

Job description – sessional facilitator

Role	Sessional facilitator
Overall purpose	Facilitation of children’s self-directed and holistic learning and development
Hours	Variable and ad hoc (occasional cover for Bamble’s lead facilitators) Note, a typical day is from 08:30 – 15:30 (see website for term dates)
Location	2 nd Hellesdon Scout Centre, 42A Middletons Ln, Norwich NR6 5NG
Salary	£13.19 per hour (£92.33 per day)
Communications and working relationships	The employer is Bamble Ltd. Danny Whitehouse & Sally Hall are co-directors of the learning community and will work closely with all employees, freelancers and volunteers to help you to have an enriching experience connecting with children and being part of their journeys of discovery. Typically, Danny or Sally will give sessional facilitators a call when we need cover (e.g., due to sickness), and ask your availability to work the next day. If you are free, you will start at 08:30, take a lunch break at 12:30 alongside children, say farewell to everyone at 15:00 and then pack up and debrief with the Lead Facilitator.

Welcome!

Thanks for your interest in co-creating an innovative alternative to school! We hope you are excited by what we’re trying to create together, and we’re delighted that you want to be involved.

We're looking for someone who is:

- passionate about this approach to education (ideally with relevant experience) e.g., democratic education/ self-directed education/ sociocracy/ non-violent or compassionate communication/play work etc.
- respectful towards children; empathetic, collaborative, authentic
- reflective, open to challenging us and being challenged (respectfully)
- able to share the admin with us/ preparations for sessions/ gathering resources etc.
- reliable, available to work at short notice, and keen to become increasingly involved as we develop the project over time

Preparations before you dive straight in

Once you’ve read through this document there are a few steps we’d like you to take before you would start to facilitate alongside us in a sessional role at Bamble:

- ⇒ **Research:** if you’re not already familiar with the pedagogical underpinnings of our approach, then research democratic and self-directed education following the links on the ‘why’ page of our website.
- ⇒ **Apply:** send a CV and a one-page cover letter, outlining why you want to work with us, sharing specific examples of experiences that illustrate the approach and abilities detailed below.
- ⇒ **Interview:** if we wish to progress with your application, we will invite you to an interview.
- ⇒ **Contracts:** if successful at interview, we will provide you with a contract of service
- ⇒ **Paid trial day:** we will invite you for a paid trial day within 2 months of agreeing your contract
- ⇒ **Learning on the job:** thereafter, whenever we call upon you for sessional cover, we will encourage you to learn on the job, and to make the most of debriefs at the end of each day, reflecting on what well and what we might all do differently in the future.

What does the job actually involve?

It’s a nuanced and highly skilled task to facilitate self-directed education, and a lot of what we’re doing is subtle or even a bit invisible. It requires sensitivity, self-awareness and typically years of practice. We believe that relationships are the most important factor in a natural learning process. So we get to know each child deeply, we build rapport, helping children feel safe in the equality, trust and mutual respect of our relationship with them. We get to know what children like and don’t like, what they find easy and what they find difficult. We create activities based on the emerging interests of children. We help restore harmony when conflicts happen without wielding adult power over children. We spend a lot of time reflecting together on children’s development, their interpersonal difficulties and their goals and needs.

Key responsibilities

Responsibility	Examples of activities
Keep children safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Familiarise yourself with all the risk assessments and safeguarding procedures, speak to the Lead Facilitator if you have any questions or concerns ● Walk around the entire site before children arrive, checking for any new or significant hazards ● Dynamic risk assessment and observation of children's activities and the environment ● Take on delegated responsibility for supervising the whereabouts of approximately 6 children, and an agreed environment (e.g., either indoors or outdoors), keep checking in with children to make sure no-one is trying to leave the site ● Be clear in your expectations regarding safety (state simply and firmly if something is not okay)
Take care of children's basic needs, in loco parentis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Act in the best interests of children: make sure everyone has eaten enough, drunk enough water, is wearing appropriate clothing, washes their hands before eating, puts on sun-cream when it's sunny etc.
Listen and observe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pay attention to what children indicate through their words and actions, notice what individuals find easy or difficult, exciting or worrying. ● Welcome families at the beginning of the day, take note of any key information shared by parents or children about wellbeing or personal experiences that might affect them at Bamble, share with other facilitators. ● Take time to step back from activities you're engaged in, check that everyone who wants to be involved is supported to do so, listen to the sounds around you, get a sense of the tones and textures of activities, the mood of the group, your felt sense about who people are learning and developing.
Get stuck in: participate, lead, respond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Participate</i>: get involved with children's games and activities, take part in whatever they're doing, on their terms. Whether it's chasies, den-building, science experiments or painting pictures, asking to take part and following their lead is an important part of building trusting rapport, learning about individuals and learning <i>from</i> them too. ● <i>Lead</i>: by developing your own personal projects, offer activities that you genuinely enjoy <i>and</i> see if kids follow your lead and want to join in. If you're sitting in the corner whittling or strumming a guitar, very often children will just naturally gravitate towards you and help or participate. ● <i>Respond</i>: i.e., to children's requests – when you're invited into a game, asked what you know about a subject, or you've co-agreed to teach something or organise some activity or learning experience.
Help resolve conflicts and address any hurtful behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When there is conflict or strong emotion, everything stops until we can find a resolution. For example, if two children both want the same object and appear to be 'fighting' over it, stop what you're doing, and make your presence known, check what each child in turn is seeking, help by giving words to what you perceive each to be feeling, help them to state what they want and need. ● If someone behaves in a way that is distressing, discriminatory, or conveys power <i>over</i> another, it is our job to respond and state what we see as problematic, to explain why it could be hurtful and to indicate another way of approaching the problem. Sometimes kids will find their own ways of communicating this, but even so it is important for adults to reinforce the need for everyone to be safe, respected and included.
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keep conferring with your colleagues to ensure you both have a similar number of children under your supervision, to negotiate who goes in and out, keep your walkie-talkie on you at all times, stay in touch with each other. ● At the end of each day, share what's on your mind with the Lead Facilitator (observations, changes in children's behaviours, concerns you have about individuals, questions about teammate's approaches, ideas for things you might do differently; don't forget to celebrate things that you think have gone really well!). ● We're a team with families, too. If there's something you've noticed that you think parents should be aware of, make sure to pass it on. If possible, let a child know that you want to pass it on, so that it's not something we do 'behind their back', but if it's especially sensitive you might find another discrete way of sharing the information with families.
Research together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If a child's curiosity has been sparked on a subject or they have indicated a desire to do more/ learn more/ explore something, your role is to support them to keep finding things out. E.g., if a kid is interested in fixing a bicycle, you might ask them how they want to learn, suggest options (a maintenance manual, youtube, talking with someone who knows more, just having a go and seeing what happens, organising a trip to a bike workshop to watch how professionals fix various problems). ● As much as possible, support children to take every step of that journey themselves (so if they want to visit a professional, suggest that they go on the laptop to find the number to call, plan what they're going to say, ring the person, arrange a time to visit, invite other children that want to go, talk through the itinerary and mode of transport, discuss any risks there might be and safety precautions, type the letters for parents about the trip etc.).

Session preparations and admin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If you or children have ideas for projects, you might need to buy some resources. Sometimes, we'll go shopping together with children, more often we'll find second hand items online or in charity shops, or we'll pick things up en route to Bamble. ● From time to time, we may ask for your help with admin elements – letters to parents or updates to the website and social media content etc.
Take care of the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fixing things that get broken (as much as possible involving children in figuring out how to do that), making sure things are safe (e.g. branches falling, slopes more slippery when wet, preventing access to toilets that have become blocked etc.) ● If you have ideas for improving the site or creating new facilities, share your ideas. Any changes need to be discussed with the scouts first.
Promote the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As an employee at Bamble, you're a really key ambassador. It can take a while to feel confident explaining what self-directed education is, but when you feel able to articulate it, we'd really be grateful for help promoting the project at events, amongst family and friends etc. ● From time to time, we may ask for your help with things like putting posters up or flyering
Additional tasks as required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We never know what each day will involve, and encourage you to be prepared for anything that might come up!

Person Specification

Approach and abilities

Passionate about this approach to education

- Has extensive knowledge of child development and is able to skillfully apply theories in practice
- Committed to exploring what children need
- Knowledgeable about self-directed education and some understanding of other related topics and approaches (democratic education/ self-directed education/ sociocracy/ non-violent or compassionate communication/play work etc)
- Involvement in a relevant community of practice (e.g. attended EUDEC or Freedom to Learn)

Respects others unconditionally

- Exhibits trust and belief in children's capabilities through a person-centred approach
- Enables children to test new knowledge in the context of experience and discover their own meaning
- Remains open and withholds judgement when seeking to resolve conflicts between individuals
- Able to hear criticism and 'no' without defensive reaction
- Avoids the concepts of 'right' and 'wrong' feelings, shows that they are open to a range of causes, needs and values of various emotional responses
- Seeks opportunities to get to know oneself and others more deeply, committed to the pursuit of 'wholebecoming' and identifying one's own blind spots
- Skilled at matching another person's emotions, sharing their joy and difficulties, witnessing and mirroring to help children to feel seen and understood

Empathetic

- Able to express caring intentions through words, silence and actions
- Shows a willingness to help others, responsive to another's needs and feelings in a given moment
- Interested in, and alert to the underlying feelings and needs that motivate actions
- Able to analyse and articulate sometimes complex interpersonal and group dynamics
- Able to help children to articulate and express their feelings and thoughts, without directing them to think or feel a particular way. Can tentatively propose interpretations of expressed feelings and behaviours with an openness to 'guessing' wrong
- Seeks to understand children's intentions, truths and whatever is alive in them, even if it differs from one's own perspective

Collaborative

- Sees learning as a process/ journey; prefers to present theories rather than conclusions, to integrate a range of perspectives
- More motivated by co-creation than about being 'right', avoids positioning oneself as an authority figure or as a dominant leader (seeks power *with* others rather than power over others)
- Offers self as a resource for learning, as a person with knowledge, experience and reflections that may be useful for another's growth and development, and invites children to request input rather than giving unsolicited guidance.
- Facilitates experiential and informal learning opportunities, rather than taking a didactic approach to presenting information
- Helps children to formulate useful questions in a spirit of collaborative enquiry, a shared process of discovery
- Able to identify the learning styles of individual children and adapt facilitation style accordingly

Congruent role model

- Does not try to disguise their true emotions and belief; can express anger, frustration, stress, disappointment, regret, shame, discomfort etc., without implying that another person is at fault
- Reflects openly on one's own observations and experiences and apply critical thinking to explore alternative perspectives and stories
- Demonstrates integrity and does what they believe to be right
- Considers failure to be a useful learning opportunity
- Able to use one's own time productively and purposefully, demonstrating how to set personal goals and to manage time to achieve those goals

Reliable

- Follows through on promises, to colleagues and children
- Acts firmly and swiftly when real and imminent danger is present
- Is able to cover at short notice and is eager to become more involved with Bamble as the project develop