

## **Earlscliffe (Sussex Summer Schools Ltd)**

### **SAFEGUARDING DRIVERS AND ESCORTS**

Protect Vulnerable Children and Adults & Protect Yourself  
External Contractors

#### **Driver and Escort Guidelines**

##### **Over Familiarity/Friendliness**

Drivers and escorts who are aware that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is becoming over friendly with them, should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with their line manager so appropriate actions can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment. To minimise the chance of a child, young person or vulnerable adult becoming over friendly and potentially leading to infatuation drivers and escorts must not:

- hug, cuddle, tickle or have any unnecessary contact with a child or vulnerable adult;
- enter into horseplay with children or vulnerable adults on or off the vehicle;
- discuss with a child or vulnerable adult anything of a personal or intimate nature;
- make any personal remark about, or to, a child or vulnerable adult even if it is complimentary;
- call any child or vulnerable adult by an endearment such as love, darling etc; please use their appropriate title or given name;
- use bad language (swearing), innuendos or sexual comments and should discourage others from doing so;
- give children or vulnerable adults gifts, send them cards, letters or text messages, see section on Giving of Gifts below;
- exchange phone numbers, email addresses (including 'Facebook' or similar) or personal details with children or vulnerable adults; Also see section called Electronic Communication and Social Networks below.
- take photographs of children or vulnerable adults, including pictures using mobile phones;
- enter the home of a child or vulnerable adult unless specifically instructed to do so;
- look through a child or vulnerable adult's personal contact book, handbag or personal belongings, except to locate the key to their premises;
- handle any money on behalf of a child or vulnerable adult unless specifically instructed to do so.
- have any social contact with the child or vulnerable adults that they meet as passengers, unless they are already a family friend or have the consent of the parents or carer. Also see section called Social Contact below This list is not exhaustive but it illustrates the type of actions which could be misunderstood and must be avoided. Any information about passengers must be treated as confidential and not be discussed with anyone such as your family or friends. This also applies to anything that passengers may tell you in the course of conversation. Please be aware that some transport is for 'Contact visits'. In such cases staff must be very careful not to give any information to parents that has not been authorised.

##### **Giving of Gifts**

It is acknowledged that there are specific occasions when staff may wish to give a child, young person or vulnerable adult a personal gift, i.e. to acknowledge good behaviour etc,

this is only acceptable practice where, in line with the agreed policy, the staff member has first discussed the giving of the gift and the reason for it, with a senior manager and/or parent or carer and the action is recorded. Any gifts should be given openly and not be based on favouritism. Drivers and escorts need to be aware that the giving of gifts can, in certain circumstances, be misinterpreted by others as a gesture either to bribe or groom that child, young person or vulnerable adult.

### **Electronic Communication and Social Networks**

Drivers and escorts should not engage in personal email or telephone contact with pupils, including instant messaging, text messaging, and social networking sites etc.

Communication by Drivers and Escorts between children, young people and vulnerable adults, by whatever methods, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as digital cameras, videos, webcams, websites such as Facebook and twitter as well as blogs. Drivers and escorts should not share any personal information with a child, young person or vulnerable adult. Drivers and escorts should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the child, young person or vulnerable adult, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Drivers and escorts should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

### **Social Contact**

Drivers and escorts should not seek to have social contact with children, young people, vulnerable adults and their families, unless the reason for this contact has been firmly established and agreed with your line manager. If a child, carer or parent seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the Driver or escort should exercise his/her professional judgement in making a response but should always discuss the situation with their line manager, parent or carer. This means that staff should:

- Have no secret social contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults or the parents and carers.
- Consider the appropriateness of the social contact according to their role and the nature of their work
- Always approve any planned social contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults with your line manager.
- Advise your line manager of any social contact if and when it happens and keep a record of the incident.
- Record the sending of personal communications such as birthday or faith cards should always be recorded and discussed with your line manager.
- Understand that some communications may be called into question and need to be justified.

### **Sexual Contact**

Drivers and escorts must clearly understand the need for boundaries in their contacts with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Intimate or sexual relationships between children, young people and vulnerable adults will be regarded as a grave breach of trust and is illegal. Allowing or encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to a sexual relationship is also illegal. This means that drivers and escorts should :

- Not have relationships with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

- Not have any form of communication with children, young people and vulnerable adults which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, electronic mail, phone calls, texts, social networks or physical contact.
- Not make sexual remarks to, about, a child young person or vulnerable adult.
- Not discuss your own sexual relationships with or in the presence of children, young people and vulnerable adults This means that drivers and escorts should:
  - Ensure that their relationship with children, young people and vulnerable adults clearly takes place within the boundaries of a respectful professional relationship.
  - Take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation.
  - Pay particular attention to their attitudes, demeanour and language as all require care and thought, particularly when staff are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

### **Acceptable Physical Contact**

Drivers and escorts should note that some physical contact with passengers may be necessary, such as:

- a) assist a person who has difficulty in walking.
- b) assist a person who has become ill.
- c) help an older person get in and out of a vehicle.
- d) assist someone to put on a seat belt or restraint.
- e) transferring from wheelchair/buggy to a seat.
- f) to stop self harming or harming others.

Drivers and escorts must ensure that they inform the person first, and keep physical contact to a sensible minimum. These instructions have been written to help drivers and escorts understand that their actions, however well intentioned, may be viewed differently by others. It is important to be aware that an allegation made against a driver or escort may result in an investigation by the Council and/or the Police, during which time the person may have to be removed from providing any transport service to the Council that carries children or vulnerable adults. Not all children, young people or vulnerable adults feel comfortable about physical contact, and you should not make the assumption that this is acceptable practice to use as a means of communication. Seek permission if possible, where a child is very young, there should be a discussion with the parent or carer about what physical contact is acceptable and/or necessary. It is recognised that some children who have experienced abuse may seek inappropriate physical contact. Drivers and escorts should be particularly aware of this when it is known that a child young person or vulnerable adult has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the child young person or vulnerable adults view, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and lead to some actions being misinterpreted. In all circumstances where a child young person or vulnerable adult initiates inappropriate physical contact, it is the responsibility of the driver or escort to sensitively deter the child and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries. Such circumstances must always be reported and discussed with your line manager. This means that drivers and escorts should:

- Be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described.
- Never touch a child young person or vulnerable adult in a way that may be considered indecent.
- Always be prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny.

- Not indulge in 'horseplay'
- Always encourage children, young people and vulnerable adults where possible, to undertake safe-care tasks independently.
- Work within Health and Safety regulations.
- Be aware of cultural and religious views about touching and always be sensitive to issues of gender.
- Understand that physical contact in some circumstances can be easily misinterpreted.

### **Abuse**

As a driver or escort you are expected to report any incidents which you feel may be caused by some sort of abuse or neglect. Try to be vigilant at all times when dealing with children young person or vulnerable adults and pay particular attention to any mood, demeanour and conduct changes.

### **Types of abuse and their key symptoms;**

- Physical – bruising, cut's and burns etc.
- Emotional – subdued demeanour, change in mood etc.
- Sexual – inappropriate physical contact or language
- Severe neglect – undernourished, wearing the same clothing every day
- Financial abuse – over protection of possessions/lack of possessions, lack of money, unexplained loss of money
- Institutional abuse – lack of personal clothing and possessions
- Discriminatory abuse – name calling

### ***Duty of Care.***

***If a driver or escort has any concerns regarding the protection of children and vulnerable adults, he/she must report this to your line manager***

### **Who do I report to?**

It is vital that reports are made to the right persons.

- Never discuss with parents or carers of children.
- Never discuss with the person(s) giving direct care to the service user – adult or child.
- Never discuss with sons and daughters and other relatives of adults.
- Never discuss with anyone else other than investigating officials.

### **Reporting Safeguarding concerns –**

DSL: Jo Stokes 01303 253951

Kent Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit: 01622 690 690

Kent Specialist Children's Services - Central Duty Team: 08458 247 100

E-mail: social.services@kent.gov.uk