

Guidelines on transporting a children 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/carers 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. Where parents/carers transport their own children, or make private arrangements with other parents/carers to deliver or collect their children, they are responsible for their children's safety and for the suitability of any travel arrangements.

However, where the activity deliverer, 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.

What are the Issues?

The CPSU encourages coaches or other volunteers/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 or 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.

There have in the past been many opportunities within the sport setting for those who wish to harm children to isolate a particular child. Thankfully Sports Governing Bodies are reducing this possibility in most coaching sessions, but the inappropriate transport arrangements can still leave children vulnerable.

Key considerations

Best practice is clearly to avoid transporting a child alone, but we recognise that in some circumstances it is an essential part of a child's participation in training and competition. 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/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 safe recruitment procedures.¹
- Parents/carers should be informed of transport arrangements including 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.
- Organisations/clubs must ensure drivers representing the club have valid car insurance, MOT and driving licence prior to carrying any passengers.
- We advise the individual/driver to check with their own insurance company if they want to use their car as part of their paid/volunteer role.

- Organisations/clubs should try to ensure there is more than one child in the car.
- When transporting children after a match or training session coaches/volunteers should alternate which child is dropped off last. Ideally two 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 particular child or group.
- The driver should have a point of contact and 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. If a culture of safety is created within the club then the child is more likely to talk to another person if they are feeling uncomfortable about a situation.
- Late collections can present clubs and coaches with particular difficulties. Parents/carers 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/carers and if possible be provided with an alternative contact number. Parents/carers should have a contact number for the club/coach to inform them of emergencies and possible late collections.
- Children should wear seatbelts at all times. The following is guidance regarding the seat-belt law which was introduced in September 2006, for more information please visit <https://www.gov.uk/seat-beltslaw/overview>.

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

- Under 12 years old or 135cm tall must use the right type of booster chair or booster cushion
- Older children should use an adult seatbelt

Alternative transport

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

Sometimes parents/carers may be asked to drive a minibus on behalf of the organisation/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.

These are European rules so they apply in the UK, the Republic of Ireland and all countries in the European Union.