

Procedures in Relation to Drivers and Escorts Transporting Children

November 2013



Context:

Thousands of Children are transported to and from settings in Oxfordshire every day. The County Council and parents and students using transport expect that those involved in either driving or escorting children do so in the safest possible way and that the vehicles used for transport are both safe and appropriate to use.

It should be recognised that many of the of the children using transport are vulnerable by the fact that they're often travelling alone with adults that they know very little about and that some of the children have complex needs. For this reason Oxfordshire County Council will only award contracts to companies and use drivers and escorts, who have complied with a mandatory set of requirements which include Enhanced Criminal Record Checks and the provision of appropriate training.

What to do if you are concerned:

It is essential that any concerns regarding the transport of a child, whether on a bus or Taxi is reported to appropriate agencies as quickly as possible.

In the first instance any concerns about a driver or escort should be referred to:

Environment and Economy
Safeguarding Lead for Schools and Social Care Transport.
Telephone: 01865 323984

Or

Children, Education and Families.
Local Authority Designated Officer - Safeguarding Team.
Telephone: 01865 810603

Or

Local Children and Families Assessment Team

C&F Assessment Team **North** - 01865 816670
Covers: Banbury, Witney, Kidlington and Surrounding areas.

C&F Assessment Team **City** - 01865 323048
Covers: Cowley, Summertown, Botley and Surrounding areas

C&F Assessment Team **South** - 01865 897983
Covers: Abingdon, Wantage, Thame and Surrounding areas.

EDT – 0800 833 408
Out of hours team

Action to be Taken:

In the case of any concern/allegation about the treatment of a child by any transport provider further investigation and collation of information will be required.

During the period of this investigation the driver or escorts involved will normally be suspended without Prejudice from driving on any Oxfordshire County Council Contact.

Depending on the nature of the concern the allegation will be investigated in one of three ways:

1. Criminal investigation led by Police
2. Child Protection investigation led jointly by Police and Children's Social Care.
3. Safeguarding/procedural investigation led by Transport Lead and OCC LADO.

At the point of any of the above investigation staff from the Integrated Transport Unit in Oxfordshire County Council will inform the appropriate Licensing Authority (District Council) of the details of any allegation

At the conclusion of a Child Protection enquiry where a child Protection concern is substantiated the right to drive on an Oxfordshire County Council contract will normally be permanently removed.

In circumstances where the right to drive on any Oxfordshire County Council contact has been removed a driver/escort or provider will have the right to appeal.

Further information regarding the minimum expectations on all drivers, escorts and providers and full details of all related procedures can be found at <http://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/safeguarding> (under Transport Procedures)

Disclosures during DBS Process

During the approved process for drivers or escorts wanting to work on an Oxfordshire County Council contact, all such applications will go through an Enhanced DBS Check. Where any disclosure is made on an applicant's DBS Certificate, Oxfordshire County Council will always be required to undertake a risk assessment.

Certain offences will automatically bar an applicant from working on an Oxfordshire County Council contract and in these cases the Councils Policy on the employment and rehabilitation of offenders will be applied. All applicants with disclosures which do not automatically bar them, will be risk assessed and decisions made as to whether the level of risk is acceptable to Oxfordshire County Council.

All applicants who are refused as a result of the risk assessment procedure will be entitled to appeal. (see full procedure of the link above).