

Guidance for parents considering employing a private tutor

Introduction

Parents may consider employing a private tutor for a variety of reasons. They may wish to elicit their support to assist their child generally with schoolwork or to help them build confidence with a particular subject. They may seek more specialised support in their literacy skills such as reading; to help them improve on potential examination grades or to assist in developing literacy skills such as reading; or perhaps to help them learn a musical instrument etc.

This leaflet is intended to assist parents when they decide to enlist the support of a private tutor, in selecting an appropriately trained and verified professional to work with their child.

Some commonly asked questions;

Does the Local Authority hold a list of approved tutors?

Sunderland Local Authority (LA) does not keep a list of approved tutors.

How can I ensure that the person I employ is properly qualified?

Always interview any potential candidate, and ask to see their career résumé. Ask for and check professional references from someone who knows the tutor now and ask to see qualification certificates. If there are career gaps on the individual's résumé, ask for reasons and seek evidence of any explanations given. If the tutor is also currently employed in a school; ask for a reference from the head teacher. If the tutor is a freelance and or works as a supply teacher ask to see their Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) letter from the clearing organisation, e.g. the College, University, Agency. This letter will state that the organization has carried out a CRB disclosure check; it will give the CRB disclosure number and date. The CRB should have been completed within the last three years.

It is also helpful for the tutor and your child to meet prior to you making a decision. Observing the interaction between the potential tutor and your child may help to inform your decision.

You may find it useful to have a written agreement that outlines:

- Dates and times of the tutors visits and if the tuition is to take place in your home that the tutor should not enter your home an appropriate adult is not present.
- That all correspondence should come directly to you and the tutor should under no circumstances text or email your child directly.

Where should tuition take place?

Tuition is best undertaken in a quiet well-organised place, which is suitable for study; away from the distractions of television and radio. A bedroom is never appropriate, even if it contains a study area.

It is essential that you (or another trusted adult chosen by you) remain on the premises. Any chaperone arrangement offered by the tutor (e.g. his or her partner) should be refused. It is important that you have access to the teaching area and can observe and hear activity at any time you wish. Intervening doors should be kept open, even though this may mean curtailing your own activities. Any tutor who is mindful and aware of current expectations of professional staff should have no objection and is likely to offer the arrangement without your suggestion.

You or the tutor may have a preference about whether the tuition takes place in your home, the tutor's home, or elsewhere, but the conditions outlined above should apply in each case. You should not feel that you are acting unreasonably to expect this.

What should I do if my I find the tutor has behaved inappropriately with my child?

Any adult who behaves in an inappropriately with a child must be reported to Children's Social Care. If your child tells you of inappropriate behaviour you must listen to your child and reassure them. However embarrassed or uncomfortable you feel about what your child tells you, or what you find. You must put the welfare of your child first. In such circumstances you should ensure that the individual is dismissed immediately from the position of private tutor to your child and you must also inform either the Police or the Social Care Initial Response Team on 0191 5661500, who will make enquiries into the matter jointly with the police and where appropriate, in liaison with the LA.

Conclusion

As a parent you will wish to be satisfied that you are employing a tutor who is properly qualified and who can be relied upon to cause no harm to your child.

Remember, you are the employer and it is therefore reasonable to expect to see references and to check out any concerns that you may have;

- Ensure that you see references that come from someone who has known the tutor recently;
 - Check out reasons for any career gaps

- Ask for evidence of qualifications and the CRB check if the tutor does not work currently in a school.
- Consider having a written agreement that outlines dates and times of contact and that the tutor should not correspond directly with your child.
- Observe interactions between the tutor and your child.
- Ensure that the study area used is well organised, quiet and orderly, and is easily accessible to allow observation. You or another trusted adult should remain on the premises.
- Report any abusive or inappropriate behaviour to the proper authorities and in such circumstances do not be afraid to dismiss the individual from your employ.
- If you have any reservations about recruiting a particular individual – DON'T the decision is yours.