

# Transporting children

## Procedure for staff in Children and Families

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# 1. About this document

- 1.1 This document sets out the procedures to be followed when staff take children and families on journeys in order to comply with the [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#). It contains a number of requirements regarding supervision/consent/insurance etc. It does not, in general, apply to normal, routine social work activities.
- 1.2 This procedure applies to ALL staff in Children and Families and should be read in conjunction with [WCC Transporting Children, Young People & Adult, Customers Safely Guidance](#).

## 2. General arrangements

- 2.1 Staff and carers transporting children on behalf of the local authority must be aware that the behaviour of children regardless of age can be unpredictable, and transport of children needs to be carefully planned and risk assessed before it occurs.
- 2.2 Consideration must be given to the likelihood of predictable problems during any journey and the following must be taken into account:
- Passenger safety;
  - Competence of the driver;
  - Awareness of driver's hours;
  - Traffic conditions;
  - Contingency funds and arrangements in case of breakdown/emergency;
  - Weather;
  - Journey time and distance;
  - Stopping off points for long journeys and toilet breaks - 15 minutes every 2 hours;
  - Appropriate car seats seat belts or restraints must be used and fastened (see Section 3 – Seat belts and restraints);
  - A working mobile telephone should be taken and carried by the person in charge and each member of staff likely to be on their own with the child;
  - Before starting any journey, the owner of any vehicle must undertake sufficient checks to ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy.

### 3. Seat belts and restraints

3.1 See [GOV.UK, Child Car Seats the Law.](#)

- Children cannot travel in contracted taxis without restraints;
- Children aged under 8 must not travel unescorted in contracted taxis or with volunteer drivers without an escort;
- Employees must only use car seats that have been purchased specifically by Children and Families' Services for the transportation of children;
- The driver is responsible in law for making sure that children under 14 years use seat belts or child seat/boosters as required;
- For children over 14 years it is the responsibility of the driver to make the child aware of the needs to wear a seat belt/ restraint;
- Where a child refuses to wear a seat belt, then under no circumstance must that child be transported.

### 4. Transporting children

4.1 Staff will be involved in the transportation of children from and to various settings e.g. school, home visits, activities, court etc.

4.2 It is the responsibility of all managers to ensure that staff update changes to their insurance and driving licence and provide copies of the documents in accordance with [WCC Driving at Work Policy](#).

4.3 Additional points should also be noted:

4.3.1 Where a risk assessment states that two staff should accompany a child, the child should never be left alone whilst on the activity. In this case both staff should sit with the child in the rear of the vehicle during the journey.

4.3.2 Under no circumstances must a child be allowed to gain access to vehicle keys. When not in use, vehicle keys must be kept in a safe place. Children may not use the main controls of vehicles, steer cars or use petrol pumps.

4.3.3 All vehicle occupants must wear suitable seat belts or restraints at all times when in vehicles (See section 3 above, seat belts).

4.3.4 Children, staff/carers and other passengers may not smoke in vehicles.

4.3.5 If there is any likely or known risk to the child or others, e.g. a child's history of violence, the likelihood that the child may go missing or refuse to go, the member of staff should consult his or her team manager for advice on how to proceed but, as a minimum, should ensure the following:

- The child must sit in the rear of the vehicle, and each child must be supervised by a minimum of one member of staff.
- Staff must be clear when it may be appropriate to use [Physical Intervention](#) and what techniques may be appropriate.
- Children must not sit behind the driver or be able to distract the driver.
- The member of staff must be satisfied that no items which could be used as weapons are available to the child. These could include tools, aerosols, pens etc.
- If it is suspected that the child may have some weapon concealed on their person, this must be discussed with the team manager immediately and before the journey commences.
- A plan should be in place for arrival at the destination
  - Will more staff be needed?
  - Is a room available?
  - Is it easy to get the car close to the destination; and
  - Is it possible to avoid other children becoming involved?
- If the potential risks cannot be managed safely, the journey must not go ahead or continue. If necessary, the police must be called to assist.

4.3.6 If a child becomes distressed to the extent that the safety of the vehicle or occupants may be compromised, the vehicle must be stopped in a safe and legal manner. The appropriate emergency support service should be summoned if required.

4.3.7 If the safety of the occupants is compromised, with the risk of injury or damage to property, [Physical Intervention](#) may be used. If the situation cannot be managed the police should be called to assist.

## 5. Smoking in vehicles

5.1 Please note that as 1 October 2015 it has been illegal to smoke in private vehicles carrying someone under 18. As set out in [Rules about tobacco, e-cigarettes and smoking: 1 October 2015](#).

## 6. Accidents or incidents

6.1 All employees have a responsibility to report accidents/incidents, injuries, work related ill health and near misses that occur out of, or in connection with, their work activity to their line manager. This is done via the 'Accident Reporting' icon available on employee's desktops. Further guidance on completing this form or locating the system, is available from the [Health, Safety & Wellbeing Service](#).

6.2 See also:

- [Accident Incident Near Miss Reporting Recording and Investigation Policy](#)
- [WCC Driving at Work Policy](#).
- [WCC Transporting Children, Young People & Adult, Customers Safely Guidance](#).