



Guidance for parents and carers thinking of using the services of a Private Tutor or Tuition Centre

This information is designed to help parents and carers to safely select an appropriately trained and verified tutor, or tuition centre, for their child.

Thinking of using a private tutor or enrolling your child in a tuition centre?

Parents of carers may seek private tuition for their child for a variety of reasons:

- to help with their school grades and improve their grades
- develop their language skills
- to learn a musical instrument or be accompanied on a musical instrument; or
- other extracurricular activity (e.g. sports coaching, drama).

Does the Council hold a list of approved providers of these services?

No, the Council does not hold such lists. Parents and carers are solely responsible for selecting and funding any private tuition they choose to use for their child.

Can my child's school help me to identify a provider?

No, but the school may be able to offer additional support to your child on site as part of the individual support they provide. They will already have a good knowledge of your child and of his or her individual learning needs and abilities.

The school may also be able to advise you of additional Borough services e.g. music and drama.

How do I find a provider?

Most private tutors and tuition centres advertise in local papers and on the internet. Parents using these services are themselves wholly responsible for ensuring the tutor is appropriately qualified and safe to work with their child or that any tuition centre involved has undertaken the necessary safeguarding checks. When your child starts private tuition, you should inform their school so that they can be responsive to your child's changing needs.

When selecting a tutor or tuition centre, how can I be sure that they are suitable and do not pose a risk to my child?

This is not a definitive list and parents should gather as much information as possible before making a decision.

- always meet with potential tutors, either individuals or those working in tuition centres and ask to see and check their professional references and qualification certificates
- check the tutor is competent in the subject area and at the right level e.g. Eleven Plus, GCSE etc. and are familiar with the syllabus
- if there are any career gaps on their CV, ask for reasons and seek collaborative evidence
- if the tutor is additionally currently employed by a local school, or other educational establishment, ask for a reference from the head teacher or head of service
- under the rules governing criminal record checks, individuals cannot request Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks on themselves but some may have a DBS check through other work, such as teaching or volunteering. It is at the discretion of parents to decide whether it poses an unnecessary risk to their child to employ the services of a private tutor without a DBS check, or with a DBS check undertaken for other purposes
- it is also important for the tutor to meet your child so that you can see if they get on before tutoring begins

When I have found a tutor, where should the tuition take place?

In the home, in a quiet place away from distraction is best. Bedrooms are not suitable for study. It is important that you have access to the room and can observe the tutor and your child at any time.

What about when choosing a tuition centre?

Visit more than one tuition centre so that you have sufficient information to make comparisons.

Ask to see the centre's child protection policy and procedures. Check that they have an identified safeguarding children lead and what child protection training staff have undertaken.

Seek clarification on what safer recruitment measures, including DBS checks they have in place for all tutors.

As whether there are 'open' sessions that parents can observe.

Check that there is awaiting area for parents so that you can remain on the premises whilst your child has their lesson. If your child attends a tuition centre for one-to-one



tuition, you should stay on the premises and, if your child attends group tuition, seek assurances that your child will remain within the group.

Finally, once your child has started taking lessons at the centre, always ask them after every lesson how it went.

What should I do if my child tells me something inappropriate has happened or I have reason to suspect a tutor has behaved inappropriately with my child?

Any adult who behaves in an inappropriate or abusive manner with a child should be reported to Children's Social Care and the Police, who will then make further enquiries and, where necessary instigate a child protection investigation.

If your child tells you of inappropriate behaviour by the tutor, you should listen to your child and reassure them that it is not their fault.

In such circumstances you should stop using the tutor or tuition centre's services immediately.

Checklist:

- inform your child's school of your intention to provide or seek additional private tutoring
- ensure that you do see and check references by making direct contact with the referee
- ask to see evidence of qualifications
- where a DBS exists, parents can ask to see evidence of it either directly from the individual tutor or can seek confirmation from the organisation or agency employing the tutor that a DBS has been done and is satisfactorily clear. In most cases private tutors, agencies or organisations will be prepared to share this information. Where the information is withheld, or information shared gives rise to concern, it is at the discretion of the parents to decide whether a tutor poses an unnecessary risk to their child
- check out reasons for any career gaps
- observe the interaction between the tutor and your child
- when tutoring takes place in your home, ensure that the study area is well organised, quiet, orderly but is easily accessible to allow observation of lessons.
Do not use a bedroom
- remain on the premises when tutoring takes place in your home or in a tuition centre
- ensure that you are able to monitor the work undertaken. Talk to your child about their progress and see their written work
- when your child attends group tuition, check that she or he remained with the group at all times



- do not be afraid to report any abusive or inappropriate behaviour to the proper authorities and to dismiss the individual from your employ if this occurs.
- do not assume anything or rely purely on verbal testimonials from other parents. Check everything.
- if in doubt about choosing a particular individual or tuition centre, trust your instincts and do not do it!

If you have any concerns about a tutor or tuition centre, please contact:

John Shelley Merton LADO: LADO@merton.gov.uk

Tel 0208 545 3187/3179

If you think a child is in danger and there are significant concerns about imminent and serious harm to the child please contact the police.

For all other safeguarding concerns about children please contact:

Merton MASH: MASH@merton.gov.uk

Tel 0208 545 4226/4227 or out of hours Emergency Duty Team 0208 770 5000