

Is My Child Safe?

A guide for parents on choosing a home tutor, instructor or coach.

If you have picked up this leaflet, it is likely that you are considering engaging the services of someone to support your child.

There are many reasons that a parent or carer may choose to consider a home tutor, instructor or coach for their child. Preparation for exams and supporting revision; learning an instrument; to develop and improve sporting or artistic skills; understand more about their heritage, religion or culture; catch up following illness; or supporting those with a learning need to keep up.

Before you take this step, check with the school or college to see if support is needed or if it can be provided within curriculum time. If you do decide to arrange these services then it is advisable to inform your child's school or college so that they are aware of the additional support.

Also consider the impact of any additional work on your child. While, as parents and carers, we want the best for our children, there does need to be an appropriate level of study: leisure balance.



What are my responsibilities?

When you enter into a private agreement with a tutor, instructor or coach it becomes your responsibility to undertake reasonable checks and put in place effective measures to keep your child safe.

If you use an agency or third party organisation to secure the tutor, instructor or coach, it is the agency's responsibility to undertake employment checks. Even then, it is advisable to ask what checks have been undertaken and ask for confirmation that there are no issues or concerns.

What are reasonable checks?

DBS

An enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS) is an established method of checking for any relevant criminal caution or conviction and seeing if the individual has been barred from working with children. Self-employed individuals cannot apply for an enhanced DBS certificate themselves. If the individual has other employment in a role which is eligible for an enhanced check, you can ask them to share their certificate with you.

If they have an enhanced DBS check certificate:

- Check that the DBS children's barred list information box has 'none recorded' in it. If it has 'not requested' the barred list check has not been undertaken.
- If there are any records in the 'Police Records of Convictions, Cautions, Reprimands and Warnings' box, you need to consider if this information indicates that they would potentially pose a risk to a child.

Qualifications

There's no requirement for a tutor to be a qualified teacher; you are paying for additional support and understanding to your child. Check what qualifications or experience they have to tutor your child. What level qualifications do they hold in the subject they are teaching? Is it at least one level higher than that which they are tutoring? Have you seen the certificates?

All national sports bodies run coaching courses. These courses train the coaches in how to develop skills, how to operate safely, how to improve technique and if, it is a specialised youth coaching course, should include a child protection module. While an adult may be an accomplished sports person, it does not mean that they can coach. For sports coaching particularly, check that they are insured to coach.

If you are paying for an instructor to teach music, and do not have a recognised teaching qualification, you should expect them to have at least the grade that they are instructing in a similar musical discipline (brass, strings etc.)

References

All tutors, instructors or coaches have to start out somewhere. They may not be able to provide references that cover 1:1 work with children, but if they are going to work with your child, it is not unreasonable to expect that they have some experience of working with or volunteering with children.

If the tutor, instructor or coach can provide references from other families they've supported children in, contact the family and speak with them about their experience.

If the individual works for a local school, ask the Head to provide a reference for them (consent will be needed from the individual for this).

Your child's response

Will your child be able to work with the tutor? Learning works best when a professional relationship is established and your child feels at ease, thus allowing them to take academic risks. Does your child feel that this could be achieved?

Safe working

If the tuition is taking place in your home, make sure that it is in an environment that encourages learning and is free from distractions. However, ensure it is safe and that you are able to observe the session and hear activity at any time you want.

If the tuition is taking place away from your home, are you able to remain on the premises? If the sessions are 1:1, are you able to monitor the interactions or have access to the teaching space? Your child's bedroom is not a suitable environment for tutoring.

Speak with your child to check that they are happy with the arrangements and the sessions. There should be no sharing of personal details, no use of touch – unless agreed beforehand for coaching, no out of lesson communication or social media contact, and no secrets kept. If your child and the tutor know this from the beginning, you can check on how these agreements are being kept.