

Child Car Seats: the law

1. Using a child car seat or booster seat

Children must normally use a car seat until they're 12 years old or 135cm tall whichever comes first.

Only EU-approved child car seats can be used in the UK. These have a label showing a capital 'E' in a circle and 'R129'.

You can choose a child car seat based on the child's height or weight.

Fitting a child car seat

You must:

- Only use a child car seat if your car's seat belt has a diagonal strap -unless the car seat is specifically designed for use with a lap seat belt
- Deactivate any front airbags before fitting a rear-facing baby seat in a front seat
- Not fit a child car seat in side-facing seats

Children with disabilities

The same rules apply for children with disabilities unless a doctor says they're exempt on medical grounds. They can also use a disabled person's seat belt or child restraint designed for their needs.

2. When a child can travel without a car seat

A child can travel without a child car seat in some circumstances.

Taxis and minicabs (private hire vehicles)

In a licensed taxi or minicab:

- Children under 3 years of age can travel without a child's car seat or seat belt, but only on the back seat
- Children aged 3 years or older can travel without a child's car seat if they wear an adult seat belt

Unexpected journeys

If the correct child seat isn't available, a child over 3 years of age can use an adult seat belt if the journey is all of the following:

- Unexpected
- Necessary
- Over a short distance

You can't take children under 3 in a vehicle without a seat belt or the correct child car seat (except a taxi or minicab).

No room for a third child seat

Children under 3 must be in a child car seat. If there's no room for a third child seat in the back of the vehicle, the child must travel in the front seat with the correct child seat.

Children over 3 years can sit in the back using an adult belt.

Vehicles without seat belts

Children under 3 must be in a child seat. If there's no seat belt, they can't travel.

A child over 3 can travel in a back seat without a child seat and without a seat belt if the vehicle doesn't have one.

The above information has been taken from The GOV.UK website on 11/04/2018. Some sections have been omitted for ease of reading and printing.

PDA Policy

It is impractical for the PDA to provide the necessary range of child/baby seats and booster cushions for drivers to fit to their cars when needed.

Drivers must not therefore carry children unless a parent/guardian provides and fits the correct child seat to the driver's car (or the child is 12 years old or over, or taller than 135 CM).

Very few PDA journeys are unexpected, or necessary in the sense that most appointments can be rescheduled. It is also not clear what constitutes a short journey, so drivers should not rely on the "Unexpected Journeys" clause to carry a child without the appropriate seat, and should advise the patient to call a Taxi.

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