

Early Learning

Safe Travel (Children) Policy

Policy Statement

Uniting Early Learning is committed to:

- ensuring children are adequately supervised to protect their wellbeing and safety during any excursion or journey from or to the service that involves travel in a vehicle organised by the service;
- keeping children safe while travelling as pedestrians, cyclists or passengers in a vehicle;
- providing appropriate information to parents/guardians about vehicle and road safety;
- providing an educational program that encompasses educating children in road safety.

Executive Summary

Obligations regarding the safe travel of children are dependent upon whether the organised arrangements are part of the provision of the education and care of the children or separate from the provision of education and care for children and the operation of the service. The potential for harm is greater outside of the safety of the education and care environment and risks must be assessed contingent upon whether children travel by service bus, school bus, hire bus, public transport or travelling in a family day care educator's private vehicle, a taxi or Uber.

Transport used for any excursion, the delivery and collection of children, or a regular outing must meet travel safety standards. This means that all vehicles must be registered, insured, maintained, and have restraints approved by the Roads and Traffic Authority. Any driver of a vehicle must have a current approved license. All adults must have a current Working with Children Check. Proper restraint systems are to be used in vehicles according to current Australian Standards.

Educators are expected to follow appropriate procedures when children are transported by bus, public transport or family day care educator's private vehicle to ensure safety at all times, which includes undertaking regular head counts/identity checks and cross-checking against the current attendance record to ensure no child is left behind. Children are never to be left unattended in any vehicle. Supervision and communication are key strategies used by educators to ensure smooth, safe and enjoyable travel arrangements for all.

Educators and volunteers are required to understand their roles and responsibilities when a parent or authorised nominee fails to collect a child, after arriving at their destination, or a child is confirmed missing. A documented emergency plan that minimises risks, is essential in the unexpected instance of a vehicle breakdown or crash, or transport-related injury involving children, staff or volunteers. All adults must understand their roles and responsibilities at these times.

Current Environmental Context

As the risks are greater when children travel outside of the service environment, a final risk assessment will be required on the day of travel. Unforeseen and or unexpected circumstances on the day may include: unexpected

DOCUMENT TITLE & NUMBER		SAFE TRAVEL (CHILDREN) POLICY		
Content Owner	Uniting Early Learning – Head of Early Learning			Page 1 of 3
Document Author	Early Learning Practice Manager	Document Version	V 3.0	Policy No. 06
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weather changes, dynamic of group, type of bus, change in collection and/or drop off points and destination conditions.

Duty of care is the responsibility of everyone and the driver of the vehicle must have a Working with Children check and not be under the influence of alcohol, drugs or any medication that will alter their perceptions or make them drowsy.

On the day, educators must ensure that all vehicles used to transport children have seatbelts fitted and/or child restraints that are suitable for a child's age/size and that these are properly adjusted, fastened and correctly used. The number of children that can be safely transported by a vehicle should not be exceeded.

To ensure the safety of children while travelling, it is essential that all staff; educators, family day care educator assistants and volunteers, involved, communicate regularly and acknowledge this communication. For example, when undertaking headcounts, ensure everyone knows exactly how many children are accounted for and the identity of each and every child. Staff are to ensure a charged and functioning mobile communicating device is taken on the journey.

Where transport is provided that is not directly part of the education and care service, a parent or authorised nominee named in the child's enrolment record must provide to the service written authorisation to allow the child to leave the education and care service premises.

Attachment 6a: Children travelling by service bus

Attachment 6b: Children travelling by school bus

Attachment 6c: Children travelling by bus

Attachment 6d: Children travelling by Family Day Care educator private vehicle

Attachment 6e: Emergency Procedures

Attachment 6f: Procedures for the late collection of children

Attachment 6g: Transportation not part of the education and care service

Attachment 6h: National Practices for Early Childhood Road Safety Education

Forms can be found on [Click here](#)

Form 6.1 School bus transportation authorisation

Form 6.2 Service bus list

DOCUMENT TITLE & NUMBER		SAFE TRAVEL (CHILDREN) POLICY		
Content Owner		Uniting Early Learning – Head of Early Learning		Page 2 of 3
Document Author	Early Learning Practice Manager	Document Version	V 3.0	Policy No. 06
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Reference/Sources

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Keeping Children Safe Policy of the Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, Approved May 2017

- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations policy
- Delivery and Collection policy
- Excursion, Regular Outing and Service Event policy
- Supervision of Children policy
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 165, 167, 169, 174
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 201: Regulation 99, 123, 124, 126, 127, 136, 158, 168, 172
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety
- Road Safety Education Victoria: www.roadsafetyeducation.vic.gov.au
- Road Safety Road Rules 2009 (Vic)
- School Bus Program Policies and Procedures www.education.vic.gov.au/studenttransport
- Starting Out Safely: <http://childroadsafety.org.au/>
- Tasmanian Licensing Standards for Centre Based Child Care Class 5 (0-12years), 2014. S4.7, 4.8
- Vic Roads <https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/safety-and-road-rules/vehicle-safety/child-restraints/child-restraint-evaluation-program>
- Department of State Growth Transport – Tasmanian road rules <https://www.transport.tas.gov.au/roadsafety/people/carseats>

Authorisation

This policy was adopted by Uniting Early Learning on: 21 September 2018

Review

This policy is to be reviewed by: 30 September 2020

DOCUMENT TITLE & NUMBER		SAFE TRAVEL (CHILDREN) POLICY		
Content Owner		Uniting Early Learning – Head of Early Learning		Page 3 of 3
Document Author	Early Learning Practice Manager	Document Version	V 3.0	Policy No. 06
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