



Ripplevale School and College Rochester

Job Description: Learning Mentor (Specialist Autism Setting)

Job Title: Learning Mentor – Autism Specialist

Reports to: SENCO / Lead Teacher

Location: Specialist setting for autistic students

Salary Band: Higher support staff scale (e.g., equivalent to HLTA or specialist mentor pay point, reflecting advanced expertise and autonomy)

Hours: Full-time term-time (or as per contract)

Main Purpose of the Role To provide highly specialist, proactive, and independent support to autistic pupils, using advanced autism-specific knowledge to enhance curriculum access, remove barriers to learning, promote independence, and directly improve outcomes in communication, emotional regulation, social engagement, and academic progress. The Learning Mentor works with significant autonomy, often leading targeted interventions and adapting strategies in real-time.

Key Responsibilities

- Proactively identify and assess emerging needs of autistic pupils (e.g., sensory overload, anxiety escalation, communication breakdowns, rigid thinking patterns) and independently initiate evidence-based de-escalation, low-arousal, or positive behaviour support strategies.
- Expertly adapt and co-deliver the curriculum using autism-specific pedagogies (e.g., TEACCH, structured teaching, visual supports, social stories, PECS/Makaton/executive function scaffolds).
- Design, implement, and monitor highly personalised learning programmes and interventions aligned to EHCP/IEP targets, including leading small-group social skills sessions, independence-building activities, or transition support.
- Take ownership of key aspects of pupil progress, including tracking impact, contributing to multi-agency reviews (e.g., with speech & language therapists, educational psychologists), and adjusting approaches to close attainment gaps and reduce restrictive practices.
- Provide specialist mentoring to build pupil self-regulation, emotional wellbeing, and independence, empowering them to manage challenges with reduced adult support over time.
- Liaise proactively with teachers, families, and external professionals to ensure holistic, consistent support.
- Contribute to staff training and development in autism-specific strategies.

- Safeguard pupils at all times, adhering to policies on child protection, behaviour, and health & safety in high-needs autism contexts.

Essential Requirements

- Significant experience working with autistic children/young people in specialist settings.
- Advanced knowledge of autism (including theory of mind, sensory processing, communication differences, executive functioning).
- Relevant qualifications/training (e.g., NAS modules, PG Cert in Autism, or equivalent specialist autism/ SEND training).
- Proven ability to work autonomously, make professional judgements, and lead interventions.
- Strong understanding of evidence-based approaches (e.g., positive behaviour support, restorative practice).
- Excellent communication, observation, and assessment skills.

Desirable

- Experience leading groups or mentoring colleagues.
- Additional certifications in relevant areas (e.g., Team Teach, Makaton, PECS).