

**POLICY AND PROCEDURE**



# **CHILDREN & FAMILIES SERVICES**

## **TRANSPORT POLICY**

**FORUM APPROVED BY :**  
Heads of Children's Services Group  
**DATE :17/03/05**

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# CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES

## TRANSPORTING CHILDREN

### POLICY AND GUIDANCE

#### Introduction

Transporting children is a necessary aspect of the day-to-day business of the Children and Families Service. It is essential that such transport be provided safely and appropriately. This document sets out the Directorate's policy and the minimum standard that must be met when transporting children.

#### Policy Statement

The following principles should apply:

- Consideration should be given to whether the journey is necessary. For example, would it be more appropriate for the parents to be transported to the child. This is particularly a factor with disabled children and small babies;
- If children need to be transported they should be transported or accompanied by their parent or carer wherever possible;
- Where it is not possible for the parent or carer to transport or accompany a child, a consistent adult should be identified;
- All vehicles used by staff or carers to transport children must comply with road safety standards and must be driven legally;
- Appropriate equipment must be used to transport children safely;
- Staff must comply with Kent County Council's Health and Safety policy and Policy for Managing Occupational Road Risk when transporting any child as part of their work;
- A risk assessment of the transport arrangements of each child must be undertaken.

#### Vehicle insurance requirements

All staff and foster carers who use personal cars to transport children must be insured for business use.

Prospective adopters are not required to be insured for business use, but must ensure children in their care are transported safely and legally.

#### Risk Assessment

All road journeys pose some level of risk to both drivers and passengers. Staff should undertake a formal risk assessment (format attached under Appendix 1) prior to transporting a child that is not previously known to them.

The risk assessment format should also be completed by the child's social worker and foster carer when placing a Looked After Child in a foster home.

Prior to commencing any journey where a child is to be transported, staff and carers should undertake an **informal** assessment of any risks that may be posed and make all possible efforts to minimise the risk. For all journeys, the driver must ensure:

- The proposed vehicle complies with road safety standards
- The proposed driver is able to complete the journey safely
- A second adult is available to accompany the child to supervise him/her where the child's behaviour or health is otherwise likely to place the child or any other passengers at significant risk
- Any car seats are in a good state of repair, meet current safety standards and are appropriate to the weight of the child (see Guidance below)
- Where any form of additional restraint is used (i.e. a car seat), it is correctly fitted in the car. Staff and carers must have access to written instructions that accompany all restraints and refer to these prior to fitting the restraint for the first time.

## **Transport of children by Voluntary Drivers or Escorts**

These guidelines refer to transport of all children looked after by Kent County Council and any children where Kent County Council Social Services is the provider of transport.

Ideally, all children should be transported or escorted by their carers or parents. However, in some situations this is not possible, and use of alternative transport may be agreed. The following rules apply in these cases:

- **An Enhanced Disclosure CRB check must have been completed in respect of all drivers and escorts.**
- Children under the age of 5 years should have an escort who should, wherever possible, be familiar to them.
- In some individual cases, a child may be transported without an escort where a risk assessment has identified that this is appropriate. If a decision is made that an escort is not required for a very young child this should be recorded.
- A risk assessment should be completed as set out above. The complexity and formality of the risk assessment may depend on the situation, but at the very least a written record of the decision regarding whether the child may be transported unescorted should be made on the child's file. This assessment should be undertaken by the child's social worker in consultation with the foster carer and other relevant persons.
- Factors to consider when assessing whether a child 5+ requires an escort:
  - The child's behavioural needs
  - Whether the child uses medication or has a health condition that may affect their status while driving (for example, those suffering from asthma, diabetes, or epilepsy), and is able to self-administer medication where it is urgently needed (i.e. use of asthma inhaler)
  - Any disability that may affect the child.

- Where school transport is being provided, whether the child needs to be accompanied into school, either for his/her personal safety or to ensure school attendance. Drivers will not usually accompany children into school.
- Whether there are particular traits of the driver and/or escort (i.e. gender) that are required as a result of the child's history or individual needs

## Use of appropriate seat belts and child restraints

Many children, particularly older children, may try to refuse to use the correct restraint/seat belt. However, it is a legal requirement that seat belts are used at all times and, in addition, Kent County Council and hence staff and carers have a responsibility to ensure the safety of children in all respects as far as possible. Therefore behavioural management techniques should be used in order to ensure that children and young people are safe.

For Looked After Children appropriate car seats will be provided to foster carers through the equipment loan scheme. Prospective adopters should receive appropriate advice to enable them to provide suitable equipment prior to placement of a child for adoption.

Managers in Children and Families, the Children's Services Provider Unit, and the Out of Hours service must ensure that a sufficient number of the full range of car seats are available for staff use, where staff may be required to transport children in either planned or emergency situations. These car seats must meet European Safety Standard R.4403 and must be maintained in good repair. Any car seats involved in an accident must be replaced immediately.

**All child restraints used must meet European safety standard R.4403.**

**Child restraints must be used as follows:**

Weight/Age of Child	Type of Car Seat	
Up to 13 kgs or 29 lbs Birth to 9-12 months	Group 0 or 0+ (Rearward Facing)	<b>DO NOT USE IN FRONT SEAT IF AIRBAG IS FITTED</b>
9 - 18 kgs or 20-40 lbs 9 Months to 4 years	Group 1 (Forward Facing)	Where possible continue to use rear-facing car seat until child exceeds maximum weight or head extends beyond the top of the car seat Do not use in front seat with airbag unless absolutely necessary
15 - 25 kgs (33 - 55 lbs) 4 - 6 years	Group 2 (Booster seat)	Where possible continue to use Group 1 car seat until child exceeds maximum weight
22 - 36 kgs (48 - 79 lbs.) 6 - 11 years	Group 3 (Booster cushion)	Must use this until child is aged 12+ or is more than 1.5 m tall; should continue to use it for child aged 12+ or over 1.5m where reasonably practicable
Child aged 12 - 13	Can use adult belt	Driver is responsible for ensuring child wears seat belt by law
Child aged 14+	Can use adult belt	Passenger is responsible for wearing seat belt by law but carer

		should insist the young person wears a seat belt correctly.
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**Some do's and don'ts of seat belts:**

**Do:**

- Make sure children under 3 years use an appropriate child restraint
- Ensure all available restraints are used;
- Use appropriate restraint for weight of child
- Ensure child does not play with fastenings
- Ensure child always wears a restraint, even on shortest journey
- Place child seat/restraint in rear of car wherever possible
- Check before buying a child seat that it will fit the care
- Remember that it is the responsibility of the driver to ensure children under 14 are wearing a suitable restraint.

**Don't:**

- Allow a child to sit on an adult's lap, even if the adult is restrained
- Allow two people to use the same restraint
- Allow an adult belt to pass across a child's neck
- Put a rear facing child seat in a front seat with a passenger air bag
- Use an ordinary cushion to raise a child using an adult restraint.

**Transporting disabled children or low birth weight babies**

Serious consideration should be given to whether the journey is necessary for the child and whether it would be possible for adults to travel to the child.

Where transporting the child is necessary, a risk assessment must be undertaken prior to transporting disabled children or a child with a medical condition to ensure that suitable precautions are taken where appropriate.

Car seats require an infant to sit in a curled-up position, which places a premature or low-weight baby at risk of failing to breathe. However, some vehicle transport of these babies is unavoidable, and thus the following precautions should be followed:

- Small babies must be transported in a Group 0 or 0+ car seat (see below). The car seat should be reclined as much as possible.
- Transport of low birth weight infants must be minimised as far as possible for the first few months following discharge from hospital. The car seat should only be used for travel i.e. not attached to the pushchair or for feeding or sleeping.
- Wherever possible an escort should ride beside a premature or low-birth-weight infant to monitor his/her breathing and well-being.
- All staff and carers who might be involved in transporting a child 5+ who is not able to enter and leave transport unaided must receive moving and handling training.

Consideration might also need to be given to whether specialist transport might be required.

## **Delegated responsibility**

The following delegated responsibilities should be noted:

- The Children's Services Provider Unit, contract holder, will ensure that all restraints supplied through the equipment loan scheme to foster carers are accompanied by the manufacturers' written instructions.
- District Managers and Service Managers will ensure that there are systems in place within their teams that enable staff to access the appropriate equipment needed to transport children safely. Managers must ensure that:
  - Staff members who are likely to need to transport children have access to the appropriate equipment for planned journeys and in most emergency situations.
  - All equipment used has been purchased new, meets the most stringent current standards, and is replaced whenever significantly worn or involved in an accident.
  - The equipment is checked before each journey for wear and adequate cleanliness, and a review of equipment provision is undertaken at least every 6 months.
  - Wherever possible, there are designated staff members in each District who are highly familiar with the equipment used by the team, and are normally available to advise staff in fitting of the equipment.
  - Awareness of health and safety issues in relation to transporting children is incorporated into the day to day business of staff (e.g. through provision of appropriate leaflets, awareness raising at team meetings, use of posters etc.)

## **Further Information**

Further information can be obtained from the Internet at:

[www.thinkroadsafety.dft.gov.uk](http://www.thinkroadsafety.dft.gov.uk)

Additionally, foster carers and prospective adopters may request a copy of the *Think! Road Safety* campaign leaflet entitled *Seat Belts and Child Restraints* from the Fostering or Adoption team in their area.

*June 2005*



**Risk Assessment:  
Assessment Sheet: 4.2.8**

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**Children & Families:**

**Risk**

**Driving and Transporting a Child**

**Date:**

**Hazard**

**Effect**

**Safe System of Work**

<p>Driving/Journey Driver competence</p> <p>Vehicle Breakdowns</p>	<p>Anxiety, Stress, Road Traffic Accidents, Communications Problems, Difficulties with Passengers, Missed Appointments</p>	<p><b>CONSIDER WHETHER THE TRIP IS NECESSARY OR CAN A PARENT/GUARDIAN TRANSPORT THE CHILD?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer to Occupational Road Risk policy (12/03) (ORR-Safetynet*)</li> <li>• Driver to hold a full driving licence/valid insurance for category of vehicle being driven (see ORR-Appendix B, Driving at Work)</li> <li>• The vehicle should be regularly maintained to minimise the risk of break downs (ORR-Appendix B)</li> <li>• Do not use the Mobile Phones whilst driving (set phones to accept voicemail)</li> <li>• Other activities including eating, smoking and reading maps can cause a distraction whilst driving and must be avoided (ORR-Appendix C. Travelling at Work Risk Assessment)</li> <li>• It is considered good practice to carry a warning triangle, First Aid kit, blanket, wet wipes and torch in the car</li> <li>• Ensure that the office are notified of your 'whereabouts' (manual ref 4.2.?)</li> <li>• Never drive whilst under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs</li> <li>• Adopt a 'defensive driving' style</li> <li>• In all cases where a child is being transported the driver/escort is to carry a mobile phone to use in the event of an emergency</li> <li>• Always assess whether the child has an special needs prior to commencing the journey e.g. diabetes.</li> <li>• Where possible plan the route to avoid heavily congested areas and minor roads</li> <li>• Remain alert to changing road conditions and modify driving accordingly</li> <li>• Take regular breaks whilst driving, a minimum of a 15 minute break every two hours is recommended.</li> <li>• Driving in any one day should not exceed 6 hours and if you feel the need for a nap allow no more than 15 minutes, to take longer will allow the body to enter full sleep mode and make subsequent driving more hazardous.</li> </ul>
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Ref:\* SafetyNet refers to Health & Safety guidance in Knet(Staff Zone).

**Risk Assessment:  
Assessment Sheet: 4.2.8 (Pg 2 of 3)**

**Children & Families:**

**Risk**

**Driving and Transporting a Child**

**Date:**

**Hazard**

**Effect**

**Safe System of Work**

Road Traffic Accidents

Personal Injury  
Damage to vehicle(s)

Road Traffic Accidents,  
Personal Injury, Vehicle  
Damage, Breaking the  
Law

- Check all available information sources prior to commencing the journey e.g. VIO flag on CAFIS for the child and associates, has the Child Contact Risk Assessment been completed? (see manual ref: 4.2.?)
  - An appropriate child seat restraint must be used (see Dept. for Transport booklets T/INF/251 and pocket guide) (see below)  
All Child Restraints used must meet United Nations safety standard ECE Regulation 44-03  
Child restraints must be used as follows:  

<b>Weight of Child</b>	<b>Type of Car Seat</b>
Up to 10 kg or 22 lbs (birth to 9 months)	Group 0 or 0+ (rearward facing)
9-18 kgs or 20-40 lbs (9 months to 4 years)	Group 1 (forward facing)
15-25 kgs or 33-55 lbs (4 to 6 years)	Group 2 (booster seat)
22-36kg (48-79 lbs) cushion)	Group 3 (booster cushion)
Child aged 12-13	1.5 m where reasonably practicable
Child aged 14+	Can use adult belt correctly
- DO NOT USE IN FRONT SEAT IF AIRBAG IS FITTED
- Where possible, continue to use rear-facing car seat until child exceeds maximum weight or head extends beyond the top of the car seat. Do not use in front seat with airbag unless absolutely necessary (immobilise airbag)
- Where possible continue to use Group 1 car seat until child exceeds maximum weight
- Must use this until child is aged 12+ or is more than 1.5 m (6 to 11 years) tall; should continue to use it for child aged 12+ or over
- Driver is responsible for ensuring child wears seat belt by law
- Passenger is responsible for wearing seat belt by law but carer should insist the young person wears a seat belt

**Risk Assessment:  
Assessment Sheet: 4.2.8**

**(Pg 3 of 3)**

**Children & Families:**

**Risk**

**Driving and Transporting a Child**

**Date:**

**Hazard**

**Effect**

**Safe System of Work**

<p>Loose Child Seat</p>	<p>Injury to child</p> <p>Personal Injury to Self and Client Claim for Compensation</p> <p>Inadequate training may increase the risk of any of the above risks</p>	<p>Check your child seat every trip using the pocket guide ‘How to fit a child’s car seat’ (DfT ref. T/INF/697)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For looking after children (including children placed for adoption), provisional/funding of car seats should be agreed prior to the start of the placement. Where necessary, however, appropriate car seats will be provided to foster carers through the equipment loan scheme.</li> <li>• Where there is evidence of previously challenging behaviour or it is reasonably foreseeable that violence could be a factor a co-worker or escort must be used. The child must be seated in the rear near side seat and child safety locks applied. If two children are being transported the escort should sit between the children.</li> <li>• All loose items that could be used as weapons / missiles must be removed and stored in the boot/hatch.</li> <li>• In the event of an incident occurring every effort must be made to stop the car safely so that the incident can be contained.</li> <li>• Do not leave a child alone in the car.</li> <li>• <b>All incidents must be reported as soon as reasonably practicable using form HS157( HS160)</b></li> <li>• <b>NB Child Car Seats involved in an accident will need to be replaced.</b></li> <li>• Where the child has mobility problems or where the rear accommodation is too small (i.e. two children an escort) consideration should be given to the use of an alternative means of transport.</li> <li>• Attend the following courses/ receive instruction as follows :</li> <li>• Defensive driving (advisory)</li> <li>• Prevention &amp; Management of Violence (compulsory)</li> <li>• Manual handling of loads (Induction Training)</li> <li>• Fitting child car seats (instructions &amp; information)i.e. <a href="http://www.childcarseats.org.uk">www.childcarseats.org.uk</a> * or RoSPA video.</li> <li>• (always refer to the manufacturers fitting instructions).</li> </ul> <p>NB: Since 2004 some cars are fitted with ISOFIX fittings (allows fitting directly to the car). However, check compliance with seat manufacturer’s instructions.</p>
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Ref:\* web site: [www.childcarseats.org.uk](http://www.childcarseats.org.uk) refers to an excellent pictorial RoSPA site exclusively about Child Car Seats(fitting;law;types etc.).

Note: As a guide to best buys(safety) child car seats refer to the Which? Magazine (June 2004 and Jan 05) [www.which.co.uk/childseats](http://www.which.co.uk/childseats).