

Derek Lyseight-Jones. The Old School House, High Street, Hook Norton,
Oxon, OX15 5NH.
Mbl: 07941 108801
Email: derek.dlj@gmail.com

RE Reference for Sara Kironde-Strain.

25th July 2020.

I am the former Head of Education and then Principal of Penhurst School (now closed) in Oxfordshire UK.

Penhurst School was one of many projects run by the national charity, Action for Children. The charity works with a wide range of young people with disadvantages or challenges, including those with developmental delay and life limiting conditions (Penhurst School) to adoption services and projects supporting vulnerable young people in the community.

Penhurst was a residential special school for profoundly disabled young people from ages 5 through to 25. The school provided education, residential care 365 days a year, multiple therapy provisions, nursing and medical support to ensure that the young people had the best opportunities for their support and development.

It was our pleasure to welcome Matthew Strain to the school in the early 2000's and to develop very sound relationships with the whole family over the years.

Sara was always very supportive of the school and she became a parent governor shortly after Matthew arrived at the school. She was always totally committed to the safety and well being of the students and also very caring about the stresses and challenges that staff faced on a daily basis.

When Matthew sadly died in 2012 it was announced that the charity had made the decision to close the school. This was in part due to the global financial crisis and the impact on local authority budgets and changes in placement practice and thinking. Sara very kindly continued to support the school as a full member of the governing body. She worked very closely with the school, especially the care staff, with whom she had developed an excellent relationship. Sara supported the staff through what was a very difficult and stressful time for all concerned.

Sara was consistently an exceptionally supportive member of the governing body and was highly valued as a critical friend. Her role at the school ended when the school formally closed on 31st May 2013.

I recommend her to you most highly.

Please do get in touch if you need any additional information.

Yours faithfully,

Handwritten signature of Derek Lyseight-Jones in black ink, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.