

Residential Education Worker (University Placement Year 2027-28)

St Joseph's Specialist Trust – Cranleigh, Surrey

20 minutes from Guildford - £28,784 plus £1,000 Retention Bonus – 33 days' paid holiday



A placement that will challenge you, develop you and make a difference.

Are you looking for a university placement that will give you genuine hands-on experience working with children and young people with complex needs?

At St Joseph's Specialist Trust, our Residential Education Workers support young people aged 5-19 outside of school hours, helping them develop independence, confidence and life skills while providing a safe, caring and positive home environment.

This is an incredibly rewarding placement – but it is also a challenging one.

You will be working in a residential children's home with young people who may have autism, learning disabilities, ADHD, communication difficulties and complex needs. The role involves supporting with personal care, daily routines, meals, activities and behaviours that can be challenging.

You will need to be resilient, emotionally mature, patient and able to remain calm and consistent when situations become difficult.

This isn't a placement where you'll simply observe professionals. You'll be part of the team, working directly with young people and taking responsibility for their care and wellbeing.

Who is this placement suited to?

We are particularly interested in hearing from Psychology students, as the placement provides valuable practical experience of behaviour, development, communication, emotional wellbeing and supporting young people with complex needs.

We also welcome applications from students studying other subjects who are considering careers in education, SEN, social care, mental health, healthcare or other people-focused professions.

Your degree subject isn't the most important thing. We are looking for people who have the right attitude and who understand that working in residential care can be demanding as well as rewarding.

You will need to be:

- Resilient and emotionally mature – able to cope with the demands of working with vulnerable young people
- Patient and compassionate – able to support young people with dignity and understanding
- Calm under pressure – able to respond appropriately when situations become challenging.
- Energetic and proactive – willing to get involved and make the most of opportunities with the young people.

- Adaptable – comfortable working different shifts and responding to changing needs
- Reliable and responsible – residential care relies on staff working effectively as a team
- Willing to provide personal care – this is an essential part of supporting some of our young people.

Previous experience in residential care or SEN is not essential. We provide comprehensive training and support, but you must be prepared for the realities and responsibilities of the role.

What will you actually be doing?

No two shifts are the same.

You could be supporting a young person with their morning or evening routine, helping prepare a meal, supporting with personal care, encouraging independence with everyday tasks or joining an activity in the community.

Our residential teams organise a wide range of activities and trips, from cycling and adventure parks to beaches, funfairs and AirHop.

You'll also help young people develop practical life skills such as:

- Cooking and preparing meal
- Shopping and handling money
- Personal care and hygiene
- Developing independence
- Communication and social skills
- Making positive choices
- Taking part in activities and the wider community

The aim isn't simply to care for young people – it's to help them develop the skills and confidence they need to become as independent as possible.

Be prepared for the demands of residential care.

Before applying, it's important to understand that this is not a traditional 9-5 university placement.

The role is based on a 37-hour working week on a shift rota, including weekends. Sleep-in duties may also be required and are paid at the appropriate rate.

During term-time, weekday shifts are generally, but not exclusively, 2pm-9pm, reflecting the fact that our young people are at school during the day.

The role can be physically and emotionally demanding, and you may encounter situations involving challenging behaviour.

You will need to be comfortable with:

- Working evenings and weekends
- Sleep-in duties
- Supporting with personal care

- Working in a busy residential environment
- Responding calmly to challenging behaviour
- Maintaining professional boundaries
- Supporting young people when they are distressed or dysregulated
- Working as part of a close-knit team

If you're looking for a predictable Monday-Friday placement with standard office hours, this probably isn't the right placement for you.

If you're looking for a placement that will stretch you, build your confidence and give you exceptional hands-on experience, it could be.

Location – please consider this carefully

St Joseph's is based on a 23-acre semi-rural site in Cranleigh, Surrey, approximately 20 minutes from Guildford.

Public transport to the site is limited, so this placement is particularly suitable for students who have university accommodation, family accommodation or their own accommodation within a reasonable commuting distance of Cranleigh.

Please consider your travel arrangements carefully before applying. As you will need to be able to reliably travel to and from the placement for a range of shift patterns, including evenings and weekends, this role is best suited to a driver with access to their own vehicle.

What you'll gain

This placement will give you experience that goes far beyond the classroom.

You'll develop:

- Practical experience of residential childcare and SEN
- A deeper understanding of autism, learning disabilities, behaviour and communication
- Experience supporting young people with complex needs
- Strong communication and relationship-building skills
- Confidence managing challenging and unpredictable situations
- Greater resilience, adaptability and emotional intelligence
- Teamwork and collaboration skills.
- Experience working alongside education, care and other professionals
- Specialist training in safeguarding, autism and positive behaviour support
- A strong foundation for future careers in psychology, education, teaching, social care, mental health and healthcare.

Why join us?

- £1,000 retention bonus - £250 after 1 month, £250 after 1 year and £500 after 18 months
- 33 days paid annual leave, including bank holidays
- Free meals when on duty

- Comprehensive induction and CPD-certified training
- Team Teach Positive Behaviour Support training before starting, refreshed annually
- Medicaash and Life Assurance schemes
- Employee Assistance Service with confidential 24/7 wellbeing and counselling support
- Ongoing 1:1 mentoring
- Excellent professional support and career development opportunities

Placement details

Start Date: July 2027 or by September 2027

Contract: 52-week-fixed-term-contract – university placement year. Hours – 37 hours per week

Rota: Shift pattern including evenings and weekends

Is this the placement for you?

If you want an easy placement with predictable hours, this may not be the right opportunity.

But if you want to challenge yourself, develop genuine professional experience, build resilience and make a meaningful difference to young people's lives, this could be an incredibly valuable year.

We are particularly interested in hearing from Psychology students, but welcome applications from students across all subject areas who have the right attitude, resilience and commitment.

No previous residential or SEN experience is required – we'll provide the training; we're looking for the right person.

How to apply

Applications close: Friday 23rd April 2027

- Request an application pack: recruitment@st-josephscranleigh.surrey.sch.uk
- Call us: 01483 272449 – ask for recruitment
- Visit: <https://st-josephscranleigh.surrey.sch.uk/>

Interviews will be arranged as applications are received, so don't wait to apply.

Safeguarding

St Joseph's Specialist Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. This role requires an enhanced DBS check and satisfactory references.