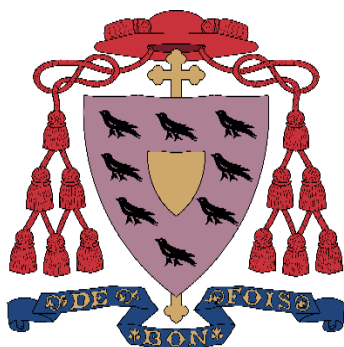




Bishop Chadwick

Catholic Education Trust

Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust

Minibus Policy

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish the regulations and requirements of the Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust (BCCET) Minibus Policy to ensure the safe management of minibus-related activities across the Trust. It outlines the conditions under which employees are permitted to drive a minibus. All BCCET schools with a minibus must adopt this policy, which can be further supplemented by school-specific guidance that provides more detailed instructions on minibus operation, fuelling procedures, and driver training where necessary.

2. Scope

This policy has been developed to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the safety of all individuals using owned or leased minibuses, while also safeguarding valuable assets by keeping them in good and safe condition. It applies to all journeys made in BCCET school minibuses and extends to the use of hired or leased vehicles utilised by BCCET schools.

3. Policy Principles

This policy has been developed in accordance with the guidance outlined in *Driving School Minibuses – Advice for Schools and Local Authorities (September 2013)*, jointly published by the Department for Education and the Department for Transport. It provides staff with the essential knowledge and information needed to drive minibuses safely, taking into account the increasing legislative requirements concerning driver qualifications, insurance, vehicle operation, servicing, and inspection.

The policy and its procedures will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if required by changes in legislation.

Only authorised personnel are permitted to drive Trust vehicles. All drivers must read and adhere to this BCCET Minibus Policy, along with any additional guidance provided by their individual school.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 School

All Trust employees must comply with the current guidelines set by the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Department for Education (DfE) when operating a school minibus. Each minibus driver must be provided with a copy of this policy, along with any referenced documents, to be read alongside relevant school-specific guidance.

While schools are required to adopt the Trust's policy, they may also develop their own driver guidance documentation to complement it. School-level guidance is likely to include:

- A code of conduct for pupils using minibuses.
- Health and safety regulations.
- Security precautions and procedures.
- Breakdown and accident procedures.
- Instructions for fuelling the minibus.

Schools must maintain a list of required equipment such as a complete first aid kit, fire extinguisher, warning triangle, and high-visibility jackets etc. A full list can be found in the *ROSPA First Aid Kit and Other Equipment for Minibuses* document (see Appendix C).

Schools must also maintain an approved list of minibus drivers, ensuring that:

- **Driver licence checks:** Drivers are asked to share their details annually, allowing the school to conduct licence checks via [the government's online service](#). These checks must be recorded on the Trust's Every system.
- **Annual Driver Declaration:** Drivers must sign a declaration confirming their understanding and acceptance of the policies and their responsibilities when driving a school minibus (refer to Appendix A for the template).
- **Minibus training:** Any training completed by staff members should be recorded.

BCCET does not require all drivers to complete MIDAS training before transporting pupils in school minibuses. It is recommended, but not required, that at least one member of staff is MIDAS accredited so that they can advise other staff with regards to good mini-bus operations and checks. Ideally this would be a member of staff with an appropriate level of authority to advise other drivers. BCCET doesn't recommend a particular training provider however a list of providers can be found on the Community Transport Association website.

[Community Transport Association - MIDAS suppliers](#)

However, as a minimum, each school must designate a member of the Senior Leadership Team with sufficient experience to approve driver applications. This Senior Leader is responsible for ensuring that the proposed driver is confident in their ability and has adequate driving experience to safely operate a minibus. If the school determines that a staff member would benefit from additional training before being authorised to drive, this training should be provided.

Schools must ensure that their minibuses meet the following requirements:

- They are used exclusively for journeys aligned with the organisation's core non-profit purpose, such as school trips, travel to sporting events during the school day, or extra-curricular activities (classified as non-commercial/social purposes).
- No trailer is attached unless the driver holds a D1 licence.

- The vehicle carries no more than 16 passengers.
- The minibus does not exceed the maximum load weight specified in the vehicle handbook.
- It is correctly licensed with a valid Section 19 Permit and complies with all related regulations.
- A valid tax certificate is in place.
- The minibus is adequately insured.
- The vehicle has a valid MOT certificate if it is more than one year old.
- A valid Section 19 Permit is displayed if required.
- The vehicle is well maintained in accordance with the inspection intervals specified under [Section 19](#)

The Trust's Central Services Finance Team is responsible for procuring vehicle insurance across the Trust. However, schools must ensure that their minibuses are correctly listed in the fleet insurance documentation. Each school must also maintain a copy of the insurance policy and be familiar with the procedure for reporting an incident. School leaders must be fully confident that insurance is in place for their minibuses and be familiar with the policy details and any limitations. Schools and minibus users must also be aware of the following:

- Who is authorised to drive each school minibus.
- Any additional insurance cover that may be required, such as when taking a minibus abroad.
- Guidelines for use by external agencies or staff from other Trust schools, particularly when organising for Hire & Reward or Minibus Loaning (refer to Sections 9 and 11 for further details).

Schools must ensure that all minibus drivers have held a full UK driving licence for at least two years and have experience driving similar vehicles (or are given an opportunity to practise ahead of journeys with children).

The school is responsible for arranging regular vehicle checks and the general maintenance of the minibuses (see Section 6 for further information).

If a school wishes to purchase or lease a minibus, they should first contact the Trust's Central Services Finance Team.

4.2 Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust

The Trust is responsible for regularly reviewing, updating, and publishing this policy in accordance with current government regulations and guidelines. This ensures that the procedures outlined remain compliant with evolving legislation and best practices regarding the operation of minibuses.

The Trust's Central Services Finance Team is responsible for the procurement of vehicle insurance for all minibuses across the Trust. This ensures consistent and comprehensive insurance coverage for all Trust-owned or operated minibuses.

By maintaining these responsibilities, the Trust ensures that minibuses across all schools operate safely, legally, and efficiently, protecting both staff and students during school-related travel.

4.3 Minibus Drivers

All eligible minibus drivers must:

- Complete an annual driving licence check as requested by the school.
- Read and comply with both Trust and school-level Minibus Policies.
- Ensure that the minibus is covered by the school's insurance policy for the intended journey.
- Sign the school's Driver Declaration Agreement (see appendix A for the template).
- Conduct pre-drive safety checks of the vehicle and complete the Pre-Drive Safety Checklist (see appendix B).
- Review the First Aid Kit and Other Equipment for Minibuses before each trip. (see appendix C)
- Report any concerns regarding the minibus's safety, condition, or any endorsements, impending endorsements, and disqualifications to the School Business Manager.
- Verify if their driving triggers any additional legal requirements, such as laws governing drivers' hours, tachographs (if applicable), and Certificates of Professional Competence.
- Be aware of the personal legal implications if procedures are not followed.
- Fully comply with all road traffic laws, including speed limits, and ensure seatbelts are worn by all passengers unless a medical exemption is in place.
- Take frequent rest breaks on long journeys (15-minute breaks after driving continuously for more than 2 hours). A second adult should accompany the driver on trips over 2 hours or if a risk assessment indicates additional support is needed.
- Inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) immediately if they are unfit to undertake a journey, so alternative arrangements can be made.
- Refrain from using mobile phones (whether hand-held or hands-free) while driving unless the vehicle is safely parked with the engine switched off.
- Not drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Adhere to the Highway Code at all times.

Where school guidelines require it, drivers may also be asked to complete the mileage log for all journeys. Fines or fixed penalty tickets are the responsibility of the driver; neither the Trust nor the school will cover parking or traffic fines.

In the event of a road traffic collision, drivers must:

- Stop and assess whether emergency services are needed.
- Record the details of any witnesses.
- Exchange details with other drivers involved.
- Call for additional assistance if needed and inform the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Note: The SLT, or a designated staff member, is responsible for filing an insurance claim on behalf of the driver.
- Take photographs of the accident scene.
- Refrain from admitting liability.

5. Driver Eligibility

Only individuals listed on the annually approved drivers list, held by the school, are eligible to drive the school minibuses.

To become an approved and eligible minibus driver, an individual must:

- Hold the appropriate driver licence (as outlined below*).
- Demonstrate that their licence remains "clean" and that they are legally eligible to drive, agreeing to immediately report any changes to their licence status to the school. The driver must cease driving the minibus until the situation is investigated and resolved. It is the driver's responsibility to notify the school of any changes to their licence before the annual licence check.
- Be medically fit and legally qualified to drive a minibus. If a driver develops a medical condition that affects their ability to drive, they must inform the school without delay.
- Sign an annual Driver Declaration Agreement, confirming their understanding and adherence to both the Trust and school-level minibus policies (see Appendix A for the template).
- Complete any necessary training. (BCCET does not require all drivers to complete MIDAS training before transporting pupils. However, schools must appoint a Senior Leadership Team member to ensure drivers feel confident and have sufficient driving experience. If additional training is deemed necessary by the school, it should be provided.)

***Driver Licence Requirements:**

- A category D1 (unrestricted) driving licence obtained before 1 January 1997.
- A category D1 (101) driving licence obtained after 1 January 1997, with the driver having been assessed by the school's designated Senior Leader as competent in handling larger vehicles.

Drivers with a full D1 (or D) PCV entitlement may drive minibuses for hire or reward.

Special Circumstances for Category B Licence Holders:

Drivers who hold a car (category B) licence may drive a minibus within the UK, provided the following conditions are met:

- The driver passed their category B test before 1 January 1997, which automatically grants a D1 (101) entitlement (not for hire or reward). These drivers may transport up to 16 passengers with no maximum weight restriction on the vehicle, and those with a D1 + E (101) entitlement may tow trailers over 750kg.
- For those who passed their category B test on or after 1 January 1997, they may drive a minibus not used for hire and reward if:
 - They are over 21 and have held a category B licence for at least 2 years.
 - The minibus is used by a non-commercial body for social purposes.
 - They receive no payment other than reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses (e.g., fuel, parking).
 - The service is provided on a voluntary basis.
 - The minibus's gross weight is no more than 3.5 tonnes (or 4.25 tonnes if equipped to carry disabled passengers).
 - They do not tow a trailer unless they hold a D1 licence.

6. Vehicle Checks and Maintenance

Servicing and MOT testing must be carried out at least once a year and in line with the manufacturer's recommendations. Additionally, [Section 19 vehicle inspections](#) are required at specific intervals based on the age of the vehicle:

- Vehicles less than 12 years old must be inspected every 10 weeks.
- Vehicles over 12 years old must be inspected every 6 weeks.

These inspections must be arranged by individual schools.

School site staff are responsible for conducting weekly and three-monthly checks to ensure there are no issues with fuel, water, oil, battery levels, tyre pressures, lights, and other key components. A signed record must be kept to confirm these checks have been completed.

In addition to MOT, servicing, and regular checks, drivers must ensure the vehicle is safe to drive before each journey. If there are any doubts about the vehicle's condition, it should not be used until it has been inspected by a qualified individual and repaired if necessary. Drivers should complete the Pre-Drive Safety Checklist (Appendix B) before each trip, noting any issues that need attention. Completed checklists should be handed to the designated school staff member upon return of the minibus, where they will be retained for one year as proof of checks and for necessary follow-up actions.

Where applicable, mileage records should be maintained to help monitor fuel consumption. Before beginning each journey, drivers should give a brief talk to pupils about the behavioural expectations in accordance with the school behaviour policy.

School minibuses must be kept clean both inside and out at all times, as they represent the high standards of BCCET within the community.

7. Payments to drivers and the implications

Paid to drive: If a staff member's contract specifies that driving a minibus is part of their duties, or if they receive additional compensation specifically for driving (beyond reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses), this is considered payment for driving the minibus. In such cases, the driver is not considered a volunteer and would need to hold a full D1 licence (or a full D licence) to legally drive the minibus.

Not paid to drive: If a staff member's contract does not include driving minibuses as part of their responsibilities and they receive no extra payment for driving students to trips or events (apart from reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses**), this would be considered voluntary driving. In these circumstances, a category B licence would be sufficient, provided the necessary conditions are met, even if the school reimburses them for fuel, parking, and tolls.

**Out-of-pocket expenses include reimbursement for fuel, parking fees, tolls, or similar costs incurred during a trip. The driver should not receive any additional payments for driving the minibus, and out-of-pocket expenses must never include compensation for driving itself.

8. Using a Minibus for hire or reward

A minibus used for hire or reward must hold a Section 19 permit.

A vehicle is considered to be operated for hire or reward if any form of payment is made, whether in cash or in kind, regardless of the recipient. Payments can be made directly by the passenger or on their behalf. This includes direct payments, such as a fare, or indirect payments, like a contribution for a school trip or a membership fee. Indirect payments are typically regarded as hire or reward by the courts because those who haven't made the payment wouldn't have the right to travel. A minibus is classified as being used for hire or reward when there is a clear and logical connection between the payment and the transportation, even if that link is indirect.

9. Section 19 Permits

A Section 19 permit is required when charging passengers, either directly or indirectly, for travel. Schools must apply for a Section 19 minibus permit, taking into account the following conditions:

- The vehicle must be able to carry between 9 and 16 passengers.
- It is only used for a voluntary organisation that benefits the community, such as an educational, religious, or sports organisation.
- The minibus service is exclusively for members of that organisation and not open to the general public.
- Any charges made are solely to cover running costs, with no profit involved.

Schools can apply for a minibus permit through the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) by visiting: [Application for a standard or large bus permit \(PSV372\) - GOV.UK](#).

10. Procuring Minibuses

Should a school wish to purchase or lease a minibus, approval is required from the CFO/CEO in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation and Trust Finance Policy.

Appendix A – Annual Driver Declaration

Annual Driver Declaration

Surname:		Forename/s:	
Date of Birth:		Department	

Please tick to acknowledge your agreement	Statement
	I confirm I have received guidance regarding the appropriate use of the School vehicle/s, including the BCCET Minibus Policy and ROSPA's Driver's Guidance and that I will adhere to all such guidance.
	I agree to exercise due care for the safety of passengers and security of vehicles whilst in my care.
	I understand that it is an offence under the Road Traffic Act to knowingly make a false statement to obtain insurance cover.
	I agree to notify the School Business Manager or Headteacher of any illness, condition or event that may affect my ability to drive, including all driving convictions. I understand that failure to do so and any false declaration made here will render the school's insurance invalid and in that event I personally may be liable for any claims made against me.
	I agree to undertake a pre journey inspection of the vehicle to ensure the vehicle is roadworthy and that should I identify any serious defect, or I am in any doubt regarding its roadworthiness, I will not drive the vehicle. I will report any defects to the School Business Manager or Headteacher immediately
	I agree to report all incidents/accidents and all damage to school vehicles in my charge however caused.
	I agree to only use the school vehicles in accordance with official school business and will only carry passengers in relation to official school business.
	I agree to abide by all road traffic legislation.
	I understand I will be personally liable for any parking fines, fixed penalty tickets or other road traffic fines issued in relation to the minibus when it is in my care.
	I understand in order to be authorised to drive a school vehicle I must: 1. Submit a declaration agreement annually, and; 2. Supply my driving licence for it to be checked annually, and; 3. Agree to undertake driver assessments or tests as instructed to do so
	I declare that the details on this page are correct to the best of my knowledge.

Driver's signature:		Date:	
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Received by School (NAME and Signature):		Date:	
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Appendix B – ROSPA Pre-Drive Safety Checklist

Pre-Drive Safety Checklist



Date: Driver Name:

Vehicle Registration No: Start Miles:

Interior Checks	Working/ Present	Defective/ Missing	Comments
Mirrors are correctly adjusted, clean and unobstructed			
Position and function/purpose of all the dashboard controls			
Position of driving seat so that all controls can be operated comfortably			
Pressure on brake pedal			
Wipers and washers are working properly			
Fuel level (and type of fuel: diesel or petrol)			
Heating and ventilation systems working			
All seats are fixed and secure and all seatbelts are undamaged and working properly			
Location of wheel brace and jack			
Location and contents of first aid kit and fire extinguisher(s)			
Relevant paperwork (permit disc, insurance, MOT, emergency numbers and driving licence)			
Change for parking or the telephone (or mobile phone or phonecard)			
Luggage is securely stowed and aisles and exits are clear			
Damage or sharp edges			
Emergency equipment (e.g., high visibility jacket, torch, warning triangle, webbing cutter, First Aid Kit)			
All doors are unlocked			
Horn is in working order			
Interior lights are working			
Equipment for wheelchair users (wheelchair tie-downs, passenger safety belts and harnesses) is available.			
No warning lights lit on the dashboard			

Pre-Drive Safety Checklist



Exterior Checks	Working/ Present	Defective/ Missing	Comments
Oil level			
Coolant level			
Windscreen washer fluid level			
Brake fluid level			
Power Steering Fluid (If applicable)			
Windscreen and windows are clean and undamaged			
Wiper blades are clean and undamaged			
Exterior mirrors are correctly adjusted, clean and unobstructed			
Lights, including brake lights and indicators, are clean and working			
Tyre pressures, including the spare (and inner tyres and tyres on a trailer, if applicable)			
Tyre tread, including the spare and inner tyres and tyres on the trailer, if applicable. At least 3.0mm across centre 3/4 is recommended. Any cuts and bulges?			
Mirrors are correctly adjusted, clean and unobstructed			
Doors open and close properly			
Trailer brake lights and indicators work, if applicable			
Lift (if fitted) works safely and is securely stowed			
Ramp (if fitted) works safely and is securely stowed			
Roof rack or trailer is properly fitted, and all luggage is securely held			
No (Unreported) Damage to bodywork or sharp edges			
Fluid leaks			

Comments:

Appendix C – ROSPA First Aid Kit and Other Equipment for Minibuses

First Aid Kit and Other Equipment for Minibuses



First Aid Kit

- 10 antiseptic wipes, foil packed
- 1 conforming disposable bandage (not less than 7.5 cm wide)
- 2 triangular bandages
- 1 packet of 24 assorted adhesive dressings
- 3 large sterile unmedicated ambulance dressings (not less than 15 x 20 cm)
- 2 sterile eye pads with attachments
- 12 assorted safety pins
- 1 pair of rustproof blunt-ended scissors
- Disposable gloves
- Mouth mask for resuscitation.

Make sure that even minor uses of a first aid kit are recorded in an accident book, and that stock is replaced after use. Check that all items are 'in date' and replace any that have passed their expiry date.

Fire Extinguisher

At least one fire extinguisher (two are recommended for accessible minibuses) which:

- complies with BS 5432 (or an equivalent, e.g. BSEN 3), and
- has a minimum test rating of 8A or 21B, and
- contains foam (please note they must not contain Halon)

Other Equipment

It is recommended that the following should also be carried:

- Pen and paper
- The organisation's internal instructions and contact details
- Insurance details
- Motoring breakdown policy details
- Mobile phone, phonecard or change for the phone
- Webbing cutter
- A high-visibility coat complying with BS EN 471 or BS EN ISO 20471
- An emergency warning triangle or a flashing beacon (not fitted to the vehicle)
- A working torch
- Sterile gloves and mouth masks.