



# Minibus Policy

## Document Owner and Approval

Headteacher is the owner of this document and is responsible for ensuring that this policy document is reviewed in line with the Trust policy review schedule.

A current version of this document is available to all members of staff on the Everychild Partnership website.

Signature:

Date:

**Last reviewed on:** February 2024

**Next review due by** February 2025

**Source/Owner:** Department for Education, Department for Transport and Association of Chief Police Officers.

## **The Aims of this Policy**

To ensure that the schools comply with current legislation and guidance concerning the maintenance and driving of the school minibuses.

To ensure that the safety of minibus users (both drivers and passengers) and other road users and pedestrians is paramount at all times.

To ensure that the Trust is meeting its health and safety and safeguarding obligations towards all members of the school community.

## **Policy Statements**

The schools follow guidance contained within Driving School Minibuses – Advice for Schools and LA's (September 2013) which was published jointly by the Department for Education, Department for Transport and Association of Chief Police Officers.

This policy and the procedures contained within it have been written to provide any members of staff who may need to drive vehicles, on behalf of the school, with the necessary knowledge and information in the light of growing legislation regarding the qualifications, insurance, operating, servicing and inspection requirements to safely operate our minibuses and carry passengers.

The behaviour and competence of the minibus drivers will be assessed to ensure the safe operation of the minibuses and to keep employees and others free of harm.

This policy extends to the use of hired vehicles that are used by the schools.

A copy of this policy will be provided to all minibus drivers and will be kept in the Staff Handbook and retained by the school office.

This policy and the procedures contained within it will be reviewed regularly as part of the schools' Health and Safety review.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of the Local Committee**

The Local Committee is responsible for ensuring that school minibuses operated on behalf of the school fully comply in every respect, with all legal transport and health and safety requirements. This responsibility is delegated to the Head Teacher to ensure its appropriate implementation.

### **Head Teacher**

The Head Teacher will ensure that the school has appropriate safety procedures for the minibus based on the ROSPA Advice for Minibus Safety and their code of practice (in addition to the DfE guidance). A copy of the full code of practice is available at [www.rospace.com](http://www.rospace.com)

## **Section 19 Permit**

All school/college minibuses require a Section 19 Permit, which must be displayed prominently in the window screen of the vehicle.

Section 19 permits are issued by the DVSA (Driver Vehicle Standards Agency) and are valid for 5 years,

## **Responsible Person – [Kathrine Ali](#)**

Ensure that servicing of the minibuses is performed at the correct mileage and that the service book is kept and is ready for inspection at any time.

Ensure that mini-checks (fuel, water, oil and battery levels, tyre pressures and lights) are conducted by an appropriately trained member of the Premises team on a weekly basis.

The Trust Central Team will arrange for appropriate insurance cover and for the payment of annual road tax. The insurance policy is due for renewal each September. The road tax is due on 1<sup>st</sup> September annually.

## **Minibus Drivers**

Follow and comply fully with the requirements outlined in 'Procedures and Practices' section below. Ensure that pre-use checks of the vehicle are conducted and complete the Vehicle Check List.

Report any concerns about the safety and/or condition of the minibus to the HT immediately.

Familiarise themselves with the relevant ROSPA guidance.

Understand the personal legal implications if procedures are not adhered to. For example, "It is the driver's licence that will suffer if the vehicle is found to be defective. It is also the driver's responsibility to ensure the safety (including the use of seatbelts) and welfare of all passengers".

Comply fully with all road traffic laws, respecting speed limits and ensuring use of seatbelts at all times. For longer journeys, frequent rest breaks are to be taken.

Inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team immediately if unfit to undertake a journey in order that alternative arrangements can be made.

Never use a mobile phone (hand held or hands free) as the driver of the vehicle unless it is parked in a safe place with the engine switched off. Making genuine emergency 999 or 112 calls whilst driving is legal.

## **Procedures and Practices Driver Eligibility**

### **Persons Entitled To Drive the Minibus**

Drivers must be aged 21 or over and have held a category B licence for at least 2 years. Minibus drivers must meet the driver licence requirements set out in Driving School Minibuses – Advice for Schools and Local Authorities (November 2014).

Before being authorised to drive the minibus, staff must undergo an assessment conducted by an experienced and appropriately trained minibus driver, booked by the school. This would mean that the staff member would be taken out to familiarise themselves with the driving of the school minibus for a designated time of 1 hour, and demonstrate they are competent to perform specific manoeuvres (e.g. three point turn, reversing around a corner).

Drivers must be medically fit and legally qualified to drive a minibus and are required to complete and sign a driver declaration form to that effect before driving the minibus.

Staff with a medical condition that needs to be declared to the insurers should advise the HT who in turn will advise the Trust Central Team accordingly.

The driver declaration form will be kept on file in the Responsible Person – Kathrine Ali's office.

It is the licence holder's responsibility to notify the HT of any changes to the driver's licence.

Where a driver informs the school that he/she has acquired penalty points on his/her licence, the Head Teacher will determine whether he/she is permitted to drive the minibus (no more than 3 points). **Please advise the Trust Central Team immediately as the insurance company also needs to be informed.**

Only those named on the approved drivers list (a copy of which is held by Kathrine Ali) will be eligible to drive the school minibuses.

### **Vehicle Readiness and Maintenance Servicing, MOT, Insurance and Taxation**

Servicing and MOT testing will be carried out at the appropriate intervals, and in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

Appropriately Trained members of the Premises team, as directed by the HT, will conduct weekly mini-checks on fuel, water, oil and battery levels, tyre pressures and lights. A signed record will be maintained to demonstrate that these checks have been undertaken.

### **Minibus Bookings and Administration**

The School Minibus is only to be used for school activities (or related at discretion of Headteacher) and is not to be used for hire or reward.

All bookings should be made via Kathrine Ali in the Sandcross Office.

A list of students and staff on the journey, and journey details (to include departure and return times) is to be left with the school office prior to departure. The office should be provided with relevant contact numbers for staff using the vehicle(s).

Drivers must sign for the vehicle in the booking diary when collecting the minibus keys from the Sandcross Office - Kathrine Ali (failure to do so may render the journey unauthorised for insurance purposes), and collect the Minibus File, which contains a copy of the Highway Code, the Minibus Policy, spare checklists, a notepad and pen.

Drivers must return the vehicle's keys and the Minibus File to the Sandcross Office on returning to school. If the minibus is being returned out of school hours, the keys and minibus file should be handed in on the next working day.

### **Pre-Use Vehicle Checks**

The school minibus must be maintained to high levels. As well as MOT and servicing, drivers should satisfy themselves that the vehicle is safe to drive. If the serviceability of the vehicle is in doubt, it is not to be used until it has been repaired.

Pre-use checks are to be recorded on the Vehicle Check List found in the Minibus File, which must be signed for on collection and return of keys from the Sandcross Office. Completed Vehicle Check Lists are to be given to Kathrine Ali on return of the minibus who will take any action necessary. These lists will be retained by the School.

Pre-use checks must include lights (headlights, hazards, brakes, reversing, side and indicators), horn, mirrors, doors (open, close and lock correctly), steering, seatbelts and windscreen wipers (including windscreen wiper wash). A walk around the vehicle should occur to check for damage/defects and to assess tyre condition.

If the driver has concerns about the condition of the vehicle it must not be used and these concerns must be reported to the HT.

Mileage records should be used to help monitor fuel consumption.

Prior to the start of each journey, the driver is to go through a brief talk with students regarding the wearing of seatbelts, journey time, being seated at all times, behaviour, noise levels and escape procedures. The journey is not to commence unless the requirements of the driver are complied with.

## **Fuel**

The School Minibuses have a fuel card that enables fuel to be purchased and charged to the School's account.

A member of the Premises team will regularly check the school minibuses to ensure that the vehicles have adequate fuel (at least half a tank). It may, however, be necessary for the minibus driver to refuel whilst on a journey.

The fuel level should not go below a quarter, this helps prevent primer damage and fuel tank sediment entering the engine.

## **Equipment**

It is recommended that the following equipment is carried on board the Minibus. If items are used during a journey, please inform the School office who will replenish supplies:

- Appropriately equipped First Aid Box.
- Fire Extinguisher - At least one fire extinguisher (which complies with BS 5432 or equivalent and has a minimum test rating of 8A or 21B) that contains foam.
- Warning Triangle - This should be used in the event of breakdown and carefully positioned 50m behind the vehicle to warn other road users of the broken down vehicle.
- Hi-Visibility Vest.

## **Tidiness**

The Minibus should be left tidy. Eating and drinking on it should be discouraged (exceptions can be made in circumstances of long delay). Bin bags are to be carried and made available for rubbish. Dirty/muddy kit (especially boots and shoes) must not be worn in the minibus. Clean tracksuits/footwear should be taken if students are likely to get muddy.

## **Vehicle Operation Capacity**

No more than 16 passengers and a driver may be carried in the school minibus.

## **Seat Belts/Luggage**

Before setting off, the driver/driver's assistant must ensure that passengers are wearing seat belts and any luggage is securely stowed. Students are to be informed that seatbelts are to be worn at all times when the vehicle is in motion.

## **Driving Rules**

Drivers are responsible for driving within the law and in accordance with the Highway Code (a copy is

held in the Sandcross Office and in each minibus). The School will not refund fines or other costs incurred by drivers as a result of any road traffic or parking offence. Drivers must inform the HT of any penalty points received whilst using the school minibus; failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

### **National speed limits apply to the school minibus.**

**Restricted road:** 30mph

**Single carriageway:** 50mph

**Dual carriageway:** 60mph

**Motorway:** 70mph

It is school policy that under normal road conditions, a minibus should not be driven in the third lane of a motorway.

Vehicles are not to be driven by anyone who has consumed **any** amount of alcohol or illegal substance.

Some medication may impair a driver's ability and employees who are taking medicines of this nature are not to drive vehicles.

All accidents, whether or not they cause injury to persons or damage to property, are to be reported to the school as soon as possible after they occur.

Keys must not be left in an unattended vehicle at any time.

Due consideration must be given to parking in secure areas as much as possible, particularly where overnight stays are required.

Vehicles must not be driven at any time if the load being carried exceeds the maximum allowable weight capacity.

Smoking is prohibited on the minibus at any time.

### **Driver's Assistant**

The minibus risk assessment will determine if a driver assistant is needed.

This person should be positioned near the back of the minibus to observe behaviour and maintain good order. They can also make and receive phone calls so the driver does not have to. They should also help with reversing and need to be visible at all times to the reversing driver. They should assist in a breakdown or accident and can act as a relief driver if they are trained and authorised to do so.

### **Reversing of vehicles**

Reversing vehicles can be particularly hazardous. The best way of avoiding a reversing accident is to avoid reversing a vehicle wherever possible.

Always check behind your vehicle before reversing – if necessary, ask someone to watch the area into which you will be reversing.

If you use a guide, ensure they can be seen at all times whilst manoeuvring – if two members of staff are present, one must at all times be the guide when reversing.

Ensure rear view mirrors are clean and properly adjusted at all times.

## **Distraction during driving**

The use of mobile phones is strictly prohibited whilst operating the vehicle. There are other similar activities, which can be unsafe and thus may attract the attention of the police, such as drinking (soft drinks), eating, smoking, or even changing a radio channel. To this end, any action whilst driving, which could cause distraction must be avoided.

## **Tiredness**

Driving when tired greatly increases the risk of an accident. The Highway Code recommends that a driver takes a minimum break of at least 15 minutes after every two hours of driving. However, after a full working day, drivers **MUST NOT** drive for a continuous period of more than two hours without taking a suitable break.

If an authorised relief driver is available to drive a journey can be continued without a break.

Drivers should use common sense to ascertain their suitability to drive at a given time (consider tiredness, recent alcohol or medicine consumption, illness etc.).

## **Safety**

Children aged 3 years to their 12<sup>th</sup> Birthday or until they are 135cm tall (approximately 4'5") must use child booster seats that are fitted properly if sitting in the front seat.

The school office will obtain additional permission from the parents/guardians for any child to be able to sit in the front seat.

Whilst driving the minibus, drivers should ensure that all doors are unlocked to assist with emergency egress if the need arises.

Drivers should ensure that internal lights are off whilst driving so that their vision is not impaired by the internal light.

Exits/gangways should be clear of obstructions (such as bags) at all times. Bags can go on spare seats and under seats.

If a trailer is used, the back doors of the minibus need to be able to open fully to help students escape safely if necessary.

Dealing with 'road rage': If threatened by another driver, do not retaliate by flashing lights, sounding the horn or making offensive gestures; this only attracts a response and will often make a situation worse. If forced to stop, stay in the vehicle with windows closed and doors locked and be prepared to drive off. If necessary, use your mobile phone to contact the police for assistance - note the registration number of the vehicle, and the make and colour, plus a description of the driver and occupants and give the police these details.

**Unsafe situations:** If you feel that driving cannot be in complete safety, do not continue. Members of staff are not required to put themselves at risk at any time whilst driving on behalf of the school.

**Security** Whenever the vehicle is left unattended, all windows are to be closed and doors locked.

## **Accident and Breakdown Procedures Breakdown Procedures**

Standard breakdown procedures are to be followed where necessary:

If on a public road, get out of the vehicle on the safe side – nearest the path or verge.

If on a motorway, follow the instructions of the emergency operator, which may include staying in the vehicle, or getting out of the vehicle and not getting back into the vehicle again.

Avoid going near the traffic flow and exercise extreme caution at all times.

If possible, leave a motorway, dual carriageway or main road if a fault occurs, which will reduce the risk of collision, but park in a well-lit place so that the vehicle can be seen by other road users.

In the event of breakdown contact Daysfleet DriverLine 0345 296 4423.

It is best to use a roadside emergency telephone if possible as this will pinpoint your location.

School should also be contacted, when practical, in the event of a breakdown.

Staff **should not** change a tyre or attempt repairs. This should be carried out by a breakdown team.

#### **In the event of an accident:**

1. Deal with any injured persons.
2. Ensure the safety of everyone involved.
3. If necessary, call the emergency services.

In all cases, stop at the scene and take the names, addresses and telephone numbers of people involved, including independent witnesses. Take photos of the accident scene, from various angles, if possible. Breakdown procedures should be carried out if necessary.

In the event of a serious incident, emergency contact numbers are available in the Minibus File (carried on all journeys).

**School Contact numbers are:**     **01737 245467 (Sandcross School)**  
   **01737 763549 (Hatchlands School)**  
   **01737 926582 (Everychild Trust)**

**General** Any member of staff who has queries relating to the driving of the school minibus or the condition the vehicle should bring them to the attention of the HT.

#### **APPENDICES:**

Appendix 1: Pre-Drive Safety Check Form (Carried out by driver)  
                    Weekly Checklist (Carried out by Premises team)

Appendix 2: Minibus Defect Notification Form

Appendix 3: Daysfleet Driverline



## APPENDIX 1 - PRE-DRIVE SAFETY CHECK FORM

<b>NAME OF MINIBUS DRIVER:</b>	<b>NAME OF VISIT/TRIP:</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>NAME OF ACADEMY:</b>
<b>NUMBER PLATE OF VEHICLE:</b>	

Each time the minibus is used, the driver should carry out a pre-drive safety check. This should be repeated each time the driver takes over the vehicle. The driver should walk around the vehicle to check for visible defects, and check the items listed below.

### **DAILY CHECKS**

	<u>OK</u>	<u>NOT OK</u>
<b>FUEL LEVEL</b>		
<b>WINDSCREEN &amp; WINDOWS</b> Including wipers - undamaged & Clean		
<b>WINDSCREEN WASHER FLUID</b>		
<b>WIPER BLADES</b> Undamaged & Clean		
<b>LIGHTS</b> Including Headlights, Hazard Lights, Brake Lights, Reverse Lights, Indicators etc		
<b>HORN</b>		
<b>MIRRORS &amp; DOORS</b> Open, close and lock correctly		
<b>TYRE PRESSURE</b>		
<b>TYRE TREAD</b> Including cuts/bulges		
<b>STEERING</b>		
<b>SEATBELTS</b> Undamaged & Working		
<b>LUGGAGE</b> Securely stowed & Aisles/Exits Clear		
<b>RUBBISH</b> All rubbish to be collected during and after use		

### **WEEKLY CHECKS**

(In addition to the Daily Checks)

	<u>OK</u>	<u>NOT OK</u>
<b>OIL LEVEL</b>		
<b>COOLANT LEVEL</b>		
<b>BRAKE FLUID</b>		
<b>MIRRORS</b> Are correctly adjusted, clean & unobstructed		
<b>DASHBOARD CONTROLS</b> Position & function/purpose of all controls		
<b>BRAKE &amp; CLUTCH PEDALS</b> Check for pressure		
<b>WHEEL BRACE &amp; JACK</b>		
<b>FIRST AID KIT</b>		
<b>FIRE EXTINGUISHER</b>		
<b>PAPERWORK</b> Permits, Insurance Documents, MOT & Tax		
<b>DAMAGE &amp; SHARP EDGES</b>		
<b>STEERING</b>		
<b>ENGINE NOISE</b>		
<b>VEHICLE BODY CONDITION</b>		

### **EMERGENCY SUPPLIES TICK SHEET**

First aid kit - fully stocked	
Fire extinguisher	
Warning triangle	
Copy of trip's risk assessment	
Operation DUKE cards	

If ALL of the above 'OK' boxes are not ticked, **DO NOT USE THE MINIBUS**. Faults must be reported to **Anita Russell** using the form below. The minibus may only be used once the faults listed have been reported, rectified and re-checked.

## APPENDIX 2 – MINIBUS DEFECT NOTIFICATION FORM

This form **MUST** be sent to Anita Russell as soon as possible when a defect(s) is identified, so that appropriate action can be taken.

**NATURE OF DEFECT(S):**

**DATE:**

**REPORTED BY:**

**ACTION TAKEN:**

**DATE DEFECT RECTIFIED:**

**RE-CHECKED BY:**  
**ON:**

### **APPENDIX 3 – DAYSFLEET DRIVERLINE**

Tel: 0345 296 4423

Select Option 1 for breakdown, windscreen repairs/replacement or accident management