

Guidelines on transporting a child or young people in your car

Introduction

The issue of transporting children to and from their sports activities safely can present challenges for sports clubs. Many sports clubs could not operate without the good will of volunteers and parents ensuring that children are transported to and returned home from events in a private car.

It is reasonable for clubs and activity organisers to place full responsibility on parents for ensuring appropriate transport arrangements are made.

However, where the activity provider, club or coach is organising transportation of its young members and asks or requires parents to transport other people's children on the club's behalf, the organiser has a responsibility to take reasonable steps to safeguard these young people for whom they have a duty of care.

The CPSU encourages coaches or other volunteers or staff not to take children on journeys alone in their car. The vast majority of coaches and volunteers will help out through their genuine desire to see children and young people and their particular sport develop. Unfortunately, we must face the reality that a minority of others will join a sports club to gain access to children to harm them.

Note: The terms 'child' and 'young person' describe any person under the age of 18. References to 'parents' should be read as parents and carers inclusively.

Key considerations

Best practice is clearly to avoid transporting a child alone. If all alternatives have been exhausted and an adult has to transport a child, there are a number of safety measures that should be put in place to minimise the risk:

- establish the suitability of any driver - the driver, like all coaches or volunteers who have unsupervised access to children in your organisation, should have agreed to a vetting check (where appropriate) and be carried out as part of wider safer recruitment procedures¹
- parents should be informed of transport arrangements, including details of the person who will be transporting their child, the reasons why and how long the journey will take
- a person other than the planned driver should talk to the child about transport arrangements to check they are comfortable about the plans
- ensure that the drivers representing the club have valid car insurance, MOT and a driving licence prior to carrying any passengers
- the driver should check their cover with their own insurance company if they want to use their car as part of their paid or volunteer role
- clubs should try to ensure there is more than one child in the car
- when transporting children after a match or training session, coaches should alternate which child is dropped off last. Ideally 2 children would be dropped off at an agreed point such as one of their family homes
- the person who returns the children to the agreed point, such as family home, should be alternated; this would reduce the risk of any one individual frequently being alone with a child or group

¹ Vetting checks are carried out by the Disclosure and Barring Service in England and Wales, AccessNI in Northern Ireland, Disclosure Scotland and Garda Central Vetting Unit in Republic of Ireland.

- the driver should have a point of contact, including one for each child they are transporting and a mobile phone should they break down
- ensure that children are aware of their rights to be safe and that they have someone to turn to or report any concerns they may have
- late collections can present clubs and coaches with particular difficulties. Parents should be provided with guidelines addressing the issue and outlining their responsibility and the consequences of late collections
- clubs should have contact numbers for parents and if possible be provided with an alternative contact number too. Parents should have a contact number for the club or coach to inform them of emergencies and possible late collections

Seatbelts

Children should wear seatbelts at all times when travelling in a car. The following guidance details the seatbelt law,

Children **must** have an appropriate child restraint or seatbelt when travelling in a car or goods vehicle.

- under 12 years old, or up to 135cm tall, must use the right type of car seat. For more information please visit <https://www.gov.uk/child-car-seats-the-rules/using-a-child-car-seat-or-booster-seat>
- children over 12 years old or 135cm, whichever comes first, should use an adult seatbelt

Alternative transport

If taxis are used by your club or organisation and there is no child restraint available, children can travel in the back seat of the taxi. Those over 3 years old must use the adult seatbelt.

Sometimes parents may be asked to drive a minibus on behalf of the club. Passengers on minibuses will be required to wear seat belts, where fitted, and the driver will be responsible for making sure that children under 14 use their seatbelts. If seatbelts are fitted on a bus, passengers must use them. The driver will be responsible for letting people know that they must use seat belts.

