



KEEPING YOUR CHILD SAFE

Guidance for parents and carers when using a private tutor, tuition centre, religious tuition, online tuition, sports clubs or arts and cultural activities

Introduction

You might want to employ a tutor or send your child to any of a range of activities outside school. Some examples might be

- Tuition to help them with their school work or improve their grades
- To learn swimming, gymnastics, martial arts
- To participate in sports activities eg football, cricket, basketball
- To learn a musical instrument
- Drama or dance

The Council and your child's school are not able to recommend private tutors or clubs, even when sometimes the activities are taking place on school site. It is your responsibility to ensure you have taken all reasonable care in choosing any tuition or activities you wish your child to take part in.

Safety advice – the importance of making proper checks

While the vast majority of private tutors and coaches are reputable, you still need to take care to make proper checks when hiring their services.

The advice below is to help you make informed decisions about tutoring services or out of school activities for your child and to give you confidence in your choices.

Disclosure and Barring Service (formerly CRB) check

This service carries out a DBS check on anyone who works unsupervised with children under 18 to make sure there is no known reason why they should not work with children or vulnerable adults.

Tutors who have had a DBS check will usually tell you they have one and you can ask to see their DBS disclosure certificate when you meet them.

Individuals cannot get a DBS by themselves - only if they are part of an organisation or through their professional body.

If the DBS certificate shows any previous criminal offences, it is for you to decide whether employing a private tutor with convictions is advisable or poses a risk to your child.

It is important to note that

- having no DBS certificate does not mean there are issues and
- having a clear DBS cannot be an absolute guarantee that someone is safe to work with children.

For more details visit www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/overview

Other checks you can make

- Think about where you found their details - was it through an advert or from another parent / website? Remember these are not necessarily a recommendation or a guarantee of safe practice.
- Regardless of how you found them, ask the tutor or coach for details of two referees, and follow them both up with a phone call.
- Ask the tutor for details of the parents of some current or former students, and follow them up with a phone call.
- If a local school, college or service employs the tutor, ask for a reference from the headteacher, principal or head of service.
- Check to see whether the tutor is properly accredited, experienced and qualified by asking for evidence such as certificates, and then contact the relevant accreditation body or organisation. Where someone claims to have qualifications but cannot produce the certificates, you must decide if the tuition can still go ahead. There is no requirement for private tutors to have formal qualifications but most good ones will have them.
- Meet with the tutor or coach in person before your child starts and if there is anything about them that worries you or your child, trust your instincts and do not proceed
- Be clear where the tutoring will take place and who will be present. Is it at your house, their house or another venue?
- If present, you may wish either to be in the same room, or to leave the door open and enter the room at random. Your child's bedroom is not a suitable place for tutoring.
- If using another venue you will need to check arrangements for drop-off and collection, where your child will wait and what the venue is like.
- Who else might be in the tutor's house at the same time or while the child is waiting? Trust your instincts and do not be afraid of calling off the lessons if you or your child feels uncomfortable.
- Ask your child how the session went.

Organisations that provide tuition and activities

When you send your child to a provider, never assume that the venue is also the provider of the sessions, which may be run by another company. Tuition, coaching companies and franchises often rent premises in sport centres, school halls or from community groups, charities and local churches. You should also be able to ask them about their safeguarding procedures and what is in place.

A checklist for parents

- Who owns the organisation?
- Who do you talk to if you have concerns and how do you contact them?
- Do they have child protection and anti-bullying policies? Ask for copies.
- Are all the staff members DBS checked?
- Is it the same staff members every week?
- If the children have to change their clothes, does anyone supervise this activity?
- Does the activity require appropriate physical contact relevant to the activity? For example, in a dance, music or sports class tutors may need to correct posture, stance and position. Children should know in advance if there will be any physical contact and it should be explained what contact and why.
- What provision is there for dropping off and collecting your child? Does it always have to be the same person who collects your child or can you send someone else without telling the tutor, coach or centre in advance?
- Do parents and carers stay while their child is taking part in the activity and, if so, where do they wait?
- Does the tutor, coach or centre have public liability insurance?
- If professional standards apply to the activity, can they show you that these are being followed?

If your child tells you something worrying or harmful has happened or the tutor / provider is behaving inappropriately

If your child tells you that they have been harmed or that the tutor or coach has behaved inappropriately, you should listen to your child and reassure them that it is not their fault. You should immediately stop using the tutor's services and report it to Children's Services and / or the police.

Any adult who behaves in an inappropriate or abusive manner towards a child should be reported to Children's Services via the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) – see contact details below - and / or the police on 101. Further enquiries will then be made and, where necessary, a child protection investigation will be launched and / or the case will be referred

to the LADO (who is responsible for managing allegations against professionals or those in a position of trust who work with children).

How to report your concerns

Contact Wandsworth Children's Services (MASH) on **020 8871 6622** - Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm – at other times you can contact the Out of Hours Service on **020 8871 6000**
Or you can email: mash@wandsworth.gov.uk

If you think a child is in immediate danger you should call the police on 999.

Radicalisation and extremism

If you are concerned that your child's tutor is teaching them extremist views or influencing them to hold such views, please contact MASH on **020 8871 6622** to discuss your concern.