

# Travelling with children



## A guide for keeping children safe and secure

Keeping your children safe should be upper most in any parent's mind. However, we are continuously seeing children travelling unsafely in a car.

Here are some top tips to keeping your child safe in the car. In recent car seat checks in the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead over 80% of seats checked were incorrectly fitted or the child was in the wrong size car seat for their height and weight.



## The law

- The law states that a child must be appropriately restrained within the vehicle until they reach the age of 12 years old or the height of 135cm, whichever comes first.
- This means that all children below the height of 135cm and under 12 years old must be in a car seat when travelling in a vehicle (a few exemptions apply; taxis and buses).

**See our step-by-step guide to installing your car seat inside this leaflet**



# Getting it right - a flowchart for parents

**START HERE**

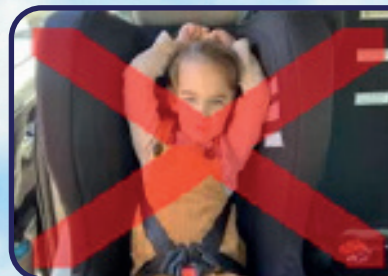
Is your child over 18kg?



**NO**

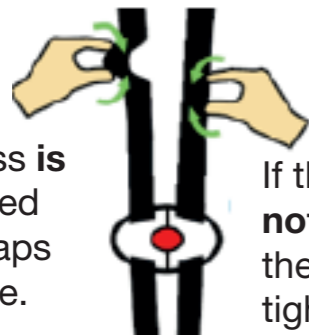
**YES**

Your child needs to be in a car seat with a harness



Make sure the harness is fitted correctly

If the harness is easily pinched then the straps are too loose.



If the harness is **not** easily pinched then straps are tight enough.

Is your child 12 years old OR over 135cm tall?



**NO**

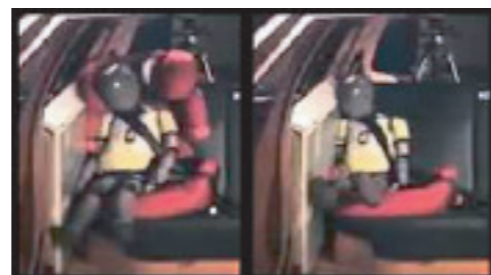
**YES**

If your child is 18-36kg, they **MUST** be on a:

High back booster seat **OR** Booster Cushion



While both are legal, a high-back booster seat will offer substantially more protection than a booster cushion



Legal does NOT equal safe!  
Before removing the booster, ensure the following occurs:

1. Shoulder belt crosses between shoulder and neck.



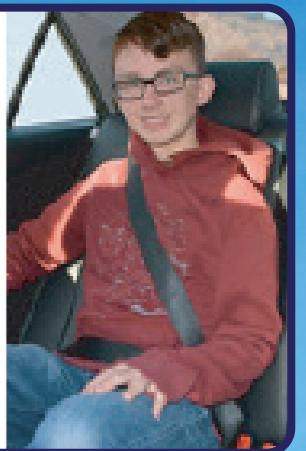
2. Lower back against vehicle seat

3. Lap belt on thighs.

4. Knees bend at edge of seat.

5. Child rides like this for the whole trip.

Your child can legally use the adult seat belt alone



**Dangerous**



**Dangerous**

If one or more of these things isn't right, the child should continue to use their booster.

# Top tips



## Further tips on keeping your child safe

### Winter coats

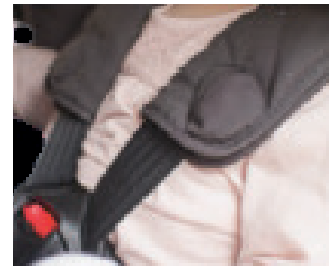
If your child is in a car seat with a harness then coats should be taken off, the child strapped securely into the car seat (do the pinch test) and then the coat can be draped over the child. This will allow the harness to act as it is intended in the case of a collision. If the coat remains on the child when they are strapped in, it stops the harness from being properly tightened on the child and the force of a collision will compress the coat material leaving the harness loose and the child could be propelled out of the car seat.



This harness looks as though it is tightened properly over the winter jacket.



However, when the jacket is removed and the harness is kept on the same setting the harness is very loose.



Take the jacket off and tighten the harness, then drape the jacket over the child.

### Car seat installation

All car seats have an installation guide. Ensure that you have read it correctly and followed the instructions carefully. If in doubt, contact the manufacturer or look on their website for a detailed installation guide. Keep checking your car seat regularly as it may come loose over time.

### Infant carrier hoods

It is important to know that greenhouse effect of using an infant carrier hood to shade a baby while traveling in a vehicle. Babies are unable to regulate their temperature and using a shade hood stops the air from circulating around the baby. The temperature within the car seat increases quickly and significantly which can harm the baby.

### Moving up to the next seat

Ensure that your child is at the maximum weight and height for the car seat before you consider moving them to the next size car seat. In this instance 'snug is good'. If you imagine putting an apple in a bowl, how small would the bowl size need to be before the apple was secure enough in it to stop it moving around and getting bruised? The more space the apple has to move, the more damaged and bruised it will get. Now apply the same philosophy to your child and their car seat. Keep them secure. **For a quick video guide on keeping your child safe in the car, visit [www.carseatsmarter.co.uk](http://www.carseatsmarter.co.uk)**