Keeping your child safer out of school

Advice for parents and carers on keeping children safe when using clubs, activities, and tutors.

Safety advice and the importance of making proper checks

You might want to employ a tutor or a provider for your child or they may want to attend an organised club or activity which provides them with the opportunity to gain social and life skills, as well as have fun. Everyone who provides activities should do as much as possible to create and maintain a fun and very safe environment for all children taking part.

Parents and Carers have a vital role to play in helping to keep their children safe and support them to know what to do if they are in a situation that makes them feel worried, anxious, or frightened.

It is essential that you check how a club, after school club or activity is run – this is your responsibility as well as the people who organise it. The people who run these clubs should be suitable for working with children and young people; otherwise your child could be at risk. It is important that they are aware of how to work with children properly and about how to keep them healthy and safe.

Even if the person appears professional, do not make any assumptions about the way the activity is managed until you have checked it out yourself. If you are in doubt, you must act.

When choosing clubs and activities for children and young people there are a number of questions you should ask and things that you should look for in relation to the safety of your child.

Does the organisation have a child protection policy and code of behaviour?

A good club, activity leader or tutor will welcome questions about what it does and the safety of the environment. It will have a child protection policy and it should tell you about what to do if you or a child has any concerns.

Are the staff and volunteers suitable to work with children?

All staff and volunteers must go through a proper recruitment process which includes interviews, references, and police checks. Ask if the organisation undertakes Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks (these used to be called CRB checks) for all staff and volunteers.

This service carries out checks for anyone who works with children under 18 to make sure that there is no known reason why they should not work with children or vulnerable adults.

Checklist for Parents:

- Who is the lead person if you have concerns and their Headquarters?
- What are their contact details?
- Do they have child protection and anti-bullying policies? Ask for copies
- Are the staff DBS checked? Ask if you can see it.
- Does the activity require appropriate physical contact **relevant** to the activity? If contact is needed it should always be explained what contact and why.
- What arrangements are there in place for dropping off and collecting your child? If the same person does not attend, the tutor or coach should be informed in advance.
- Is it the same staff members every week?
- Are the children supervised for this activity?

What should you be wary of when choosing a tutor, club, or activity?

- Poor or no communication about procedure, when you ask them about it you receive an answer you are not happy with
- Children and young people are leaving a club or activity for no particular reason
- Parent/carer discouraged from being involved
- Individuals who show favouritism or if they are personally rewarding specific children or young people
- Any encouragement of unnecessary physical contact
- If children or young people are invited to spend time alone or with staff or volunteers; this also includes visiting the adult's home
- Inappropriate behaviour between a tutor and a pupil
- Use of mobile phones, they could be used to show/ take unauthorised or inappropriate images; messaging between a tutor and pupil
- Children are not chastised or hit in any way

If your child tells you about something that worries them or makes them feel uncomfortable you should listen to your child and reassure them that it is not their fault. You should immediately stop using the service and report it to Police or First Response straight away.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

If you have concerns about the safety or well-being of any child or young person in Bristol, please contact Bristol City Council's First Response team on **0117 903 6444** or please contact the Police on **101**, or **999** in an emergency.

Reporting an allegation of abuse against a person who works or volunteers with children

If you need to report an allegation of abuse against a person who works or volunteers with children, contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on **0117 903 7795**

ChildLine – the free helpline for children and young people who can call **0800 1111** to talk about anything that worries them.

Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership (City Hall) Bristol City Council, PO Box 3399,

Bristol BS1 9NE

https://bristolsafeguarding.org/

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