

Purpose

The Department for Education in the UK has provided guidance and advice on safeguarding issues in relation to non-school providers of care and/or education or activities to children. It is clear that safeguarding of children by individuals or organisations may not meet the standards met by schools such as BIST. It is therefore our duty to inform and advise parents on some of the risks and ways of avoiding them. Non-school providers perform a valuable service in our community and many will be safe and nurturing environments, however many will also lack the safeguarding apparatus and standards that a school such as BIST has. Our intention in sharing this information is not to provoke a fear of such non-school providers, but to ensure parents are more aware.

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Schools such as BIST must have safeguarding policies, procedures and apparatus in place as standard and as a requirement of COBIS membership.

A non-exhaustive list of non-school providers and settings includes:

- Tuition or learning centres/providers - which may be used to support mainstream or home education in term time or during holidays and include private tutors, English language centres, examination preparation centres (i.e. for SATs or IELTS), etc.
- Activity-based clubs or settings - e.g. ballet classes, gymnastic training, sports tuition, instrumental music tuition, martial arts training, drama classes, religion-based groups, etc.
- Open access youth providers - e.g. youth clubs, youth-based community groups.
- Supplementary or complementary schools - those schools offering support or education in addition to the mainstream and which operate after school hours or during the weekend.
- Private language schools.
- Creche, day care and pre-school groups.
- Online providers, communities and groups.

Parents are encouraged to ask safeguarding questions of the people running organisations that they leave their children with. The UK government's DfE sets out draft safeguarding questions, including a list of 'red flags' that parents should watch out for:

- Are the staff police checked?
- Is there a safeguarding and child protection policy?
- Can the provider name a designated safeguarding lead (DSL - person responsible for safeguarding)?
- Have the staff and DSL had relevant training?
- Does the provider allow children access to the internet? If so, are filtering or monitoring systems in place?
- Is the physical environment safe? (e.g. loose wires, damp, no fire escape, no first aid kit, etc)
- Is there a designated first aider?
- Does the provider ask for parental consent forms and require emergency contact details?
- Are there other adults present who are not staff members? Is there a lack of clarity on the roles of different adults in the setting?
- Is there a health and safety policy?
- Is there a fire escape plan and other procedures in case of similar emergencies?

For further advice, please contact our safeguarding team