



Mini-Bus Policy and Procedures

Created: October 2015

Updated: August 2022

Review By: Autumn 2024



Statement of Intent

St Mary's Catholic High School understands that minibuses are a useful form of transport, and are often required for outings such as educational visits or trips.

The school also understands that safety on the minibus, and of the minibus itself, is paramount when travelling. As a result, this policy has been created to provide guidance on the responsibilities and procedures associated with the use of minibuses.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory and non-statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Road Traffic Act 1988 (As amended)
- The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licenses) Regulations 1999 (As amended 2015)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- DfE and Department for Transport (2013) 'Driving school minibuses: advice for schools and local authorities'
- RoSPA (2015) 'Minibus safety A Code of Practice'
- GOV.UK (2016) 'Child car seats: the law'
- GOV.UK (2014) 'Seat belts: the law'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Educational Visits and School Trips Policy
- Administering Medication Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The Business Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring that a full MOT on the school minibus is carried out by the required date.
- Providing appropriate tax and licensing for the minibus.
- Ensuring that the minibus is appropriately insured, and roadside assistance is organised.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that a second driver is available when appropriate.
- Setting minimum criteria for the minibus driver and ensuring they conform to it.
- Undertaking generic and specific risk assessments.
- Handling any maintenance reports.
- Establishing an emergency procedure in the event of accidents or breakdowns.
- Reviewing this policy.

The driver is responsible for:

- Ensuring that they are eligible to drive as per the eligibility requirements outlined in this policy.
- Adhering to all relevant road rules and laws, including any driving hours regulations.
- Ensuring that all passengers are wearing a seatbelt.
- Conducting additional safety checks on the minibus before travelling.
- Ensuring that the minibus is used for the purposes outlined in the insurance policy.

Supervisors are responsible for:

- Taking headcounts when boarding and exiting the minibus to ensure everyone is accounted for.
- Keeping a record of the names and contact numbers for any pupils travelling in the minibus.
- Ensuring that passengers continue to wear their seatbelts throughout the journey.
- Ensuring that passengers model good levels of behaviour, and responding to any disruption appropriately.
- Ensuring that passengers do not consume food or drink on the minibus.
- Ensuring that there is at least one first aider on the minibus.

Passengers are responsible for:

- Following all instructions issued by the driver and supervisors.
- Wearing their seatbelt at all times during the journey.
- Conducting good levels of behaviour, and not distracting the driver.
- Conducting good levels of behaviour towards drivers in other vehicles.
- Keeping all exits clear for the duration of the journey.
- Maintaining the exterior and interior of the vehicle, and ensuring no damage is caused.

Eligibility

A minibus is defined as a motor vehicle with between 9 and 16 passenger seats. It is described as a category D1 vehicle by the Driving Vehicle Licencing Authority (DVLA).

To be eligible to drive a minibus for hire or reward, drivers will hold a full D1 (or D) passenger carrying vehicle (PCV) entitlement. All drivers of the minibus will be between the ages of 21 and 70.

Before any individual is permitted to drive the minibus, they are required to provide their driver's licence to the business manager, who will record confirmation of this and make a photocopy for school records.

If the business manager is not satisfied that the driver's licence is sufficient, they will inform the driver that they are not eligible to drive the minibus.

Drivers of the minibus are required to have at least two years' experience as a qualified driver.

Drivers with more than three points on their license will not be eligible to drive the minibus.

Drivers will also be eligible to drive a minibus if they passed their category B (car) driving test **before** 1 January 1997, provided the minibus is not being used for hire or reward.

In these circumstances, there will be a passenger limit of 16 and no maximum weight restriction on the vehicle.

Drivers with a D1 + E entitlement may also tow a trailer weighing up to 750kg.

Drivers will also be eligible to drive a minibus if they passed their category B (car) driving test **on or after** 1 January 1997, provided the minibus is not being used for hire or reward, and the following conditions are met:

- The driver is over 21 years old and has held a category B (car) driving licence for at least two years
- The minibus is used by a non-commercial body for non-commercial purposes, e.g. school sports team travelling to a fixture
- The driver receives no payment other than the recovery of their out-of-pocket expenses, e.g. fuel and parking costs
- The driver provides the service on a voluntary basis
- The gross vehicle weight of the minibus does not exceed 3.5 tonnes (or 4.25 tonnes if including any specialist equipment to carry disabled passengers)
- The driver does not tow a trailer

Drivers holding a category B (car) licence, obtained on or after 1 January 1997, are eligible to drive any vehicle weighing a maximum of 3.5 tonnes, with a maximum of eight passengers, and with a trailer weighing a maximum of 750kg, e.g. 'Lightweight Minibuses'.

Drivers may also apply for a minibus permit, also known as a section 19 permit scheme, via the LA if there is a need to charge passengers.

Drivers holding either a category B (car) licence or a category D1 (101) licence are entitled to drive a minibus operated for hire or reward if they also hold a section 19 permit.

To be eligible for a minibus permit, the following criteria will be satisfied:

- The vehicle carries between 9 and 16 passengers
- The vehicle is being driven for a voluntary organisation that benefits the community

- The minibus service is only available for members of that organisation, and not the general public
- Any charges are requested to cover running costs and not for personal profit
- The driver is 21 or older

Risk assessment

The business manager will conduct a risk assessment of the minibus; this will be reviewed annually and in response to any services, or following a breakdown/accident.

The business manager will also conduct a generic risk assessment of the minibus service, covering factors such as supervising drivers, parental consent, journey planning, accident procedures, etc.

Additional risk assessments may also be completed for specific journeys, if necessary.

Procedures

The keys for the minibus are held in the business manager's office.

The keys will be signed in and out of by the driver of the minibus – they will be signed back in as soon as the minibus returns to the premises.

The driver of the minibus will ensure that:

- They are legally entitled, and properly insured, to drive the minibus.
- The minibus is well-maintained and legally allowed on the road.
- The minibus has a valid MOT certificate and insurance.
- The minibus has a valid permit disc, if operating under a section 19 permit scheme.

A designated member of staff will carry out and record a weekly maintenance check on the minibus using the ['Maintenance checklist'](#).

The 'Maintenance checklist' will be updated following every service, with details of each of the checks.

The minibus will be cleaned on a weekly basis by a designated member of staff.

If the appointed person has any concerns regarding the safety or roadworthiness of the minibus, they will inform the business manager, who will organise appropriate action.

If the driver has any serious concerns regarding the safety or roadworthiness of the minibus during the journey, e.g. a flat tyre, a call will be made to the business manager, and the breakdown procedure will be followed.

If the driver notices any minor defects during the journey which do not compromise the safety of the driver or passengers, e.g. one broken windscreen wiper, these can be reported to the business manager after the journey.

The minibus will not be used in any situations where a cause for concern has been identified by a qualified mechanic.

In addition to the weekly checks, and before beginning the journey, the driver will:

- Plan the journey so that it can be completed safely and comfortably in line with the passengers' needs.
- Conduct a visual inspection of the minibus and the pre-drive checklist.
- Ensure that they are fit and able to drive.
- Conduct a moving brake test.
- Ensure that all rubbish is removed and there is no damage to the inside or outside of the vehicle.
- Ensure that passengers are aware that they must not consume food or drink on the vehicle.
- Ensure that no passengers embark on the minibus with muddy shoes or damp, dirty clothing.

The driver of the vehicle will plan all routes accordingly, ensuring that the route is suitable and safe for use by minibuses.

Mobile phones are not permitted for use by the driver whilst they are driving the minibus. If the driver must make a call, they will pull over to a safe stopping place to do so.

A mobile phone will be carried by at least one member of staff in case of an emergency. The member of staff will have the numbers of all parents of pupils on the minibus, as well as emergency contacts for the school.

A nominated person at the school, who is not on the journey, will be aware of the destination of the minibus, its route and its expected time of arrival and return.

Parents will also be informed of the above information and will be provided with the mobile phone number for the member of staff on the minibus.

Smoking, drinking alcohol and taking drugs is strictly prohibited by pupils, staff members and the driver at all times whilst on the vehicle.

The driver will ensure that the legal speed limits for minibuses are followed at all times during the journey.

Pupils will be required to maintain good levels of behaviour at all times whilst on the minibus, in line with the school's Behaviour Policy, and will avoid any behaviour that may distract the driver.

Any disruption on the minibus will be dealt with appropriately by supervisors, in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and Educational Visits and School Trips Policy.

Purchase of fuel

The St Mary's Fuel card should be used to purchase fuel for the minibus. Receipts should be retained and provided to the Business Manager.

Where the school fuel card cannot be used to purchase fuel for the minibus, receipts should be retained and reimbursement organised with the Business Manager.

Booking

Where a staff member wishes to book the school minibus for an educational/ sport/extra-curricular excursion, a booking should be submitted to the Business Manager via the Sports Key booking system (School website>Lettings).

Where there are conflicting requests for the minibus, bookings will be made on a 'first come first served' basis. Alternatively, 'one off' educational opportunities or events of exceptional importance will be prioritised.

Health and safety

If a driver is taking any prescribed drugs or medicine that may affect their ability to drive, they are not permitted to drive the minibus, in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy.

In light of the above, if the driver feels unwell before or during the journey and that this may affect their ability to drive, they are not permitted to drive the bus. Another member of staff who holds a relevant license will be available to drive the minibus in such cases. If there is no suitable alternative driver, the trip will be postponed.

Drivers will not drive for longer than two hours without taking a break for at least 15 minutes.

A second driver with a valid license will be available to take over driving the minibus during driving breaks, or if the driver is ill.

A first aid kit will always be available on the minibus and will be fully stocked, and at least one member of staff on the minibus will be a qualified first aider. This will align with the First Aid Policy.

Additional medication may be taken for pupils with medical conditions, though only staff trained to administer medication will do so, in accordance with the school's Administering Medication Policy.

Seatbelts and seats will be fitted and worn in accordance with relevant seat belt laws.

The minibus will also be fitted with child car seats for pupils between 3- and 12-years old, or those under 135cm tall, and in accordance with relevant child car seat laws.

Additional seat belts will be fitted for pupils with SEND, for those that require additional postural support.

The driver will instruct all pupils to wear their seatbelts throughout the journey; supervisors will ensure that they continue to do this whilst on the minibus.

All members of staff aboard the vehicle will wear their seatbelts at all times.

Pupils over the age of 14 are personally responsible for wearing their seatbelt and must ensure they do this throughout the journey.

Passengers will ensure that all emergency exits are clear at all times.

Smoking is strictly prohibited whilst on the mini-bus.

The consumption of alcohol is strictly prohibited whilst on the mini-bus.

Breakdowns

In the event of a breakdown, the driver will move the vehicle off the road and switch on the hazard warning lights.

Passengers will be moved out of the nearside of the vehicle, and as far away from it and other traffic as possible.

If it is safer for passengers to remain in the vehicle, e.g. if there is not a safe place outside, the driver and supervisors will assess the situation and decide whether to stay on the minibus.

The driver or a supervisor will contact the relevant breakdown cover company immediately.

The driver or a supervisor will contact the business manager after arranging a breakdown call out.

Contact details for the relevant breakdown cover and insurance provider will always be kept in the dash compartment of the minibus.

If the breakdown occurs on a motorway, the driver or a supervisor will use the roadside emergency telephone, and will provide the police with the breakdown service, the vehicle's location, and if any pupils on board have SEND.

All passengers will be kept together in one group and pupils will be constantly supervised.

If necessary, the driver will seek help, leaving the pupils with the supervisors. If the driver is the only adult present, pupils will not be left alone.

The driver, supervisors and pupils will all wait in the safe place until it is safe to return on the minibus.

If passengers are unable to return on the minibus, appropriate transport will be arranged by staff in school to collect pupils, supervisors and the driver.

Accidents

An emergency procedure will be established by the headteacher prior to beginning the journey, and a copy will be kept inside the dash compartment in the minibus.

The emergency procedure will be communicated to the driver and all supervisors on the journey, to ensure they are fully aware of the process to be followed.

In the event of an accident, emergency services will be contacted immediately and supervisors will remain with pupils at all times.

The driver or a supervisor will contact the business manager as soon as possible after calling the emergency services.

All passengers will remain at the scene of the accident in a safe place until the emergency services and any additional transport has arrived.

If injuries are sustained, the names of those involved will be reported to the business manager and an accident log will be completed upon return to the premises.

If no injuries are sustained and the vehicle is not damaged, the driver will ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and safe before continuing the journey. An accident log will be completed upon return to the school.

Hire Fees

Hirers will be invoiced upon return and the vehicle inspected for any damage.
There is a one off charge of £25.00 per hire for external educational users.
Mileage is charged at 0.45p per mile. Please ensure the log book is completed.
For school use the mileage will be charged at the cost of 26 mpg at average cost that week.
Private Hire upon application.

Appendix A:

Maintenance checklist template:

Check	Checked?	Details of defect	Reported (date)
Tyre pressure			

Tyre condition and tread depth			
Lights – operation/cleanliness			
Engine oil level			
Coolant level			
Brakes, including fluid level			
Battery			
Windscreen			
Seat belts/buckles/fixings			
Operation of			
Fire extinguisher			
Jack/handle/wheel brace			
First aid kit			
Operation of horn			
Doors, latches, locks			
Condition of wheel rims and			
Road fund licence/transport			
Condition of mirrors			
Operation of dash controls			
Excessive exhaust smoke			
Condition of body work/number			
Silhouette signs			
Rear scope			
Cleanliness of exterior			
Cleanliness of interior			

All checks have been made and all defects reported to the Business Manager.

Name: _____

Signed _____

Dated: _____

In Case of Accident

In the event of a breakdown, puncture, etc., the driver should contact:

Action

Notes

Check

Take photographs of any damage to the vehicles involved.

Don't apologise or admit it was your fault.

Take the other persons, name, address, contact number, registration number, make and model of their vehicle and their insurer's name and policy number.

Name:
Address:

Reg No:
Make & Model:
Insurer's Details:

Make a note of injuries to anyone involved, the number of passengers in the other vehicle and contact details of any witnesses or policy officer who attend the scene of the accident

No of passengers In other vehicle:

Contact Details of Witnesses:

Registration No PK57 RHX

Expiry Date		Policy No	
4 November 2021	Insurance	00008722MBP	QBE Insurance (Europe) Ltd One Coval Wells CHELMSFORD

			CM1 1WZ Tel 0800 389 1708 BREAKDOWN COVER Equity Redstar 0800 0850361
14 April 2021	MOT	138815504175	Station Garage Leyland
	Road Fund Tax		March
	Radio Code	8988	

Registration No SF19 OSR

Expiry Date		Policy No	
9 August 2021	Insurance	00030226MBP	QBE Insurance (Europe) Ltd One Coval Wells CHELMSFORD CM1 1WZ Tel 0800 389 1708 BREAKDOWN COVER Year 1 0800 111 234 After year2 0333 202 3022 Quote Registration No
August 2023	MOT		Station Garage, Leyland
	Road Fund Tax		Included in lease.
	Radio Code		