

# Job Description

<b>Post Title:</b>	Play Outreach Worker
<b>Reporting To:</b>	Children's Services Operations Manager
<b>Salary:</b>	£12,500 - £14,500 per annum
<b>Hours:</b>	Full Time; 37.5 hrs per week (With a term time only option)
<b>Annual Leave:</b>	4 weeks per annum
<b>Contract:</b>	1 Year Fixed Term, possibility of extension

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## BASIC OBJECTIVES OF POST

### Main purpose of the job:

1. To Facilitate play sessions in Schools
  2. To support the Children's Services Co-ordinator in co-ordinating the PiS Essex based projects
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## Background

The job role will be based either in **Maldon and Tending**, Essex. Work will take place in a number of schools within these districts. Post holders will be expected to travel throughout their nominated districts to deliver play activities as part of the PiS (Play in Schools) project.

Please see Appendix 1 for an overview of the **Play in Schools** project and

# Roles and Responsibilities

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## The post holder will:

- Work in a range of schools across the elected districts in Essex
- Contribute to the planning and preparation of play and drama activities
- Follow and implement play and drama plans with groups
- Adapt and exercise flexibility when implementing plans, in order to meet groups' and individuals' specific needs
- Support the Children's services co-ordinator in the administration and organisation of the projects
- Liaise with schools to establish and finalise timetables for the project each half term
- Support the recruitment of new schools
- Keep records of which children and young people attend the sessions and collect monitoring information as required
- Liaise with class teachers and other stakeholders to negotiate and discuss referrals to the projects
- Implement the referral process and where appropriate provide feedback to key stakeholders on children and young people on progress
- Complete reports and other documentation as required
- Support and guide freelance or temporary staff working on the projects
- Attend half termly training and administration weeks at the Mapalim head office in London
- Attend weekly and monthly team meetings in the elected Essex district
- Contribute to the on-going evaluation and review of the projects and the summative evaluation of the projects

# Person Specification

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## Essential Criteria

The successful candidate will:

- Have experience of working with children and young people
- Be I.T. Literate and able to use email
- Be well organised
- Be a clear and effective communicator, both verbally and in writing
- Have the ability to manage own time effectively
- Have good interpersonal skills
- Have experience of reading maps and finding difficult places
- Be able to work effectively in a team
- Have a commitment and an understanding of equal opportunities and the ability to implement principles of good practice to all aspects of work

## Desirable Criteria

The successful candidate *may*:

- Hold an NVQ level 3 (or equivalent) in Children's care, learning and development, Playwork or youth work
- Have experience of undertaking outreach work
- Have a diploma degree in drama or a related area

# Project Overviews

Appendix 1

## Play in Schools (PiS)

### Project Aim:

To improve **social skills**, raise **self-esteem** and **confidence** in pupils who display **challenging behaviour**. Challenging behaviour could include pupils who demonstrate **threatening** behaviour, verbal and physical **abuse** and general **disruption**.

The project will aim to support those pupils who are **poor attendees**, at **risk of exclusion**, leading to **reduce fixed term exclusions**.

### Delivery Objectives:

- To ensure that children are consulted and actively participate in developing the service delivery
- To provide strategies for children to generate new personal learning
- To promote inclusion
- To increase self esteem
- To empower children to take responsibility for managing and resolving their own difficulties
- To reduce exclusion and improve attendance
- To stimulate imagination and motivation
- To improve social skills
- To promote social, emotional and behavioural skills
- To reduce disruptive and unacceptable behaviour

### Project Structure

**The project is split into SIX strands of delivery.** Not every school will necessarily have all six strands of delivery. At the initial stages, the project

manager will meet with the school in order to ascertain the specific needs of the school and the children.

Through this interface and through consultation with the children and young people, the project manager will work with the children and the staff to design an implementation programme for the school. This may contain all six strands, or it may just include one or two.

The strands are as follows:

1. Playwork Intervention
2. Parent Directive Play
3. Play Therapy
4. Play Club
5. Midday Assistant Playwork Training
6. Playground Play

## **1. Playwork Intervention Strand**

This strand has been specifically designed to support children with behaviour difficulties in school using a targeted programme. It aims to reduce anti-social and poor behaviour in school lessons.

This strand is delivered in blocks of six weeks or half term periods; the time tabling for this will be negotiated with the project manager on a half term basis according to the needs of your school. The school will select their own referral process for identifying children and young people to be included in the project. Once referred, they will take part in the programme for the full six weeks, remaining in the same peer group throughout.

Playworkers will plan the six-week programme in advance using information based upon children's needs or focus groups that the school has provided as part of the referral process. These programmes are designed to support children in developing strategies to deal with some of the following issues:

- Low self esteem
- Anger management
- Confidence
- Self worth
- Bullying
- Conflict resolution
- Friendship skills
- Positive play experiences
- Working as a team
- Social skills
- Boundaries

## **2. Parent Directive Play Strand**

Within this strand playworkers run sessions with groups of parents/carers and their children. Children and parents/carers have an opportunity to play 'positively' with each other, facilitated by the playworkers. The delivery is in blocks of six weeks or half term periods. The school will work with the project manager to select their own referral process. The same families will take part in all sessions for the duration of the six week programme.

Playworkers plan for each session and a number of issues are explored; these could include anger management, conflict resolution and boundaries. The issues that are selected can be done so either at the request of the school or otherwise the play staff will tackle issues with the families as they arise or are identified.

## **3. Play Therapy Strand**

Play therapy is an effective intervention for many children but particularly for those children who have experienced negative situations during their life, including those presented with problems associated with abuse, loss, illness, disability or witnessing violence. It helps children to modify their behaviour, address issues that may exist around self-concept and help build healthy relationships.

Play therapists use play as a form of communication, which is often a language that children will choose because they do not have another facility to describe their thoughts and feelings.

This strand is a very targeted way of working with children to support their social and emotional development. The school will work with the project manager to identify the best approach for the therapist within their school context. This could be in one of three ways:

### **a) Therapeutic group play**

The Play therapist will work with a small group of children, addressing common themes or issues through the play process.

### **b) Family play therapy**

The Play therapist will work with family groups to help them to address issues that may have affected the whole family. These could include bereavement, family breakdown, abuse & domestic violence and conflicts within the family.

### **c) One-to-one play therapy**

In some cases, children benefit from having one-to-one therapy time. Because of the issues around communication, children find play

therapy a more useful and powerful form of intervention than traditional counselling.

A play therapy session will usually last for one hour with each client or client group. The therapy will run with the same individuals or groups for two consecutive half terms.

#### **4. Play Club Strand**

This strand offers either one or two sessions per week - after school or breakfast play club. The times of the sessions are negotiated with the school, as are the number of weeks the strand runs for. This strand provides children with the opportunity to attend an extended schools programme offering activities to enhance their development using the SPICE model. Mapalim prides itself on running high quality provision that supports the outcomes in "Every Child Matters", focusing on the following key areas to:

- Be Healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

A variation of structured and unstructured play opportunities will provide possibilities to explore and support children's social interactions through a positive and reassuring environment.

#### **5. Midday Assistant Playwork Training Strand**

This strand offers the opportunity for midday assistants to attend training to develop key playwork skills in order to enhance the provision that they are offering during lunchtimes. These skills could include:

- Child protection awareness
- Playground games
- Wet play ideas
- Developing positive relationships with children
- Managing challenging behaviour

Other topics that the school identifies could also be included. Training could take place at the school either directly before or after the lunchtime session. Sessions could run weekly – or at a different pace to suit the needs of the school/staff.

By supporting midday assistants to develop these skills, they will, in turn, help to support children's play experience within the playground and facilitate conflict management through positive approaches. In addition we can also work with the school to create an 'induction booklet' for new midday assistant staff.

## **6. Playground Play Strand**

This strand will provide experienced playworkers to facilitate a range of play opportunities for children in the playground. Two playworkers will visit a school to work together with a group of children and young people during the lunch hour. Group activities (from team games, challenges, scavenger hunts, etc) will help to stimulate children, giving them the opportunity to take part in positive, flexible but focused activities, and could contribute to relieving what children often describe as 'boredom' during the break as well as addressing some issues around social isolation. Where children are less bored and instead engaged with organised activities conflicts are also much less likely to occur.

This project also provides the opportunity for schools to significantly enhance the playground environment, both 'emotionally' as well as physically, without the need for large amounts of capital expenditure on costly playground equipment.

The 'added bonus' for this strand is that meal time supervisors are able to join in and observe the playwork staff and will be able to extend the project by continuing to run games and activities on days where the playworkers are not in the school.