

SCHOOL MINIBUS SAFETY POLICY

Rationale

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.

Aims

1. To provide clear procedures relating to use of the School Minibuses
2. To ensure that all users of the School Minibuses are aware of their legal responsibilities.

Eligibility to drive the School Minibuses

1. 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.
2. Any endorsements incurred by eligible drivers must be disclosed to the Bursar, as these may affect eligibility to drive the vehicle. The Bursar 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.
3. All eligible drivers will be trained using a recognised training scheme every 3 years to ensure high levels of competence and skill.
4. New staff (with effect from Easter term 2011) will be asked to undertake individual training unless able to provide evidence of previous training which means they are already qualified to drive minibuses.

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.

Procedures

1. The School Minibuses must not be used unless the named driver meets the eligibility requirements above.
2. Those wishing to use a School Minibus should book it out via the minibus booking diary held in the Working Common Room.
3. The Headmaster has overall responsibility for the School Minibuses and final powers of authorisation over their use.
4. Drivers of the School Minibuses must complete a Minibus Vehicle Check / Log Sheet stored in the minibus along with the mileage and driver record sheet. This is to allow careful monitoring of the Minibus, its condition and its general use.
5. The School Minibus should be collected from and returned to its parking bay located on the School grounds close to the cross-roads and keys should be returned to the Working Common Room at the end of the journey, or as soon as possible thereafter.
6. Any defects noted should be reported to the Facilities Manager as soon as possible. More serious defects MUST be reported IMMEDIATELY. Minor defects can be reported after the journey has taken place. However, if the driver is in any doubt the vehicle MUST NOT be taken onto the road.
7. Any cash required for a journey, which specifically relates to the minibus (i.e. to purchase fuel) should be requested from the Finance Department. Receipts should be obtained for any such expenditure and handed in to the Finance Department upon return. Fuel cards are kept by Maintenance (Joe) and should be requested if the minibus is running low on fuel before you start your journey.

Maintenance/ Licensing of the School Minibuses

1. Overall responsibility for ensuring that the School Minibuses are properly maintained and licensed lies with the Headmaster. However, this responsibility is devolved to the Facilities Manager.
2. The School Minibuses should be regularly serviced according to manufacturer's recommended practice. The Facilities Manager is responsible for arranging this servicing with a reputable and suitably qualified organisation.
3. Minor checks of the vehicles (oil, water, tyres etc.) will be completed at least every 21 days by a member of the School Maintenance Staff.
4. 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 point 3 above has been completed. They should remember that as driver, they will be held legally responsible for driving with any defect.

5. Licensing of the School Minibuses is the responsibility of the Facilities Manager, who must ensure that all Road Tax, Insurance and MOT certificates are up to date.

In the event of an accident

1. The driver should inform the SMT On-Call as soon as is reasonably possible.
2. Insurance details should be swapped with a third party as soon as is possible. However, NO LIABILITY should be admitted.
3. Where it is safe and reasonable to do so, pupils should be removed from the vehicle and taken to a safe area away from the accident site, where they should be fully supervised.
4. A visual check of the vehicle should be undertaken before the journey resumes.
5. If the vehicle is not roadworthy the driver should contact the Breakdown Service.

In the event of a breakdown

1. The driver should inform the SMT On-Call as soon as is reasonably possible.
2. The Breakdown service indicated on the windscreen should be contacted as soon as is reasonably possible.
3. Where it is safe and reasonable to do so, pupils should be removed from the vehicle and taken to a safe area away from the breakdown site, where they should be fully supervised.

Health and Safety of Drivers and Passengers

The named drivers should state the following to the pupils before the commencement of the journey:

1. Seatbelts must be worn at all times. This is a legal requirement. (It is the driver's responsibility to check this).
2. Everyone should remain seated at all times.
3. Which entry and exit doors are to be used. (It is recommended that side doors be used except in emergencies).
4. Gangways and doorways are to be kept clear at all times. Bags should be kept on laps or stored under seats securely.

Other considerations

1. If at any time the pupils distract the driver, s/he should stop the bus until the pupils are settled. Do not try to continue. Remember that they may also be distracting other drivers.
2. Where possible park the bus with the side doors to the kerb. Where this is not possible, pupils should remain seated until you are able to supervise them from the road.
3. It is essential that all drivers of minibuses have had sufficient rest prior to undertaking a journey. The driver must therefore assess whether they are safe to drive before commencing a trip.
4. Drivers should remember that prescribed medication or over the counter medications may affect their ability to drive.
5. On no account should you drive a Minibus if you have had any alcohol within the previous 12 hours.
6. Drivers MUST NOT drive for longer than 2 hours without taking a break for at least 15 minutes. Remember tiredness kills.
7. It is essential that for all journeys in the School minibuses with a distance over 60 miles they be staffed by the named driver and at least one other qualified driver.
8. Pupils should only be taken on a journey in the minibus accompanied by one adult after an agreed risk assessment.

R J Bailey
May 2011