By Appointment to His Majesty The King
Supplier of Coach Services

Safeguarding Policy 2026

Westway Coach Services Ltd is committed to safeguarding children and young people on every journey we provide. Their welfare comes first. We expect everyone working on our behalf to recognise concerns, maintain professional boundaries and act promptly to help keep children safe.

This policy applies to all travel involving anyone under 18, including school and college transport, private hires, sports teams, youth and community groups, excursions, holidays, airport transfers, events and family travel. It applies whether children travel with parents, carers or group leaders, or under an agreed arrangement without an accompanying adult.

What this policy covers

- Responsibilities, safer recruitment, training and the standards expected of staff and transport partners.
- Journey planning, supervision, safe collection and handover, breaks and emergencies.
- Recognising, recording and reporting concerns, responding to disclosures and managing allegations.
- Confidentiality, CCTV and telematics, information sharing and policy review.

Immediate danger: call 999 in the UK, or the local emergency number overseas. Make the situation safe and then notify the Westway office or duty manager. Do not wait for internal approval.

Policy owner: Compliance Manager | Updated: 29 October 2026
Review due: October 2027, or sooner if circumstances change

(A) Purpose and scope

A child means anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday. Safeguarding includes preventing abuse, neglect and exploitation, protecting children from harm and responding when their welfare is at risk. This policy covers booking and journey preparation, boarding, travel, stops, arrival and handover, including replacement or subcontracted transport.

It applies to directors, employees, drivers, office and operations staff, agency workers and anyone engaged to deliver Westway transport. Subcontractors must meet these safeguarding standards or demonstrate equivalent arrangements. The same standards apply to children travelling within a mixed group of adults and children.

Every child must be treated fairly and with dignity. Staff must consider disability, additional needs, communication barriers and other circumstances that may increase vulnerability. A child's behaviour, background or ability to explain a concern must never be used to dismiss it.

(B) Responsibilities and supervision

Compliance Manager: is responsible for safeguarding at Westway and acts as safeguarding lead. They oversee safeguarding arrangements, coordinate referrals and liaison with statutory agencies, maintain confidential records, and oversee training, follow-up and review. Internal processes must never delay protective action.

Office and duty manager: receive urgent reports, arrange immediate practical support and escalate promptly to the Compliance Manager or their deputy. Record who is taking responsibility and confirm that concerns have been acted upon; passing a message on is not sufficient.

Safeguarding cover and support: the Director must ensure suitable resources and a trained deputy are available. The Compliance Manager must keep their own and the deputy's contact details in current staff and duty instructions and ensure safeguarding cover whenever children are travelling.

Drivers and other staff: follow this policy, remain alert, report all concerns promptly and keep accurate records. Drivers retain responsibility for the safe and lawful operation of the vehicle and must not be expected to supervise a group while driving.

Parents, carers and group organisers: provide suitable supervision, accurate emergency contacts and relevant support information. The booking must identify who supervises the children and manages headcounts, behaviour, breaks and handovers. Westway does not provide a chaperone merely by supplying a driver.

Where children travel without an accompanying adult, Westway must agree and record suitable arrangements with the parent, carer or commissioning organisation before travel. These must address age, needs, collection permissions, emergency contacts and foreseeable risks. All adults retain their own safeguarding responsibilities.

(C) Safer recruitment and training

Westway will check identity, employment history, references and role suitability before assigning staff to work with children. Criminal-record checks must match the role and legal eligibility, including Enhanced DBS checks and children's barred-list checks where applicable. A person barred from regulated activity with children must never be engaged in that activity.

Agency and subcontracted providers must confirm relevant checks and suitability before allocation. Staff must receive induction and refresher training appropriate to their role, including recognising abuse, professional boundaries, reporting and emergencies. Staff must promptly disclose relevant changes affecting suitability; management will review checks and training requirements regularly.

(D) Planning and running journeys

Before travel, the office and organiser must agree the itinerary, passenger numbers and ages, supervision, collection and drop-off arrangements, emergency contacts and any additional support. Record necessary information securely and brief the driver on what they need to know.

- Consider mobility, communication, medical and allergy needs, child restraints and seating, wheelchair access, journey duration, overnight travel and planned stops. Resolve unsuitable arrangements before departure.
- Only authorised passengers may board. Check any uncertainty with the office and responsible adult. Do not leave a child in an unsafe location while an authorisation issue is resolved.
- Every child must have an allocated passenger place with an appropriate restraint arrangement for the vehicle and journey. No standing passengers are permitted. Give an appropriate safety briefing and require seatbelts to be used where fitted, subject to lawful exemptions.
- Use company tracking and passenger-register systems correctly where allocated. Log the start and completion of the journey as required. Never operate a phone or passenger-register device while driving.
- Keep to agreed collection points and destinations. Route or stop changes must be checked with the office and organiser where practicable. Urgent safety needs, legal requirements or an emergency may require an immediate change, which must be reported as soon as safe.
- Do not make personal stops or errands with children on board. Plan suitable rest and toilet breaks, park safely and agree adult supervision and headcounts before departure and after every stop.
- Check the full vehicle, including both decks and the toilet where fitted, after every journey and before leaving it unattended. Do not rely solely on a register or a group leader’s headcount.

(E) Collection and safe handover

Release a child only in line with the agreed arrangements: to the authorised responsible adult or destination representative, or independently where this has been expressly agreed and recorded. Do not accept a child’s request, an unfamiliar adult’s assurance or an unverified message as authority to change the arrangements.

If the expected adult is absent, appears unable to provide safe care, or a handover is disputed, keep the child in a safe, supervised place and contact the office or duty manager immediately. The office must verify arrangements through the agreed contact and obtain children’s services or police assistance where necessary. Never leave a child alone or take them home privately.

If a child is missing or unaccounted for, stop departure, alert the responsible adult and office, and check the vehicle and immediate safe area without leaving other children unsupervised. Contact the police without delay where the child’s whereabouts or safety cannot be established; call 999 if there is immediate danger. Do not wait for the journey to finish or assume the child has gone home.

Delays, breakdowns and replacement vehicles must preserve supervision, safe handover and emergency contact arrangements. For overseas travel, agree local emergency and safeguarding routes before departure and use local services promptly when required.

(F) Staff conduct and professional boundaries

Staff must be courteous, calm and respectful towards children, families, organisers and colleagues. Follow reasonable instructions from the responsible adult where safe and lawful, and refer disagreements to the office. The following standards apply throughout the relationship, including after a child's journey has ended.

- Do not use threatening, humiliating, discriminatory, sexual or otherwise inappropriate language or behaviour. Do not discuss adult personal matters or expose children to unsuitable material.
- Do not seek private relationships, keep secrets with children, show favouritism or arrange private meetings or lifts. Avoid unnecessary one-to-one situations; where an unavoidable situation arises, keep it visible and report it promptly.
- Do not give children personal contact details, call or message them privately, or connect with current or former child passengers through social media. Use approved business channels with the parent, carer or organiser. Report unsolicited contact or attempts to form a closer relationship to the Compliance Manager.
- Do not give personal gifts, money, rewards or favours to children. Any company-approved items must be arranged openly through the responsible adult. Report gifts or hospitality offered to staff to the office.
- Do not photograph or record children on personal devices. Company photography requires prior management authorisation and an appropriate, documented permission process. Do not publish passenger images or identifying journey details privately.
- Never supply alcohol, tobacco, vaping products, drugs or other age-restricted items. Keep personal items secure. Do not offer food, sweets or drinks without an agreed arrangement that considers allergies and choking risks. Follow Westway's food and drink rules and any agreed medical or accessibility exception.
- Do not provide intimate or personal care unless this is specifically agreed, risk assessed and within an authorised, trained role. Drivers must refer such needs to the responsible adult and office.

(G) Behaviour and physical contact

Respond calmly to unsafe or disruptive behaviour and seek help from the responsible adult. If driving becomes unsafe, stop in a safe place and contact the office. Never put a child off the vehicle as punishment or leave a child without an agreed safe handover.

Bullying, discriminatory abuse, sexual harassment and harmful behaviour between children must be taken seriously and reported. Protect the child affected and arrange appropriate supervision of everyone involved. Do not dismiss harmful behaviour as banter or require a child to confront the person responsible.

Physical contact must be necessary, appropriate and explained wherever possible, for example when providing agreed boarding assistance or emergency first aid. Respect the child's dignity and wishes. Avoid unnecessary touching.

Physical intervention must never be punishment or a way to secure ordinary compliance. If immediate physical harm cannot be prevented by a safer alternative, use only the minimum reasonable and proportionate intervention for the shortest time, within the law and your training. Never use painful holds or restrict breathing. Obtain help, report the incident immediately and record the reason, action, duration, witnesses and any injury.

(H) Recognising and reporting concerns

Concerns may arise from what a child says, behaviour, injuries, observations, messages or another person's report. Examples include physical or emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, grooming, exploitation, domestic abuse, harmful behaviour between children and online abuse. Unexplained injuries, marked fear of an adult, withdrawal, sexualised behaviour or unsafe collection arrangements may require action. Staff do not need proof and must not investigate whether abuse has occurred.

1. Protect: if there is immediate danger or a serious medical emergency, call 999 in the UK or the local emergency number overseas. Stop the vehicle safely if necessary. Keep children supervised and seek emergency assistance.

2. Listen: stay calm, take the child seriously and let them speak at their own pace. Reassure them that they were right to tell you and that abuse is not their fault. Do not promise secrecy; explain that you must tell someone who can help.

3. Avoid investigation: do not ask leading questions, press for detail, confront the alleged abuser or ask a child to repeat their account to several people. Clarify only what is necessary to understand immediate safety needs.

4. Report promptly: contact the Westway office or duty manager as soon as safe and ask for the Compliance Manager or their deputy. Safeguarding concerns must be escalated immediately, not held until the end of a shift or dealt with only as a customer complaint.

5. Record: as soon as possible, record the date, time, location, journey and vehicle details; the child's details; the child's exact words; observations; witnesses; and all actions and contacts. Separate fact from opinion, identify the author and time of the record, and preserve original notes.

6. Refer and follow up: the Compliance Manager or their deputy must promptly contact the relevant children's social care service or police where protection or advice is needed, record the referral and follow up the outcome. Reporting to a school, parent or organiser alone is not a substitute for an external referral when required.

Anyone may contact children's services or the police directly. Do so if internal contacts are unavailable, implicated, or have not acted and the concern remains. Record and escalate any continuing risk. Do not delay urgent action to obtain permission or complete paperwork.

Inform parents, carers and organisers where safe and appropriate. Seek advice from children's services or police before informing anyone if this could expose the child to further harm, alert an alleged abuser or undermine an investigation.

(I) Illness and medical emergencies

If a child becomes ill or injured, stop safely if necessary, alert the responsible adult and office, and seek emergency assistance when required. Provide first aid within your competence and follow emergency-service advice. Do not leave the child unattended.

Drivers must not give routine or over-the-counter medication. Any planned medication support requires an agreed written arrangement and an appropriately authorised, trained person. This must not prevent appropriate emergency first aid or action directed by emergency services. Record the incident and any care provided.

(J) Allegations about staff and speaking up

Report concerns about any driver, employee, agency worker, subcontractor or other adult immediately to the Compliance Manager or their deputy. This includes inappropriate boundaries, apparently minor concerns, and conduct outside work that may affect suitability to work with children.

If the concern involves the usual reporting contact, report to the Director or another uninvolved senior manager, or directly to children's services, the police or the relevant LADO. No one should handle an allegation about themselves. Staff must not be disadvantaged for raising a concern honestly.

Where an adult may have harmed a child, committed an offence involving a child, posed a risk of harm or shown possible unsuitability to work with children, the Compliance Manager or alternative reporting contact must seek LADO advice promptly and within one working day, in line with local procedures. Use children's services or police out of hours where immediate action is needed. Do not delay a referral while gathering evidence or conduct an internal investigation before agreeing the approach with the relevant agencies.

Management will make immediate, proportionate arrangements to protect children, preserve evidence and maintain confidentiality while the matter is assessed. This may include changes to duties or removal from child-facing work. Employment action and communications must be coordinated with safeguarding enquiries. Make a DBS referral where the statutory conditions are met, including where a person leaves before the process concludes.

(K) Confidentiality and records

Share safeguarding information promptly, securely and only with people who need it to protect the child or manage the concern. Data-protection rules support necessary safeguarding disclosures; consent is not always required. Record the reason and lawful basis for sharing, or for deciding not to share. Do not allow uncertainty about consent to delay urgent protection; seek appropriate advice.

Use approved company channels and verify the recipient. Do not discuss concerns in front of other passengers, use personal messaging groups, upload sensitive information to public AI tools or circulate footage. Keep safeguarding records separately from routine booking information with access restricted to authorised staff.

Relevant CCTV, dashcam, telematics, booking records and messages must be secured promptly before routine deletion. Access and disclosure must follow Westway's privacy, security and Artificial Intelligence policies. Authorised staff must assess evidence in context; an AI alert is not a safeguarding finding. Records must follow documented retention and secure-deletion arrangements, with preservation holds for investigations or legal requirements.

(L) Monitoring and review

The Compliance Manager will review concerns, patterns, referrals, supplier compliance and training to identify improvements. Staff must read and follow this policy and material updates; breaches may lead to disciplinary or contractual action. Review at least annually and after a serious concern, changes in guidance or significant operational change. Keep reporting contacts current and accessible to staff, families and organisers.

This policy works alongside Westway's Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities, Diversity and Inclusion, Artificial Intelligence and privacy policies, the Staff Handbook and journey-specific arrangements. For travel outside England, use the relevant national or local safeguarding procedures as well as these company standards.

(M) Reporting contacts

For urgent safeguarding concerns, telephone the appropriate service. Do not rely on email being seen immediately. Staff must also have the current duty contact and Compliance Manager or deputy details available in their operational instructions.

Immediate danger or serious emergency: 999 in the UK; use the local emergency number overseas.

Westway office: 020 8944 1277. Ask for the Compliance Manager or their deputy; the duty manager can help you reach them. General correspondence: info@westway-coaches.co.uk. Outside office hours, use the duty contact supplied for the journey. If no one can be reached, contact statutory services directly.

Children's services: use the local authority children's social care service for the child's area. If a child needs immediate local protection while travelling, contact the service where the child is located or the police; uncertainty about the correct area must not delay action.

Surrey Children's Single Point of Access: 0300 470 9100, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm; cspa@surreycc.gov.uk. Evenings, weekends and bank holidays: Emergency Duty Team, 01483 517898.

Surrey LADO: 0300 123 1650, option 3; LADO@surreycc.gov.uk. This route is for allegations or suitability concerns about adults working with children. For other areas, contact the relevant local authority's LADO or equivalent service.

If you are a child or young person and something makes you feel unsafe, tell your parent, carer, group leader, driver or Westway office. You can ask to speak to a different adult. We will listen and help you reach the right support.

(N) Supporting guidance

This policy draws on the following guidance. The Compliance Manager must keep the procedures aligned with current law, relevant safeguarding partnership arrangements and the services Westway provides.

Department for Education — Working together to safeguard children 2026

Department for Education — Information sharing to safeguard children and young people

Disclosure and Barring Service — Eligibility for roles working with children

Disclosure and Barring Service — Making barring referrals to DBS

NSPCC — What to do if a child reveals abuse

NSPCC Learning — Safer recruitment

Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership — Allegations against staff or volunteers

Surrey County Council — Children's Single Point of Access

External contact details checked on 29 October 2026.