks such as horticulture, environmental care, nature-based learning, team challenges, sensory exploration and life-skills activities.
- Support the maintenance, preparation and safe use of outdoor education resources and spaces.
- Contribute to records relating to participation, incidents, health and safety, learner engagement and progress, where requested.

5. Pastoral Support, Care and Safeguarding

- Support the pastoral and wider team in promoting consistent, proactive and relationship-based pastoral support for learners.
- Use agreed behaviour support, regulation and communication strategies to prevent escalation and help pupils re-engage with learning.
- Support learners' individual care plans, risk assessments and support strategies, maintaining confidentiality and professional boundaries at all times.
- Safeguard and promote the welfare of learners, following statutory requirements, Welsh Government guidance and school policies.
- Communicate effectively with SLT, teachers, support staff, therapists and leaders to ensure consistent support across the school day.
- Record and report concerns, incidents, observations and relevant information accurately and promptly in line with school procedures.

6. Professional Contribution and Improvement Culture

- Act as a positive role model for professional standards, teamwork, reliability and commitment to the school's values.
- Contribute to a supportive staff culture by working collaboratively with leads, teachers, support staff and multi-disciplinary professionals.
- Participate in professional development, reflective practice and training linked to autism, safeguarding, animal care, outdoor education and health and safety.

- Contribute to school self-evaluation and improvement by sharing observations about learner engagement, provision, resources and practical learning environments.
- Support school events, open days, enrichment opportunities and community activities that showcase pupils' achievements and strengthen the wider school offer.

Key Relationships

- Learners
- Pastoral Support
- Enrichment Instructors
- Teaching and Support Staff
- Parents and Guardians
- Therapists and multi-disciplinary professionals
- Senior Leadership Team
- External providers, where appropriate

Person Specification

Essential Criteria

- Experience working with children and young people with autism, additional learning needs or complex needs.
- Ability to support learners positively, calmly and consistently in practical, pastoral and enrichment settings.
- Understanding of safeguarding, professional boundaries, confidentiality and child protection responsibilities.
- Awareness of health and safety requirements in practical learning environments, including animal care, food preparation and outdoor education.
- Practical confidence in supporting animal care routines, including feeding, cleaning, welfare checks and safe learner interaction with animals.
- Willingness and ability to support agreed holiday animal care cover as paid overtime.
- Flexibility to widen the skillset to support Food Technology, Art, Sport and other enrichment sessions, including preparation, hygiene routines, safe equipment use and clean-down.
- Flexibility and willingness to cover in a Teaching Assistant role across the school, as needed.
- Ability to support outdoor education activities safely and appropriately under the direction of the Outdoor Education Instructor.
- Excellent communication, interpersonal and team-working skills.
- Patience, resilience, flexibility and a nurturing approach to supporting learners with autism.
- Strong organisational skills and the ability to manage practical resources and routines effectively.
- Commitment to the school's mission, values and inclusive ethos.

Desirable Criteria

- Relevant qualification or training in animal care, education, support work, food hygiene, outdoor education, horticulture or vocational learning.
- Experience working in a special school, independent specialist provision or alternative provision setting.
- First aid qualification or willingness to complete relevant training.
- Experience supporting learners in practical curriculum areas, enrichment activities or vocational pathways.
- Knowledge of Estyn inspection frameworks and expectations.
- Experience contributing to learner observations, records, risk assessments or practical learning documentation.

Professional Attributes and Expectations

- Demonstrates professionalism, reliability and a strong sense of responsibility, particularly in relation to animal welfare and learner safety.

- Responds calmly and consistently to learner needs, using agreed autism-specific strategies and seeking guidance where required.
- Maintains high standards of hygiene, organisation and care across animal care, enrichment learning areas.
- Is reflective and open to feedback, training and continuous improvement.
- Is willing to contribute flexibly to school events, trips, enrichment activities and multi-disciplinary collaboration.

Key Responsibilities – Aligned with School Development Plan

Our Pathways – Curriculum and Learner Progress

- Support enrichment, pastoral, animal care, and outdoor education activities that extend curriculum pathways and help learners engage meaningfully in learning.
- Adapt support to meet the diverse needs of learners with autism, supporting communication, independence, confidence and social-emotional development.
- Help learners develop transferable skills through practical routines, vocational experiences, life skills and real-world learning opportunities.
- Contribute observations and feedback to leads and teaching staff to help monitor learner engagement, participation and progress.

Our People – Staff Development and Collaboration

- Work collaboratively with colleagues to provide consistent support for learners.
- Participate in professional learning opportunities to develop confidence and competence in autism practice, animal care, food hygiene, outdoor education and safeguarding.
- Share practical knowledge, observations and ideas with colleagues to strengthen inclusive enrichment provision across the school.
- Contribute positively to school culture by modelling teamwork, professionalism and commitment to continuous improvement.

Our Place – School Environment and Community

- Help maintain safe, stimulating and well-organised animal care, and enrichment learning environments.
- Support the development of practical learning spaces that promote independence, wellbeing, sustainability, creativity and a sense of community.
- Encourage learners to engage positively with their environment and to develop responsibility for animals, resources, food preparation areas and outdoor spaces.
- Support school events, open days and enrichment opportunities that showcase learners' achievements and contribute to the growth and reputation of the school.

Additional Note

This job description is not exhaustive. The postholder may be required to undertake other duties appropriate to the role and grade, as directed by the Head of School, Curriculum Lead or relevant members of staff. Duties may be reviewed in line with the needs of the school.