



OPAL Mentor (Northeast of England)

Job Description

Hours: 16 hours per week (to start) flexible over 3 days, term time plus INSET training days

Location: Northeast: Redcar, Middlesbrough, Cleveland Region

Employment type: To be discussed (employed or freelance trainer)

Responsible to: OPAL Northeast Director

Salary: Starting from £22 p/h Dependent on experience and employment type.

Average F/T Salary: £38,000 p.a (average number of working :41 weeks per year)

Holiday Entitlement: If employed 22 days plus 8 bank holidays (pro rota)

Deadline for applications: Friday 4th August **Interview Date:** Wed 16th August 2023

Full training provided. Access and use of car essential

About OPAL

Come and join a dynamic national team of professionals dedicated to putting play on the educational radar and enhancing children's playtimes at school.

OPAL – Outdoor Play and Learning - CIC is the UK's leading, award-winning organisation providing school improvement through play.

Play is the universal language of childhood. It is through play that children learn, make friends and make sense of the world around them. Play helps to develop their brain, stimulates creativity and problem-solving, promotes resilience and social skills and maintains physical, mental and emotional health.

Children spend 1.4 years of their primary school attendance in play, and yet many schools have no strategic approach to play to meet the needs of children across all ages. The OPAL Programme is a mentor supported primary school-improvement programme, addressing all areas that schools must plan for to improve the quality of their play opportunities.

OPAL has helped hundreds of schools to improve play in the UK, Canada, Australia, France, New Zealand, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Poland and Hungary.

As a rapidly growing organisation, we are looking to expand our UK team to reach even more schools.

About the role

Being an OPAL Mentor is multi-faceted and highly rewarding role, which will see you affecting change and transformation at organisational level to improve children's lives ultimately.

OPAL Mentors deliver the OPAL Primary Programme to schools across the country. This role is regional based and may involve travel to schools within a 100-mile radius.

As an OPAL Mentor, you will be working independently with primary school staff, guiding them through the 18-24-month strategic OPAL programme. The main goal of the programme is to support the creation of a sustainable school play culture at the same time as enabling fantastic playtime provision for children.

OPAL is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all those affiliated with the organisation to share this commitment.



You will be working across your local region, facilitating eight compulsory and two optional half-day meetings per school, throughout every school's OPAL journey. Outside of the meetings, you will be available for online and telephone support, as per schools' individual needs. You will also be proactively contacting and seeking to meet prospective schools in your region. Therefore, a full valid driver's license and access to a car, as well as a regular internet connection and mobile phone are essential. Laptop will be provided.

As a successful candidate, you must:

- Have knowledge of play and playwork theory and previous experience of quality playwork-based practice, as this will inform the delivery of the OPAL programme and will be applied in each individual school context.
- Hold a relevant qualification (teaching, playwork, advice and guidance, degree level and above desirable but not essential).
- Have knowledge of how schools operate in the UK.
- Be able to communicate effectively with people from all walks of life, of different ages, abilities and backgrounds, at various hierarchical levels within a school.
- Be comfortable presenting to and training both small and large groups of people.
- Be highly organised.
- Take initiative in reaching out to prospective schools and be interested in developing your marketing and advertising skills.
- Have excellent spoken and written English.

This role does not involve working directly with children.

Following selection, successful candidates will be required to complete comprehensive training, which includes attending either a face-to-face or a virtual three-day course, followed by an initial period of assisted mentoring of local schools.

All OPAL Mentors benefit from tailored on-going support, regular meetings sharing best practice and access to the latest research, guidance and resources that underpin and continuously develop the quality of our work.

Appointment as an OPAL Mentor will be subject to an Enhanced DBS check and two satisfactory references.

Training will take place on mutually agreed dates with a potential Sept start date (negotiable)

Further information about OPAL can be accessed via the OPAL website:

<https://outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk/>

If you have any questions about this role or would like to arrange an informal conversation prior to applying, please contact Ingrid Wilkinson (OPAL Northeast Director) at opal.ingrid@gmail.com

To apply: Please provide CV and covering letter explaining why you have the necessary skills, experience and aptitude for the role of OPAL Mentor (see person spec) and forward to opal.ingrid@gmail.com

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