

GUIDANCE FOR AWAY TRIPS FOR CLUBS & TRANSPORTATION

Away Trips

Travelling to competition is a regular event for many junior clubs. Trips may vary from short journeys across town to another venue or involve more complicated arrangements involving overnight stays. But even what may appear as the most straightforward of trips will require some level of planning. The following will outline a number of issues that need to be considered when travelling with children/young people.

Communication with:

- **Children/young people** – they should be aware of the travel plans, venue and time for collection, time of return and any costs. Children/young people should also have a clear understanding of what standard of behaviour is expected of them. Children/young people must know what kit they need to bring with them.
- **Parents/guardians** – should be made aware of the above and must have completed a consent form detailing any medical issues that the team manager should be aware of. Parents/guardians should also have the name and contact details of the team manager/coach in the event of an emergency.
- **Other coaches/volunteers** – need to be made aware of what their responsibilities are in advance of the trip. If the trip is a long journey, it is important that all coaches/volunteers have an itinerary.

Transport

For more detailed transport procedures refer to Transport Guidelines, but the following are some basic points.

- Ensure the driver has an appropriate and valid driving license
- Allow an appropriate length of time to complete the journey
- Consider the impact of traffic and weather conditions
- If using a mini-bus ensure that all seats are forward facing and they all have seat belts fitted if carrying children. Is the driver experienced in driving a mini-bus?
- Ensure everyone wears seat belts
- Check there is appropriate insurance for the journey
- Clarify supervision requirements. The driver should not be considered as a supervisor during the journey.
- Ensure that the vehicle is road worthy
- Ensure booster seats are used where appropriate.

Insurance

In addition to the mini-bus/car insurance, ensure that general insurance covers travel to away events.

Emergencies

Ensure that the vehicle has breakdown and recovery cover. The manager/coach should have access to a mobile phone and contact details for all the children/young people. The above are only basic points of advice and are not comprehensive guidelines.

Additional consideration for trips requiring accommodation

Accommodation

- Discuss your code of conduct and discipline policy with the staff at the accommodation
- If rooms are equipped with satellite TV, in appropriate programmes may be available. It may be possible to arrange for these programmes to be disconnected
- Check the accommodation policy for extras on bills, breakages and lost keys
- All accommodation must be clean and with access to sufficient toilet and bathing facilities

IT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE

- For athletes to share a bed
- For male and female athletes to share a room
- For staff/coaches to share a room with athletes

GUIDELINES ON TRANSPORTING A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON IN YOUR CAR

Athletics NI encourages coaches not to take children on journeys alone in their car. The vast majority of coaches help out through their genuine desire to see children or athletics develop. Unfortunately we must face the reality that a minority of others join clubs to gain access to children and create an air of acceptability, 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 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:

- The driver like all coaches/volunteers who have access to children in the organisation should have agreed to a vetting check (Access NI) to be carried out on them
- 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 a competition or training session coaches/volunteers should alternate which child is dropped off last. Ideally two children should be left off at an agreed point ie: one of their family homes
- The person who takes children home should be alternated; this would reduce the risk of any one individual from always being alone with a 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 club a child is more likely to talk to another person if they are feeling uncomfortable about a situation.
- Late Collections. These can present clubs and coaches with particular difficulties. Parents/guardians 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/guardians and if possible be provided with an alternative contact number. Parents/guardians should have a contact numbers for the club/coach to inform them of emergencies and possible late collections.
- Children should wear seat belts at all times – children must use an appropriate child restraint or seatbelt when travelling in a car or goods vehicle
Depending on their weight under 3's must use a baby seat or child seat
Those under 12 and 135cm tall must use the right type of booster chair or booster cushion
Older children should use an adult seatbelt