



Pastoral Care Specialist

Job Description

SCHOOLS OUTREACH LTD

Authored by: Schools Outreach, December 2006

Pastoral Care Specialist

Job Description

Main Role Description:

- Offer individual pupils unconditional acceptance, respect and trust.
- Establish good relationships with pupils, especially those identified as being in need of pastoral care.
- Complement and co-operate with the staff of the school, as well as with others involved in the care of the same pupils.
- Give time to pupils and, where appropriate and welcome, their parents, when the pupils' circumstances, attitudes, or behaviour suggest that they are at risk of experiencing the onset or further development of serious problems.
- Encourage the realisation of the full potential of the pupils - physically, psychologically, socially, and spiritually.
- Seek to enhance the self-worth of the pupils.
- Discover means by which the wisdom of the pupils may be stimulated - wiser pupils make better decisions in life.

The Pastoral Care Specialist's commitment to the school:

1. All Schools Outreach pastoral care specialists are recruited on the basis of their personal qualities and previous experience working with children and young people. They must convince both the Chief Executive of Schools Outreach and the Short-list Panel (where applicable) that they will be wholly committed to the host school, its staff and pupils.
2. Because we know that every school is unique in its mix of staff and pupils, we leave it to the Line Supervisor and other senior members of staff to put together, in discussion with the specialist and his/her Staff Carer, the specifically-detailed ways in which they will demonstrate, in practice, his/her commitment to the school, so long as all these 'ways' fall within the terms of this job description. These 'ways' may vary from school to school according to the school's needs and the worker's gifting, qualities, and experience. We suggest that, during the specialist's first full-time term in the school, and once they have settled into their role in the school, the Line Supervisor and the specialist, together with the Staff Carer, spend time together in order to produce a more earthed-in-practice job description.
3. Also to be borne in mind is the fact that a Schools Outreach school-based PCS is entitled to six weeks of annual paid holidays, somewhat less than a school's teaching staff. This may mean that a PCS can undertake involvement in school-based activities in the school holidays, though some specialists join Schools Outreach when they have already become involved in holiday activities with children and young people, through other child-care agencies/organisations, Scouts & Guides, or in their local communities.

The school's commitment to the PCS:

1. Appoint a Line Supervisor who will meet regularly with the specialist and prepare annual workplace evaluations;
2. Ensure that the teaching staff understand the purposes of the presence of a Schools Outreach PCS in the school;
3. Encourage the teaching staff to support, encourage and co-operate with the specialist;
4. Provide the PCS with a room for the purpose of 'caring in confidence', preferably a room situated adjacent to another occupied room with windows and a connecting door;
5. Establish the reasons why and the means by which pupils may be referred by staff to the specialist;
6. Supply basic resources to the PCS, e.g. stationery, photocopying facilities, telephone, secure filing cabinet;
7. Where applicable, a financial commitment towards the costs incurred by Schools Outreach who employ the specialist in the first instance.

Further notes:

Though Schools Outreach wishes a school to possess a sense of 'ownership' of the PCS, it must always be borne in mind, by the school, that the educational charity Schools Outreach is the specialist's employer and exercises direct management of them; so that, for example, the PCS's presence at termly in-service training events is expected and is a matter taken very seriously by Schools Outreach. Dates of such events will be made available to the school well in advance. Such events provide the specialist with regular peer encounters, where experiences and expertise can be shared; with developmental learning and training; with opportunities to meet the charity's Directors and executive staff; with opportunities to off-load concerns and anxieties; with longer and, perhaps, more profitable times with the Staff Carer. In-Service events usually run from Thursday to Friday.

We know from experience over the past 18 years that the presence of a specialist in a school can sometimes be viewed as a school suddenly possessing 'an extra pair of hands', with specialists expected to take on tasks which could not be considered to fit within a 'pastoral care' remit. For example: Schools Outreach would not wish a PCS to be expected to stand in for a sick or absent teacher, except in emergencies and where the local teachers' organisations have been contacted and approval obtained. Even then being seen in a 'teaching' role can fundamentally change the pupils' perception of the specialist's role; a change which may exert unwanted effects upon the relationships between specialists and pupils. A PCS is an appropriately trained professional carer. While the role of a specialist can be flexible, we do expect that their role will be established and developed only within the sphere of pupil pastoral care. Having written this, we know that pupil pastoral care will lead a PCS into other spheres if certain specific difficulties are to be effectively remedied, including school-home liaison, home visits, pupil residentials, and the expression of their creative gifts as a part of the establishment of good relationships with both staff and pupils, be the gifting inter-personal, parental encouragement, artistic, musical, dramatic, or sporting. However, we do not expect specialists to allow themselves to become restricted by allowing their gifts to be so strictly time-tabled that they cease to be perceived by pupils to be generally available for one-with-one pastoral care, which must always remain their priority.

We do not wish our workers to be placed under excessive pressures, which could negatively affect their health as well as rendering them ineffective.

The level of commitment to pupils undertaken by a PCS has sometimes been seen to be 'dedication gone mad', one or two of whom have worked five full days in a school weekly, and then spent weekends visiting pupils' homes. We do not encourage workaholism! The specialist's Conditions of Employment state that they must spend one full day in every seven resting and work a maximum of 37 ½ hours per week.

This organisation takes the physical, mental, and spiritual health of its employees very seriously.

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