



## Guidelines on transporting a child or young person

Sports clubs, organisations or community groups could not operate without the goodwill of volunteers and parents ensuring that children are returned home or transported to events in a private car. The vast majority of staff, coaches and volunteers will help out through their genuine desire to see children develop. Unfortunately we must face the reality that a minority of others will join an organisation to gain access to children and create an air of acceptability about their role, justifying their close contact with children.

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 activities. 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:

- 🚗 Parents should be informed 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
- 🚗 The driver must ensure that they have insurance to carry others, particularly if they are in a paid position or claiming expenses.
- 🚗 The driver should attempt to have more than one child in the car.
- 🚗 When leaving children off after an activity or event staff, coaches or volunteers should alternate which child is dropped off last. Ideally two children would be left off at an agreed point i.e. one of their family homes.
- 🚗 The person who leaves children home should be alternated; this would reduce the risk of any one individual from always being alone with the child.
- 🚗 The driver should have a point of contact and mobile phone should they break down.
- 🚗 Ensure that children are aware of their rights and they have someone to turn to or report any concerns they may have. If a culture of safety is created within your organisation then the child is more likely to talk to another person if they are feeling uncomfortable about a situation.
- 🚗 Children should wear seatbelts at all times, where they are fitted. The driver is legally responsible to ensure that a child under 14 wears a seatbelt (i.e. the adult would have to pay any fine) but morally responsible to ensure all passengers wear seatbelts.

### Personal arrangements between parents

If parents make personal arrangements between themselves this is not the responsibility of the club, unless there are particular concerns about a parent's ability to drive for example due to the consumption of alcohol.

### The use of booster seats

From 2006, the law in Europe requires all children in cars, vans and other goods vehicles to be carried using an appropriate child restraint until either they have reached the age of 12 years or are 150cm (5') in Republic of Ireland and 135cms (4'5") in Northern Ireland, or whichever comes first with very few exceptions. The European law allowed countries to opt for a minimum height of between 135 and 150cm. For more information visit [Child Car Seats – The Law : Northern Ireland](#)

**Like all advice these procedures will only reduce the risk and still the best advice is to avoid transporting children alone in a car.**