# School Minibus Policy

**Rationale**

Access to a school minibus is a valuable resource. Within the Blessed Edward Bamber Multi Academy Trust Christ the King Catholic Academy and St Mary's Catholic Academy each lease a school minibus. It is a mutually accepted agreement that St Cuthbert's Catholic Academy can use these resources as part of the Trust family.

This policy has been written is to ensure that all staff using this resource are aware of the legal and procedural responsibilities pertaining to its use. For the purposes of this document the Executive Head teacher will have overall responsibility for school journeys and residential visits, advised by the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) in each school.

**Aims:**

1. To provide clear procedures relating to use of the school minibus.
2. To ensure that all users (drivers and accompanying staff) of the school minibus are aware of their legal responsibilities.

**Definitions:**

*Teacher in charge* (TIC) – this is a named member of the teaching staff to whom this responsibility is devolved.
*Residential visit* – this is defined as a visit or trip lead by staff and pupils, organised under the auspices of the school and lasting for 24 hours or more in duration.
*School Journey* - any visit or trip lasting less than 24 hours
*MIDAS* – (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) a requirement that all drivers of the school minibus must complete and pass

**Those eligible to drive the school minibus:**

- Those permitted to drive the school minibus must be at least 21 years of age with a full (preferably clean) driving licence that has category D1 showing. Any endorsements incurred should be disclosed as these may affect eligibility to drive the vehicle.
- Only drivers who have passed an independently assessed MIDAS test will be eligible to drive the minibus. These tests can be arranged through the school and will be booked where possible in blocks to make training and testing cost effective.
- All eligible drivers should be re-tested every 3 years to ensure high levels of competence and skill.
- However, drivers who passed their driving test after January 1997 (without group D) are now required to hold a vocational driving license too or complete the D1 training programme.

**Points to Note**

**Driving the 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 MIDAS MINIBUS tested drivers will have been made aware of.**

**Procedures**

1. Any school minibus should not be used unless the named driver meets the eligibility requirements above.
2. The Executive Head teacher has overall responsibility for the school minibus and final powers of authorisation over its use. This responsibility may be devolved to the EVC or TIC in her absence.
3. Drivers of the school minibus must complete a vehicle check before every single journey, no matter how short. This is to allow careful monitoring of the minibus, its condition and its general use as well as ensure the safety of all passengers.
4. The school minibus should be collected from and returned to the car park area located on the St Mary's Catholic Academy Site.
5. Keys should be returned to Christ the King reception at the end of the journey, or as soon as is possible thereafter.
6. Any defects noted should be reported to the Executive Head teacher as soon as possible, they must also be logged in the minibus log. 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. Staff using the minibus should ensure that the vehicle is left sufficiently fuelled. Staff finding that the vehicle has insufficient fuel should make arrangements for refuelling with the Trust Business Manager, Mrs Emily Coyne to gain access to the fuel cards. If this is not possible the TIC should fuel the vehicle and retain a VAT receipt so that their expenses can be reimbursed.
8. Staff have a legal requirement to enter the mileage, destination and condition of the bus at the start of their journey and the journey mileage (and any other relevant information) at the end of the journey.

**Financing of minibus trips**

1. All school visits must be self financing unless other arrangements have been made with the education visits coordinator or member of the SLT.
2. Where visits are central to the extended curriculum that the school is seeking to offer, alternative sources of funding trips may be possible e.g. Aim Higher, Gerald Richardson Trust. The TIC should see their line manager when planning for a visit to see what help with funding might be available.
3. If other funding streams are not available the school PTFA or SVP may be then approached to secure help for a trip that might otherwise not be possible.
4. No student should be prevented from accompanying an essential trip for financial reasons alone. In the case of genuine hardship an application should be made to the Executive Head teacher.

**Maintenance/Licensing of the School Minibus:**

1. Overall responsibility for ensuring that the school minibus is properly maintained and licensed lies with the Executive Head teacher.
2. The school minibus should be regularly serviced with Ford. The agreement is that this will be at least every 30,000 or every two years whichever occurs first. There is also an agreement that a safety inspection is completed every 10 weeks by Fleet Complete Ltd. The St Mary's Catholic Acadmey Premises Manager, Mr Andrew Freeman, is responsible for arranging this servicing/safety checks with a reputable and suitably qualified organisation.
3. Minor checks of the vehicle (oil, water, tyres etc) will be completed at least every 21 days by a member of the St Mary's Catholic Academy premises staff.
4. Prior to any journey, the named driver must complete a visual check of the vehicle. This must be completed using a vehicle check sheet kept in a log book on board the vehicle. 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 minibus is the responsibility of the Trust Business 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 Executive Head teacher, the EVC and TIC 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 necessary 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.

**These guidelines should be read in conjunction with any advice provided by the minibus insurers.**

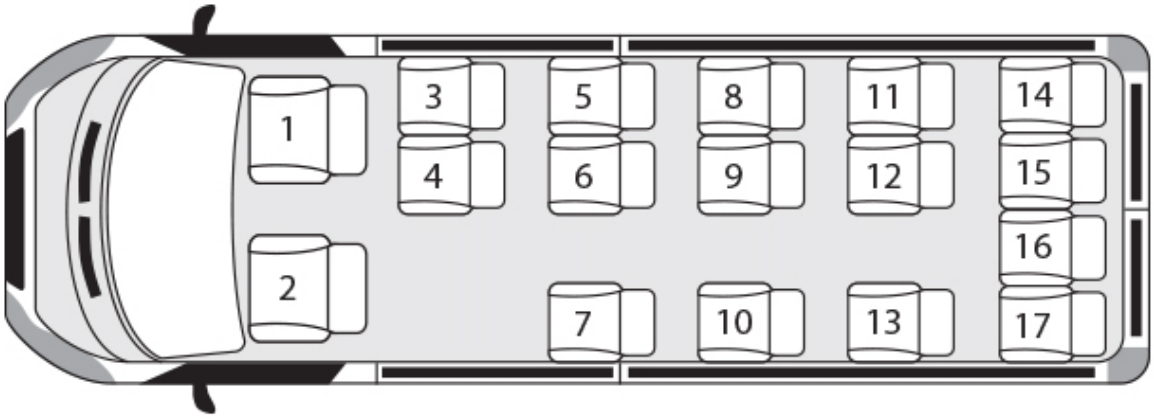
**Health and Safety of drivers and passengers:**

The driver should state the following to pupils:

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. Children are permitted to ride in the minibus without booster seats (as long as each seat belt is adjusted to their shoulder height), however it is good practice to do so.
4. All doors are to remain "shut but unlocked" in line with legal requirements.
5. Which entry and exit doors are to be used (it is recommended that side doors be used except in emergencies)

Other considerations:

1. The driver's responsibility is to **drive**. There will always be an additional member of staff in the minibus who is responsible for the behaviour of the pupils. However, if at any time the pupils distract the driver, s/he should stop the bus until the pupils are settled and must not try to continue. Remember that the children 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. Drivers **MUST NOT** drive for longer than 2 hours without taking a break for at least 15 minutes. Remember tiredness kills.
4. It is essential that all journeys in the school minibus be staffed by the driver and at least one member of staff/adult. Under no circumstances should pupils be taken on a journey on the minibus accompanies by only one adult.
5. Drivers must ensure the completion of a seating plan/register prior to departure and leave a copy with the school office.
6. Class teachers or TIC are responsible for producing and updating their class minibus seating plans.
7. Drivers should be aware of the restriction on the seating of front passengers due to the air bag and possible lack of an adjustable seat belt.




**Minibus Seating Plan**

| Full Name | Year Group and Medical Conditions |
|---|---|
| **1.** | **Driver:** |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |
| 4. | |
| 5. | |
| 6. | |
| **7.** | **Staff Member:** |
| 8. | |
| 9. | |
| 10. | |
| 11. | |
| 12. | |
| 13. | |
| 14. | |
| 15. | |
| 16. | |
| 17 | |

**Minibus 21 day Check List**

| EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR | Checked | Comments |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Brake check (on moving vehicle) | | |
| 2. Oil level (once only at the start of the day) | | |
| 3. Coolant level (once only at the start of the day) | | |
| 4. Windscreen washer fluid level (once only at the start of the day) | | |
| 5. Brake fluid | | |
| 6. Windscreen and windows are clean and undamaged | | |
| 7. Wiper blades are clean and undamaged | | |
| 8. Lights including brake lights and indicators are clean and working | | |
| 9. Tyre pressures including the spare | | |
| 10. Tyre treads including the spare tyre. There should be at least 2 mm of tread across the centre three quarters of the tyre. | | |
| 11. Any cuts and bulges in the tyres | | |
| 12. Doors open and close properly | | |
| 13. Damage or sharp edges. | | |
| 14. Mirrors are correctly adjusted, clean, undamaged and unobstructed | | |
| 15. Position and function of all dashboard controls are known/understood | | |
| 16. Position of driving seat is adjusted so that all controls can be operated | | |
| 17. Check for pressure on brake pedal | | |
| 18. Wipers and washers are working properly | | |
| 19. Fuel level (and what type of fuel is used by vehicle) | | |
| 20. Seat belts (where fitted) are undamaged and working properly | | |
| 21. Location of wheel brace and jack are known to driver | | |
| 22. Location of fire extinguisher and first aid kit is known | | |
| 23. Location of relevant documentation (insurance, up-to-date road tax, MoT, emergency numbers and driving licence) | | |
| 24. Change for parking or telephone (phone card/mobile phone) | | |
| 25.Damage or sharp edges | | |
| Comments | Date: | |
| Print Name | | |
| Signature | | |

## Minibus Drivers' Hours

The table below summarises the main rules concerning Drivers' Hours.

A comprehensive explanation of the rules is contained in 'Drivers' Hours and Tachograph Rules for Road Passenger Vehicles in the UK and Europe (PSV375).

Available from the www.vosa.gov.uk website

| | **Domestic rules** | **EC rules** |
|---|---|---|
| Maximum length of working day | 16 hours | 13 hours |
| Daily driving period | 10 hours | 9 hours |
| Time driving without a break* | 5½ hours | 4 ½ hours |
| Minimum length of break | 30 minutes | 45 minutes |
| Daily rest period | 10 hours | 11 hours |
| Weekly driving limit | | 56 hours |

*The break is a period during which the driver may not perform other work and is exclusively used for recuperation. This break may be split into smaller periods and distributed throughout the 4½ hours.

In this case, the first period must be at least 15 minutes, and the second period must be at least 30 minutes.

*Courtesy of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)*