

# Choosing a motorsport club, team or coach

**Safeguarding Children: Guidance for parents and carers choosing activities, clubs or personal coaching for children and young people in motor sport.**

December 2021





# Introduction

Thinking of your children joining a motor sport club, team or employing a professional to assist in developing your child's driving skill?

Many parents support their children in attending various activities. These might include a motor sports group such as a team or club. Many parents whose children take part in motor sport activities and competitions employ individuals or subscribe to teams to help with the car performance and driving development, for the purpose of this guidance we will use the term coach however in motor sport many use the term mechanic, coach or engine builder. Often providing this form of support and guidance for your child can help them to build on skills, knowledge and confidence.

This is often a very positive and valuable experience assisting the child's development, self-esteem, and enjoyment of the sport.

When choosing any club, team, or group activity or in choosing individual coaching, it is important that parents are confident that their children will be safe and happy. This leaflet provides some points for you to consider in selecting a club, team, group or coach for your children.



# Choosing a club, team, group activity or club

If your child is interested in attending a motorsport activity, for example to learn a new area of the sport, it is important to visit and find out how the club, team, or group operates. It is best to visit a standard group activity session so you can see first-hand what the staff or volunteers are doing and whether the children appear to be enjoying their session.

Obviously, coaches can sometimes need to be firm to maintain group discipline or excitable to motivate children to stretch their performance. All children may become a little anxious of the new challenges at times, but they should never be upset nor become fearful of the coach or the activity. All coaches whether paid, or volunteers should act professionally and in a similar way you would expect from schoolteachers.

Taking care of children and young people is a huge responsibility and it is important that staff and volunteers are well trained, supported and have the necessary skills and experience to work with children.



# Questions you might want to ask a team manager or group leader include:



- Does the club, team or tutor have a policy on safeguarding children?
- Who do you speak to if you're worried about anything?
- Is there a nominated safeguarding or welfare officer and if so, how do you contact them?
- Are staff trained and do they have a Motorsport UK approved suitability check in place? (*Referred to as DBS in England, Wales British Isles and PVG in Scotland*)
- Is the group linked or affiliated Motorsport UK? (The National Governing Body of four wheeled motorsport)
- What is the staff ratio of adults to children and is there a trained first aider on site?
- Are you required to sign any consent forms, or provide emergency contacts and your child's relevant medical details?
- Is there a written code of conduct for coaches and volunteers? (Many clubs, teams and groups will have codes of conduct for the children and parents also).
- What's the policy if your child may need personal care?

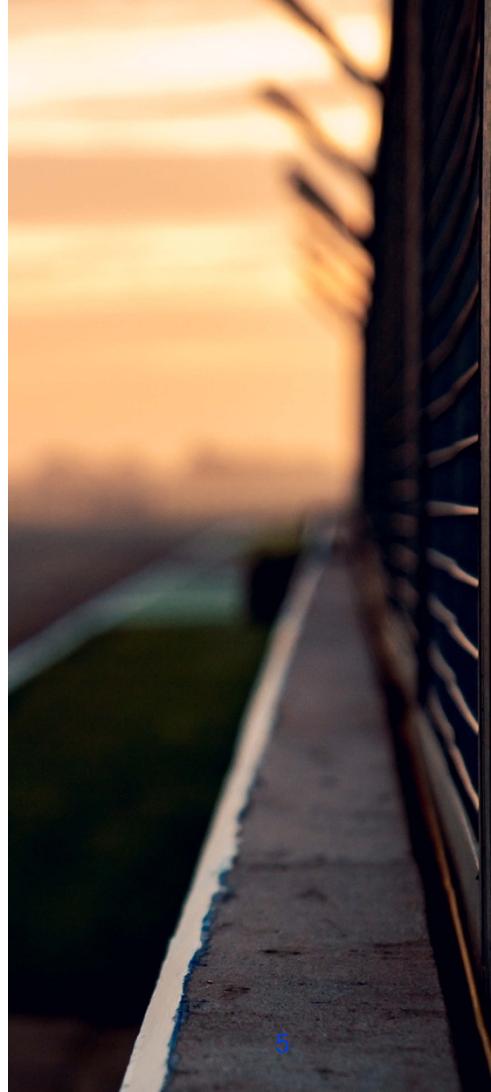
# Choosing a personal tutor or coach

Employing the best coach for your child is vital, so taking time to get it right is important and will help keep your child safe. These are some simple steps and checks to make to help you decide.

- Always interview the tutor and be satisfied that they answer your questions fully.
- Ask to see personal references and confirm their authenticity by contacting the referees directly. Ask to see their qualification certificates (not photocopies) and be satisfied they are recognised and authentic.
- Ask to see their CV or employment record, if there are career gaps, ask reasons and seek evidence of any explanations offered.

(Motorsport UK is **not** responsible for the checking of independent coaches and teams however they do oversee the suitability checks (*DBS/PVG*) for all those working or volunteering in affiliated activities, and no one should be participating in such activities without having completed this process with Motorsport UK)

- If the coach has recently been or is currently employed in a school, speak to the lead, and request a reference.
- Arrange a time for your child to meet the coach as observing the interaction between the tutor and child may help you make your decision.





# Keeping your child safe

- When arranging one on one sessions with a coach to be in your own home this should be, in a communal area of the household which is well organised and suitable for study, away from the distractions of television and radio (a bedroom is not appropriate). Do not agree to a one to one session in a professional's home.
- If attending a group activity, it is a good idea to always stay in the premises with your child and sit within your sight.
- Ensure that you or another trusted adult chosen by you remains on the premises. Any chaperone arrangement offered by the coach should be declined.
- Check that access for you is easy and that you can observe and hear activity at any time you wish.
- If it is group coaching session seek assurances that your child will remain with the group at all times.

# Your child should not travel alone with the coach at any time



- Any contact outside of activities should be directly with the parents. The coach should not contact the child direct, either via telephone, email or social media.
- Official Club websites or social media pages that provide information to all the club members are appropriate and should be accessible to everyone. This is actually a very good way of parents seeing what is going on with club activities.
- Ensure your child is aware of any arrangements that have been agreed.
- Speak with your child regularly to ensure they are happy with the arrangements and any agreements made with the coach have been kept.

Any volunteer or coach that is mindful and aware of current expectations toward safeguarding children should have no objection to any of these checks or arrangements. Do not feel that you are acting unreasonably to expect this, and you should not accept arrangements you are not happy with.



# What to do if your child tells you something inappropriate has happened



- It is important that you listen to what your child says and believe what they are saying reassuring them that it is not their fault.
- If you are concerned that the coach or any professional has engaged in 'poor practice' i.e. has not done the right thing, rather than done something wrong that is abusive or a possible offence. Generally, we would advise parents to cancel the activities or keep the young person away from the activities until there has been time to seek advice.
- If as a parent you feel uncomfortable speaking with someone within the club or team in the first instance, you can seek advice from Motorsport UK safeguarding team via [safeguarding@motorsportuk.org](mailto:safeguarding@motorsportuk.org) or your Local Authority Designated Officer details can be found on your local county council website.

# The Local Authority Designated Officer based in the Children's Workforce Allegations Team should be informed if you any have concerns where it is believed that a person working with children has;



- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- You should contact the Police if you believe that a crime has been committed.



# Useful Contacts

Motorsport UK safeguarding team

[safeguarding@motorsportuk.org](mailto:safeguarding@motorsportuk.org)

Motorsport UK Local Designated Officer contact.

Duty LADO based in the Children's Workforce Allegations Team (Oxford County Council): Tel: 01865 810603

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/contactus/contact-local-authority-designated-officer>

Police: Non-emergency number: 101 (available 24 hours a day seven days a week) The non-emergency number does not replace 999



*This document has been produced as a guidance specific to parents of children involved in motor sport activities and is reflective of the guidance produced by Essex County Council, Children's Workforce Allegations Team & County Sports Partnership - Active Essex & Essex Safeguarding Children Board for full document click [here](#).*

