|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date last reviewed: 10th October 2017 | Date last amended: 10th October 2017 |

**HANDING OVER CHILDREN SAFELY**

It is the responsibility of the driver and escort to ensure that all children have been dropped off in a safe manner. To ensure this, staff must adhere to the following procedures.

**HANDING OVER AT SCHOOL**

All children must be passed over to a member of staff at school regardless of whether they are an independent child or not. Children must not be allowed to cross roads unsupervised. Staff must report to the bus operator manager where there are safety concerns with the collection and drop off points. Should the vehicle arrive early staff must wait with their passenger in the vehicle until the allocated time.

**HANDING OVER AT HOME**

An adult must be present at the home address (18 years or above only) to collect their child for a handover with staff. Should an adult not be present staff will follow procedures outlined in section ‘Absence of an appropriate adult’.

**HANDING OVER AT DESIGNATED POINT**

All children must be handed to an appropriate adult at the agreed drop off location unless parents deem their child as independent and request for their child to be dropped off without an adult present. In this case they must meet criteria set in section ‘INDEPENDENT TRAVELLER’

Staff will only hand over a child to an adult (18 years or above only) with parental consent. The bus operator will ask parents/carers for security information prior to travel to help identify the appropriate adult. This will include the following:

* A security password assigned by the parent/carer
* Name of adults authorised to collect their child(ren). A hand over will not be made to the adult unless parents have given the bus operator manager prior consent for the individual
* Parents contact details i.e. home address and contact telephone number

If staff on the vehicle do not recognise the adult collecting the child they will ask them for some security information. This will include the following:

* The adults full name collecting the child and the password assigned by the parent/carer

OR

* The adults full name collecting the child and identification of the individual such as passport or driving licence

If the adult cannot provide the security information the staff member will need to contact the bus operator manager who will decide an appropriate course of action which could lead to the child either being taken back to the original collection point i.e. school etc or a social services office.

**When dropping of children staff must always make sure:**

* Every child is dropped off at the agreed address given to you by the bus operator
* Ensure every child enters the building of the home location safely
* Ensure every child is passed over to an appropriate adult at the drop off location unless they are considered to be an ‘independent child’ read section ‘INDEPENDENT CHILDREN’ for criteria details

**When dropping of children staff must never:**

* Never hand over a child to an adult you or the child does not recognise or to someone they are expressing concern in being left with
* Never give a child to an adult waiting outside the house unless they can prove they have parental consent and can access the house or building you are dropping off at
* Never collect or drop off at an alternative location without prior consent from the bus operator manager
* Never take instruction from another adult to change the drop off or collection points i.e. parents, carers, school staff or children. Ask them to contact KCC prior to any journey commencing
* Never drop off a child at their friends or relatives house
* Never take a child back to your own home or leave them with your own family or friends

**INDEPENDENT CHILDREN**

An ‘independent traveller’ is a child who has been given permission from their parent/carer to manage their journey independently at the drop off location without supervision of an adult and will not require a handover to an adult.

Independent travellers will be dropped off at the agreed drop off location and will be responsible for managing the rest of their journey including entering the premises without any aid from the bus operator. Parents/ carers and the passenger need to be confident that the child manages this independently.

Should staff have concerns with the child being able to travel independently they will report this to the bus operator manager who will discuss the concerns with the parents/carers, school or any other relevant bodies responsible for the care and wellbeing of the child. The bus operator may refuse this method of handover should they feel the child is at significant risk.

In order for the child to qualify as an ‘independent Traveller’ they must meet the following criteria:

* The child must be at least 12 years of age
* Parents will need to give their consent for their child to travel independently by either writing a letter of consent or completing a travel care plan and return it to the bus operator
* Staff must check with the bus operator manager to confirm if a child has been given consent by their parent/carer to travel as an independent traveller.