

Guide for Parents

Choosing a Private Tutor, Coach or Club

Parents support their children in attending various activities. These could include sports groups such as football or netball or attending a group to learn a new skill. Parents may also consider employing a private tutor for a variety of reasons. They may wish for example, to assist their child generally with schoolwork; to help them build confidence with a particular subject or skill such as reading; to help them improve on potential exam grades; or to help them develop skills such as playing a musical instrument.

When choosing any group activity or a private tutor, it is important that parents are confident that their children will be safe and happy.

This leaflet is intended to assist parents in selecting group activities, coaches, and tutors.

Choosing a private tutor or coach

Taking time to choose a tutor for your child is important and will help to keep your child safe. Here are some simple steps and checks to help you decide.

- Always interview the tutor or coach
- Ask to see personal references and confirm their authenticity by contacting the referees directly
- Ask to see their original qualification certificates and be satisfied they are recognised and authentic
- Ask to see their CV and employment record. If there are career gaps, ask reasons and seek evidence of any explanations offered
- If the tutor is a qualified teacher, ask to see a copy of the tutors Teaching Agency Registration and a copy of their DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check
- If the tutor has recently been or is currently employed in a school, speak to the Headteacher for a reference
- It is also helpful for the tutor or coach and you and your child to meet prior to you making a decision
- If the tutor is a freelance or works as a supply teacher, ask to see their DBS



Please note that Suffolk County Council and the Safeguarding Partnership are not responsible for the checking of private tutors and coaches

A prospective coach/tutor should be able to provide the information above without delay. It is recommended that you exercise caution should they not do this.

You may want to have a written agreement that outlines dates and times of the tutors visits and if the tuition is taking place in your home, states that they should not enter your home when an appropriate adult is not present, and that all correspondence should come directly to you. Tutors and coaches should not be emailing, texting, or contacting your child on social media.



Choosing a group activity or club

We would recommend that you use clubs and activities that are supported by nationally recognised organisations such as the Football Association or England Netball.

If your child is interested in attending a group activity, for example, to learn a new sport or to join a choir, you should visit and find out how the group operates and it would be useful to visit one of the activity sessions so you can see what the staff are doing, what is covered in the sessions and whether the children seem happy.

Coaches and instructors should always act professionally and in a similar way you would expect from teachers.

It is important that staff undertaking activities are well trained, supported and have the necessary skills and experience to work with children.



Below are some questions you might want to ask the group leader



- Does the club or coach have a policy on safeguarding children?
- Who do you speak to if you are worried about anything?
- Are staff trained and do they have police checks (DBS checks)?
- Is the group linked to a professional body or recognised organisation?
- What is the staff ratio and is there a trained first aider on site?
- Are you required to sign any consent forms, or provide emergency contacts and your child's relevant medical details?
- Is there a written code of conduct for coaches and any volunteer coaches?
- What's the policy if a child needs personal care?

Keeping your child safe

Tuition at home is best undertaken in a quiet location suitable for study, away from the distractions of television, radio, and any social media. A bedroom is never appropriate. It is essential that you or another trusted adult chosen by you remains on the premises. Any chaperone arrangement offered by the tutor should be declined. It is important that you have access to the teaching area and can observe and hear activity at any time you wish. Any intervening doors should always be kept open.

If your child is attending a group activity, it is a good idea to always stay in the premises with your child and sit where they are within your sight. Seek assurances that your child will always remain with the group.

- Your child should not travel alone with the coach/tutor at any time
- Any contact outside of activities should be directly with the parents
- The coach should not contact your child direct

Club websites or social media pages that provide information to all the club members are appropriate and should be accessible to everyone.

Always ensure that you child is aware of any arrangements that have been agreed for both group activities and one to one tuition or coaching. Speak with your child regularly to ensure they are happy with the arrangements and that any arrangements made with the tutor/coach have been kept.



What to do if your child tells you something inappropriate has happened?

If you are concerned that the coach/tutor has engaged in 'poor practice' i.e., has not done the right thing, we would advise parents to cancel the activities or keep your child away from the activities until advice has been sought.

Any adult who behaves in an inappropriate or abusive manner with a child must be reported to Children's Social Care. If your child tells you of inappropriate behaviour, you must believe what they are saying re-assuring them that it is not their fault. **You must put the welfare of your child first.**

You must inform the Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) if you have any concerns where it is believed that a person working with children has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- Behaved towards a child of children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

You should contact Suffolk Police if you believe that a crime has been committed.

Contact details for Local Authority Designated Officers

 LADO@suffolk.gov.uk  **0300 123 2044**

Further details of the LADO role can be found at the link below on the Suffolk Safeguarding website.

 www.suffolksp.org.uk

If you are concerned about a child, you can call Customer First on **0808 800 4005** (freephone number)

Conclusion

Recruiting a private tutor or coach or choosing a club or group can cause anxiety and worry for parents. By following the guidance in this leaflet, you will have taken reasonable steps to safeguard your child.