

Teaching Assistant (University Placement Year 2027-28)

St Joseph's Specialist Trust – Cranleigh, Surrey

20 minutes from Guildford - £21,599 plus £1,000 Retention Bonus – Term-time only



Make a real difference – and discover what you're capable of

Are you looking for a university placement that will give you genuine hands-on experience and prepare you for a career in psychology, education, SEN, social care or other people focused professions?

At St Joseph's Specialist Trust, we offer university students the opportunity to join our Teaching Assistant Placement Programme and gain meaningful experience supporting children and young people aged 5-19 with complex needs.

Please note: this is a challenging placement

Our students may have complex learning disabilities, autism, social communication needs and behaviours that can be challenging. The role can be physically, mentally and emotionally demanding, and requires resilience, patience, consistency and the ability to remain calm in difficult or unpredictable situations.

This is not simply an opportunity to observe SEN education – you will be actively involved in supporting our students every day. In return, you'll gain an exceptional level of practical experience, develop your confidence and resilience and learn from experienced professionals in a specialist environment.

Who is this placement suited to?

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

However, we welcome applications from students studying any subject. You may be considering a future career in teaching, education, psychology, social work, occupational therapy, care, healthcare or another people-focused profession.

More important than your degree subject is your attitude and ability to cope with the demands of the role.

We are looking for people who are:

- Resilient – able to cope positively with situations that may be challenging or unpredictable
- Patient and compassionate – able to see the individual behind the behaviour
- Calm under pressure – able to respond appropriately when situations become difficult
- Emotionally mature – able to manage the emotional demands of working with vulnerable young people, for instance, providing personal care when required (training provided)

- Adaptable and willing to learn – no previous SEN experience is required, but you must be open to feedback and new approaches.
- Reliable and committed – able to contribute consistently as part of a busy team
- Curious about behaviour and learning – particularly interested in understanding why young people behave as they do and how we can support them

You do not need previous SEN experience. We provide comprehensive training and ongoing support. What we cannot provide is resilience – so it is important that you consider whether this type of environment is right for you before applying.

Location – please consider this carefully

St Joseph's is based on a 23-acre semi-rural site in Cranleigh, Surrey. Public transport to the site is limited, so this placement is particularly suitable for students who have university accommodation or their own accommodation within a reasonable commuting distance of Cranleigh.

Please consider your daily travel arrangements before applying. You will need to be able to reliably get to and from the placement throughout the academic year.

What makes this placement special?

- Comprehensive training – You'll receive extensive training to help you develop the skills and confidence needed to work effectively with our students, including a twice-weekly TA training package covering both theory and practical learning. You'll also work towards a CPD-certified Teaching Assistant apprenticeship qualification, giving you a recognised qualification alongside your practical experience.
- Genuine career-building experience – Gain hands-on SEN experience that can be highly valuable when applying for future roles or postgraduate courses in psychology, education, teaching, social work, care and related professions.
- Real responsibility and real impact – You'll become part of the students' day-to-day lives, supporting them to develop communication, confidence, independence and life skills.
- Develop resilience and confidence – This placement will challenge you, but it will also help you develop valuable skills in communication, teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability, leadership and emotional resilience.
- A supportive professional community – You'll join a team of nearly 250 staff working across our specialist school, children's home and supported living services. You'll have access to experienced colleagues, 1:1 mentoring and ongoing professional development.

What you'll gain

By the end of your placement, you'll have:

- Meaningful, hands-on experience of working with young people with complex needs.
- A deeper understanding of SEN, behaviour, communication and learning
- Transferable skills in communication, teamwork, creativity and problem-solving
- Increased confidence, resilience and adaptability
- Experience working as part of a multidisciplinary professional team
- CPD and specialist training to strengthen your CV

- A strong foundation for a future career in psychology, teaching, SEN, education, social care or healthcare.

Pay & Benefits

- £21,599 actual salary – 39 working weeks plus holiday pay, paid in 12 equal monthly instalments.
- £1,000 retention bonus - £250 after 1 month, £250 after 1 year and £500 after 18 months
- Free lunch during term time
- Free on-site parking
- Medicaash and Life Assurance schemes
- CPD-certified training and 1:1 mentoring
- Team Teach Positive Behaviour support training before starting, refreshed annually
- Employee Assistance Programme with 24/7 wellbeing and counselling support.
- Excellent opportunities for future career progression

Could this be the placement for you?

If you are looking for an easy placement with a predictable day-to-day routine, this probably isn't it.

If, however, you want to challenge yourself, develop genuine professional experience, understand complex behaviour and make a meaningful difference to young people's lives, this could be an incredibly rewarding year.

We welcome applications from students across all subject areas, but are particularly interested in hearing from Psychology students.

If you're compassionate, resilient, curious and ready to learn, we'd love to hear from you.

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.