

Feedback from parents

In 2019, we spoke to parents across Birmingham about their views on OOSS. Some of what they told us they wanted was:

- their children's schools to be aware of the OOSS their children attend
- to be shown around settings
- to have meetings with OOSS staff so that they are able to contribute to practice
- settings to give advice on 'rights' to mirror what's being taught at school
- to work together with different OOSS across communities

And that they most value:

- trust between parents and OOSS
- quality of teaching and kind teachers
- safe buildings and friendly environments
- good relations with local communities
- being contacted about their children directly by teachers

OOSS can be key sites of development and socialisation, so it is important to carefully consider which settings you choose for your child/ren and young people to attend.

If you have concerns about the safety and/or welfare of a child or young person telephone CASS on 0121 303 1888

In an emergency where a child's safety is at immediate risk of significant harm, contact West Midlands Police on 999

'Red flags' to look out for

- Little or no consideration for health and safety, including general lack of awareness of the risks and how to reduce them
- Evidence of a dangerous environment, e.g. loose wires, damp, no clear exit route in case of emergencies and no first-aid kit. Lack of awareness of what to do in the event of a fire or an emergency
- No specified individual responsible for first aid
- No staff member or volunteer with relevant training to deal with child protection matters such as extremism
- No child-protection policy in place.
- Signs of abuse visible on other children who attend the setting, for example, unexplained bruises
- Staff have not completed relevant training, qualifications or checks (i.e. DBS checks).
- Staff or volunteers appear not to acknowledge or raise potential safeguarding concerns
- If a setting has many staff and volunteers, their roles and responsibilities are not clear
- Where applicable an internet safety policy is not place or monitored
- No process in place for dealing with complaints
- Parents are not asked to sign a consent form

Positive signs to look out for

- Health and safety has been considered. Large settings should have a written policy. Small settings do not need to have a written policy but should be aware of the risks and how to reduce them
- The environment appears safe (i.e. a well-maintained building with a clear exit route in case of emergencies and a first-aid kit available). The setting knows what to do in the event of a fire or emergency
- A specific individual is responsible for first-aid
- There is a staff member or volunteer with relevant training to deal with child protection issues such as peer-on-peer abuse
- A child protection policy can be given to parents on request. This should say how children can report concerns and how the setting will make parents aware of them
- Staff and volunteers have completed relevant qualifications and checks (i.e. DBS checks)
- If a setting has many staff or volunteers their roles and responsibilities are clear
- Where applicable an internet safety policy is in place and monitored
- A complaints process is in place
- Parental consent form and emergency contact details are requested before the child attends for the first time



birmingham.gov.uk/ooss

BIRMINGHAM

Out of School Settings

Parent Guidance



This is a non-statutory information leaflet for Birmingham parents, guardians and carers who send, or are thinking of sending, their child/ren to out of school settings (OOSS). It is intended to be a voluntary resource to help you understand what a safe environment looks like.

The Department for Education (DfE) have funded this resource and further information can be found on their website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education

Before sending your child to an OOSS, you will want to know that your child will be safe. There is no single framework that governs how these settings operate, and they are not inspected or assessed by a regulator. But as a minimum, your OOSS provider should have policies on health and safety, safeguarding and child protection (including online and digital safety), and suitability of staff.

This leaflet contains

- questions you may wish to ask a setting
 - feedback from parents
 - positive signs and 'red flags' you may wish to look out for when choosing a setting
- (Please go to the DfE website for the full listing)

Have staff/volunteers had DBS checks?

DBS checks are not always required by law but considered good practice as part of any employer's recruitment and safeguarding policies and practice. If the setting has not had its staff DBS checked, you may wish to consider sending your child to a setting that has. Don't assume that a setting has had its staff DBS checked – always ask.

Will any adults besides the instructor be present at the venue while my child is there? If so, will they be there regularly?

This is especially important to ask if the setting operates from home. If other adults will be present besides the tutor or coach, you may wish to ask for their names, whether they will be in the room alone with your child at any point, and whether they have been DBS checked. (see above)

What training have staff had?

Training will differ according to the type of setting but all staff should, at the least, have good working knowledge of and be suitably trained in health and safety and child protection. As part of their policies and procedures, settings should be able to tell you about training undertaken by staff.

May I have a copy of your child protection policy?

The setting should be able to give you this on request. The policy should also include commitments that

- under no circumstances should any member of staff inflict corporal or emotional punishment on a child, and
- no disciplinary approaches should be used that could cause a child physical or emotional harm.

Who is responsible for safeguarding children, what training have they had and how recent was it?

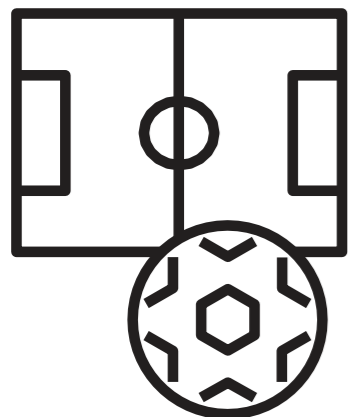
The setting should be able to name a person who is responsible for safeguarding children. This person should have had the training that gives them the knowledge and skills they need for their role. Training should be repeated at frequent intervals or if the setting's circumstances change.

How will you securely store the information you hold on my child? Who has access to it and will you give it to anyone else?

The setting should be able to detail how they are storing paper and electronic copies of files. Electronic data should be encrypted and password protected, paper data should be secured with a lock. This information should not be given to other parties without your child's consent (and your consent if your child is under 13 years).

Is my child allowed unsupervised access to the internet? What filtering and monitoring systems do you have?

Your child should be 13 or older to access the internet unsupervised. If the setting allows your child to access the internet unsupervised, they should have age-appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place.



“Parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities”

Article 5, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child