

Guidance for Personal Tutors on working with children or vulnerable adults

Departments will be informed of any students who are under the age of 18 at the start of their course by the Admissions Service. Personal Tutors with tutees under the age of 18 or those considered to be adults at risk should familiarise themselves with the [University Safeguarding Policy](#) and the [Safeguarding Reporting Process](#), and be aware of how [to report a Safeguarding incident/concern](#) to the Safeguarding team.

Personal Tutors should be mindful of the [guidance from the Dean of Students' Office](#) on maintaining professional boundaries, and never share their personal contact details (home or personal mobile telephone number, personal e-mail address) or engage in correspondence via social media/accept friend requests from students who are under the age of 18 or who are vulnerable adults. Communications or correspondence should take place through university e-mail accounts or work telephones. Personal Tutors should avoid any unnecessary physical contact with children or vulnerable adults and be mindful that gestures that may be well intentioned, such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, could be misinterpreted. Personal Tutors should also be mindful of their use of language and terminology in all interactions with children or vulnerable adults.

If a child or vulnerable adult makes a safeguarding disclosure or you have a safeguarding concern, you must report this to the Safeguarding team in line with the Safeguarding Reporting Process.

Face to face meetings

Personal Tutors should ensure that children and vulnerable adults are treated equally and with respect and dignity and seek to build relationships based on mutual trust that empowers them to share in the decision-making process. It is good practice to avoid spending time alone with under 18s or vulnerable adults, and to avoid any private or unobserved situations. It is recognised that as part of their role Personal Tutors will need to meet with students on a one-to-one basis, and therefore should, where possible, arrange to meet under 18 or vulnerable adult tutees in a public place, or in an office within sight and earshot of colleagues. Meetings should never take place behind closed doors, and meetings outside of normal teaching hours/the normal teaching environment/institution should be avoided.

Online meetings

It is recognised that it is more difficult for Personal Tutors to avoid spending time alone with under 18s or vulnerable adults if there is a need for one-to-one meetings to take place online. If it is not possible to meet face-to-face, Personal Tutors are advised to keep a brief, written record of the key areas of discussion that take place in online meetings.

Online meetings should always be hosted using licensed platforms that have been approved by the Information and Digital Group, as stated in Regulation 31 on Information Management, Security and Records Management. Personal Tutors are advised to familiarise themselves with the [Guidance Note on Online Safeguarding](#), and be mindful of the following key points:

- Ensure that you are familiar with the platform that is being used for the meeting and that access can be restricted so that only the intended participants may take part.
- Ensure that your background environment, which may be visible to participants, is appropriate.

- Ensure that appropriate precautions are taken to ensure privacy and confidentiality when working from home, ensure that participants cannot be seen by others in the household, and that conversations cannot be overheard.

Training

TES/Educare is the University's preferred provider for safeguarding training, if training is required, please contact the Safeguarding team at safeguarding@warwick.ac.uk for advice.

DBS checks

In order to be eligible for an Enhanced DBS Certificate with Children's Barred List check, individuals must carry out regulated activity with children (training, teaching or instruction, care or supervision of children, or providing advice and guidance wholly or mainly for children) and meet the frequency requirements (on more than three days in a 30-day period, or overnight). Personal Tutors do carry out regulated activity with children, however given that the University is primarily an adult environment and the majority of students admitted are over the age of 18, most Personal Tutors are unlikely to meet the frequency requirement to be eligible for a DBS certificate. However, if you are based in a department that recruits a higher proportion of under-18s (such as the International Foundation Programme), or there are circumstances that mean you believe your role would meet the requirements above, please contact DBS@warwick.ac.uk for advice.