



Minibus Policy

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| Status: | STATUTORY |
| Responsible person: | Headteacher |
| Responsible Governors' Committee: | Fully Governing Body |
| Review date: | July 2022 |

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1. PRINCIPLES

The School minibuses are a valuable resource, which helps to provide pupils with access to School Visits and Off-Campus Residentials, as well as to numerous other extra-curricular activities. It is essential that all users of this resource are aware of all legal and procedural responsibilities pertaining to its use.

This policy aims to;

- Provide guidance on how best to use the school minibuses.
- Detail safe operating procedures for their use, which details the checks that should be carried out before and after use by drivers.
- Provide information about who can drive minibuses and the times that they may do so.
- Provide details about what actions to take in case of a breakdown or an accident.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to catalogue the various procedures that must be followed to ensure the safe use of the school's minibuses. This document will be given to all minibus drivers as part of the overall induction package.

3. DRIVER ELIGIBILITY

Those permitted to drive the School Minibuses must be between 21 and 70 years of age with a full clean driving licence including category D1 or D PCV entitlement. Any endorsements incurred by eligible drivers must be disclosed to the Headteacher or School Business Manager Mrs C Langeveld, as these may affect eligibility to drive the vehicle. The School Business Manager is responsible for organising an annual viewing of driving licences to ensure appropriate insurance coverage and will publish a list of eligible minibus drivers list in the working common room.

All eligible drivers will be trained using a recognised training scheme in St Helens every 4 years to ensure high levels of competence and skill.

NB –Driving a School Minibus is NOT the same as driving a car; it requires different levels of knowledge, skill and awareness. It also carries different legal responsibilities which trained drivers will have been made aware of.

The absolute minimum requirements to comply with our insurance are that the drivers; -

- Are over the age of 21,
- Completed local authority Driver Awareness Minibus qualification
- Have at least two years experience as a qualified driver
- Hold a current full driving licence with no more than 6 penalty points. If a driver has less than 6 points, the driver may still be precluded if the points are for dangerous driving
- School should be informed immediately of any penalty points or convictions received

Prior to transporting students for the first time, all drivers will be given the opportunity of either a vehicle familiarisation session with a member of the school team or a more formal training session with The Local Authority.

These sessions will include:-

- Daily vehicle checks
- Pre-journey checks
- General driving safety
- Road testing
- Emergency stop
- Use of mirrors and indicators
- Reversing using mirrors only
- Passenger safety
- Passenger comfort

All new drivers will be added to the list of authorised minibus drivers which is held in the school managers office. Staff who pass the test to drive a car after 01.01.98 are required to successfully complete a local authority test to drive the School minibuses. Details about the comprehensive training needed can be obtained from the School Business Manager.

4. DRIVERS HOURS

It is the school's policy that when on a trip that involves an extended day there must be a second driver in the party who is eligible to share the driving with the main driver to reduce the possibility of driver fatigue. An extended day is anything beyond 7.00 pm when the teacher started work at 8.45 am. ***This requirement is non-negotiable.***

5. DRIVER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Whilst the school will ensure a weekly check of the condition of the minibuses, drivers are responsible for the following checks before embarking on their trips:

- Do a visual inspection of the minibuses which includes tyre pressure checks and that the windscreen and glass is clean and can be seen through
- Check brakes to see that they are functioning correctly
- Ensure that mirrors and seat are in the correct driving position
- Check that all lights are functioning correctly
- Ensure that all seat belts are being worn. This includes all passengers, who must wear a seat belt
- Ensure that the windscreen washer system works and that wipers are functioning correctly
- Ensure that the vehicle is correctly loaded and that no more than sixteen passengers are being carried
- Emergency exits must not be blocked
- Ensure that all doors are correctly closed
- Check that you have enough fuel for your journey
- As soon as possible after moving off, the driver should carry out a running brake test and at the same time, check the operation of the seat belts
- At intervals throughout the journey, all instruments and warning lights should be checked and necessary action taken if a fault is indicated
- Ensure that food and drink are not consumed on the vehicle
- Make sure that no rubbish is left on the vehicle and ensure that no malicious damage has occurred to the interior of the vehicle

At the end of the journey the driver must lock and make the vehicle secure. Keys should only be taken from the school office just prior to making use of the minibuses. The keys should be returned to the office immediately after use.

PASSENGER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Should wear seat belts and always remain in their seats until instructed otherwise
- Should never distract the driver by shouting, etc
- Staff to monitor passengers who choose to eat or drink on the vehicle
- Must make sure that escape routes are not blocked by bags, etc
- Students are ambassadors of the school and must never bring its name into disrepute by gesturing, etc
- Passengers found to have vandalised the minibuses may face a ban from using it again and be required to pay for damages

6. MAINTENANCE/ LICENSING OF THE SCHOOL MINIBUSES

Overall responsibility for ensuring that the School Minibuses are properly maintained and licensed lies with the Headteacher. However, this responsibility is devolved to the Minibus Driver. The School Minibuses should be regularly serviced according to manufacturer's recommendations. The School Business Manager is responsible for arranging this servicing with St Helens Transport Section or the hire company.

Minor checks of the vehicles (oil, water, tyres etc.) will be completed at least every 21 days by Mr Bergqvist. Prior to ANY journey, the named driver must complete a visual check of the vehicle. This must be completed using a Minibus Vehicle Check/Log Sheet kept in the minibus. Drivers MUST NOT assume that the above has been completed. They should remember that as driver, they will be held legally responsible for driving with any defect. Licensing of the School Minibuses is the responsibility of the School Business Manager, who must ensure that all Road Tax, Insurance and MOT certificates are up to date.

7. ACCIDENT PROCEDURES

If an accident occurs and any personal injury or damage to third party property is involved, then the driver must stop. He/she must be prepared to give his name and address and details of the owner of the vehicle to a Police Officer or any other person having reasonable grounds to ask. If for any reason the driver is not able to give these details then he/she must report in person to a Police Station as soon as practically possible, otherwise an offence is committed, and in any event not later than twenty-four hours afterwards. Report your accident immediately to the School Business Manager who will let you have the appropriate forms to complete for onward transmission to our insurers.

8. BREAKDOWN AND RECOVERY

The school minibuses are covered for breakdown and recovery. Details of how to contact them and our membership numbers are attached to the minibus windscreens. Any issues should be reported to the Office Manager

9. FIRST AID

All minibuses contain first aid boxes which are checked at the end of each term by the OAA Team. The contents of these boxes include:-

- Antiseptic wipes
- Bandages
- Assorted adhesive dressings
- Plasters
- Eye pads
- Scissors.
- Any use of the first aid kit must be reported to the Facilities Manager as soon as possible thereby maintaining a full kit at all times.

10. PURCHASE OF FUEL

The school holds an account with the LA. Should you need fuel for your journey, please ask Office Manager for the fuel fob. The fob must be returned with the fuel receipt.

Please remember the fact that **all minibuses operate on diesel (black hose)**. When filling with fuel ensure that the ignition is turned off and that there are no naked lights in the vicinity.

11. CARE AND THE CLEANING OF MINIBUSES

Minibuses involve a great expense when purchasing. Please help to ensure that their working lives are extended for the maximum possible period. One of the main problems with school minibuses has been that the inside wears out before the body and mechanics. You must check on the condition of the interior at the end of each journey. Students should not be allowed to wear muddy boots in the minibuses and should be encouraged to get changed at the end of matches or following any outdoor activities in order to stop them sitting on the seats with damp and dirty clothing.

The OAA team has responsibility for conducting weekly checks of the minibuses and passing on findings to the School Business Manager (or in her absence the Acting Headteacher Mr. D Francis).

Any defects in the minibuses noted by staff should be notified immediately to the School Business Manager who will then determine whether or not the vehicle should be taken off the road and repairs carried out.

The minibuses are inspected every ten weeks and serviced in line with the manufacturer's recommendations. The service schedule is monitored by the OAA Team.

12. COVID-19 ARRANGEMENTS

Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic pupils will be asked to follow particular protocols when travelling on the school minibus, this may include sitting in specific seats on the bus, avoiding turning around to talk to peers, sanitizing hands before and after travelling. Pupils will not be expected to but will be given the opportunity to wear face masks. The driver has the right to refuse to transport anybody who is showing symptoms of COVID-19.

Cleaning products will be available on each vehicle. The school minibus will be cleaned on a more regular basis with high contact spots cleaned after each use. Vehicles will also be cleaned if a member of staff or a pupil tests positive for Covid-19. No pupils will be transported in staff's private vehicles.

These protocols will continue to change as government guidelines change.

13. INCORRECT USE OF THE MINIBUSES

A driver who breaks the speed limit will be responsible for paying his/her own fines. Similarly fines imposed for incorrect car parking or negligent driving will be the responsibility of the driver. Any damage caused to the minibuses through incorrect use, may result in the driver being asked to contribute fully or partially to any excess payable by the school.

14. SPEED LIMITS

The speed limit for minibuses is as follows:

- 30 mph not 40 mph on urban carriageways
- 50 mph not 60 mph on single carriageways
- 60 mph not 70 mph on dual carriageways
- 70 mph on motorways

15. KEYS

Keys are kept in the main office. They can be picked up at any time between 8.00 am and 5.00 pm. When you have finished using the minibus, please return the keys immediately. Do not collect the keys too far in advance of using the vehicle, as this prevents use in the intervening period.

16. LIST OF AUTHORISED DRIVERS

| Drivers Name | Date of Expiry |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| Karen Edwards | Expiry date of training 27/06/2021 |
| Ben Bennett | Expiry date of training 12/10/2022 |
| Ian Collins | Expiry date of training 08/10/2022 |
| Karen Baldwin | Expiry date of training 26/10/2025 |
| Karl Bergqvist | Expiry date of training 27/06/2021 |

The School Business Manager will keep a list of drivers who have been authorised to drive the minibuses. Authorisation may be withdrawn at any time by the Headteacher. Any member of staff who has been advised not to drive their own vehicle for medical reasons must advise the Headteacher immediately.

17. FINAL COMMENT

Driving a minibus safely and in a professional manner is not difficult, but it does demand greater responsibility. Preparation is essential and you must always present the highest standards to your passengers and other road users.