

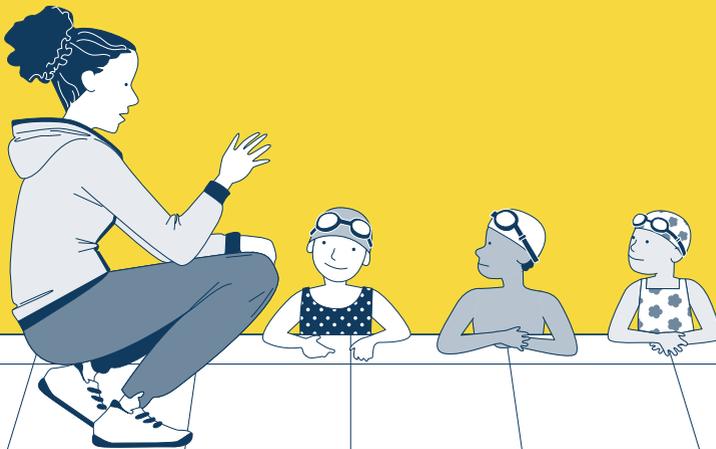


Department
for Education

Keeping Children Safe

in Community Activities, After-School Clubs and Tuition:

Guidance for
Parents and Carers
on Choosing Safe
Out-of-School Settings



What is an Out-of-School-Setting (OOSS)?

An out-of-school setting can mean many things, from places like community and youth centres, sports clubs, and places of worship to individuals offering tuition in their own home or providing coaching at a playing field or local park.

Most OOSS are safe spaces which provide fun, educational activities and classes for children of all ages. **However, as a parent or carer, you will want to be reassured that your child is safe while they are not in your care.**

There is no single legal framework that governs how these settings operate, and they are not inspected or assessed by a single regulator. This means there is no single responsible body with complete oversight of these settings, or the quality and safety of their provision.

As a minimum, organisations and clubs working with children and young people should have safeguarding policies in place to reduce the risk of harm.

To help keep your children safe during community activities, after-school clubs and tuition, the Government has released guidance to help parents and carers choose safe out-of-school settings.



What is the 'Keeping Children Safe during Community Activities, After-School Clubs and Tuition: Questions to help parents and carers choose out-of-school settings' guidance?

This new government guidance can help you choose a safe out-of-school-setting for your child.

It includes:

- Questions that you may want to ask a provider to ensure that they are providing a safe environment for your child
- Red flags to look out for when you visit a setting
- Checklists of positive signs that suggest a safer setting

The guidance for parents and carers sits alongside a code of practice for providers, which lays out the minimum level of safeguarding practice providers should have in place to reduce the risk of harm to children in clubs, tuition or community-led activities.

You should also read the **guidance for parents and carers** of children attending out-of-school settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak).

You can find the '**Keeping Children Safe during Community Activities, After-School Clubs and Tuition**' code of practice and parental guidance at [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).



What does a safe setting look like?

As a parent or carer, there are some questions you can ask and positive signs or red flags you can look out for to decide whether a particular setting is a safe environment for your child.

Providers should welcome your questions about safeguarding and be able to reassure you that your child will be safe in their care. If they cannot then you may want to consider sending your child to a different provider. The example on the next page shows how you can use the parental guidance to help choose a safe setting for your child.

Example Scenario

Maya's son is six years old and wants to join a drama club. After a quick internet search, Maya finds a club in the local area and decides to take her son on the weekend to try to register him.

The drama club is in a community hall. When she enters the hall with her son, she notices that there are loose wires sticking out from the wall and some screws on the floor where children are running around in their socks.

There are three adults sitting on a bench at the other side of the hall but Maya isn't sure which one of them is in charge. No one comes to greet her. Maya asks one of the adults what the registration process is. They say that they are a volunteer and aren't sure. The volunteer goes into another room and returns with a man who tells Maya that he runs the club.

Maya asks about the registration process but is told that she doesn't need to complete a form as it's only an informal club. She points out the screws on the floor and the loose wires and the owner gets annoyed, explaining that the community hall has been undergoing building work and the loose wires are not his fault.

Maya decides that the setting doesn't seem like an environment she would want to leave her son in and decides to look for another drama club.

In the example scenario, Maya decided that the drama club was not a safe setting for her son based on the following red flags:

- Dangerous environment e.g. loose wires
- Unknown adults in the setting
- No consent or registration form

Find positive signs you can look out for when you visit a setting on the next page.



Positive signs to look out for when choosing an out-of-school setting

- Environment appears safe (e.g. a well-maintained building with a clear exit route in case of emergencies and a first-aid kit available).
- An appointed person is responsible for first aid.
- A child-protection policy can be given to parents on request. This should say how children can report concerns and how the provider will make parents aware of them.
- An appointed person who leads on safeguarding within the setting.
- Staff and volunteers have completed relevant qualifications and checks (e.g. pre-employment references, DBS checks, etc).
- If a provider has many staff or volunteers, their roles and responsibilities are clear.
- A parental consent form, which asks for medical information and emergency contact details, is needed before the child attends for the first time.
- A complaints process is in place.





For more information on positive signs, red flags and questions to ask providers, read the full guidance for parents on **Keeping Children Safe in Out-of-school Settings** at [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).



If you are reading a print version of this document, you can find the digital version which includes web links to other useful resources at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/keeping-children-safe-in-out-of-school-settings>

