

Minibus Policy

RATIONALE

The School Minibus is a valuable school resource, which helps to provide pupils with access to school visits and other extra-curricular activities. It is essential that all users of the minibus are aware of all legal and procedural responsibilities relating to its use.

AIMS

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

THE SCHOOL WILL

- ensure that minibus conforms to relevant legislation, is maintained in a roadworthy condition, and is regularly serviced;
- ensure that the minibus will not be used until defects which have safety implications are rectified;
- ensure that the proper insurance, licences and permits are held and kept up to date;
- maintain a list of authorised drivers approved by the School's insurers;
- ensure that a sign indicating maximum permissible passenger capacity is displayed in each vehicle.

THE SCHOOL WILL NOT

- pay fines for parking, speeding or other motoring offences;
- provide legal support for staff charged with the above.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

Booking the bus

- All booking should be made in the booking form in the General Office.
- Bookings should be made as far in advance as possible.
- Bookings requiring a driver are dependent on availability of driver and cannot be assumed.

Authorisation to Drive

- Drivers of the School Minibus must be at least 21 years of age and must be in possession of a valid driving license and have qualified by test for category DL2
- Before any person can be authorised to drive the School Minibus, they must provide a copy of their driving licence to the School Business Manager.
- The applicant may not drive a minibus until the School Business Manager has confirmed that insurance arrangements are in place.
- Once on the list, drivers are obliged to advise the School Business Manager of any change in circumstances which might have a bearing on their insurability. This will include notification of motoring offences occurring between annual declarations.
- Use of the minibus will not be considered to be "Authorised" unless the booking form in the Office has been properly completed in advance.
- Keys are to be collected immediately before use and returned immediately after use. If, however, the vehicle is thought to have a potentially hazardous defect (see Appendix A) keys should be handed in to the General Office and the log book so marked.
- Personal use of the minibus is not permitted without the express permission of the Principal.

Safety

Drivers must remember that they have responsibility for the vehicle they are driving and if they feel there is a problem with the vehicle they should not take it out until it has been checked.

- When taking charge of a minibus, drivers must satisfy themselves that the vehicle is in a fit condition for use (check tyres, lights etc) and that there is adequate supply of fuel.
- If you have not driven the minibus for a time you should familiarise yourself with its operation before taking pupils out.
- When in charge of a party and/or when driving a minibus, staff must ensure that:
 - the maximum permitted number of passengers is not exceeded,
 - seat belts are worn correctly at all times,
 - all luggage or other material is loaded securely in a safe manner and that it presents no danger to occupants of the minibus or to other road users,
 - all current road traffic legislation is observed,
 - the minibus is returned in a clean condition at the end of a journey
- The member of staff in charge should state the following to pupils:
 - Seatbelts must be worn at all times. This is a legal requirement (and the driver's responsibility to check this).
 - Everyone should remain seated and behave appropriately at all times
 - Which entry and exit doors are to be used (and emergency exit).

Reporting and Recording

- Drivers will report all accidents, however minor, to the Principal, as soon as possible.
- Drivers must report all Category A Defects (see Appendix A) to the Principal or School Business Manager immediately, who will retain the keys to prevent the use of the minibus.
- Drivers must report all Category B Defects (see Appendix A) to the Principal or School Business Manager as soon as possible.
- In the event of a minibus becoming unserviceable while away from School the following action must be taken :-
 - Report to School by telephone, as soon as possible, giving details of the location and the problem. Remember to give the school office the number from which you are calling.

Fuel

- A fuel card should be drawn with the keys when minibus is taken out. Fuel cards may be used to refuel the vehicle belonging to School and for properly authorized activities only. The use of a fuel card to refuel a private vehicle is forbidden and doing so may lead to disciplinary action.
- Fuel may also be purchased using the authorised school requisition procedures from approved garages.
- If it is not possible/not likely to be possible to refuel at an approved station the member of staff must either make suitable arrangements to allow the purchase of fuel, or settle the fuel cost and present a receipt to the office for reimbursement.
- Fuel cards can be used only in approved garages. A list of these for both NI and the Republic of Ireland are kept in the office.

Accident/Breakdown Procedures

- Insurance details should be swapped with a third party as soon as is possible. However, NO LIABILITY should be admitted.
- The driver should inform the Principal or School Business Manager as soon as is reasonably possible.
- Full details of the incident, injuries and damages should be recorded and reported to the Principal or School Business Manager immediately on return.
- Where it is safe and necessary to do so, students should be removed from the vehicle and taken to a safe area away from the accident site, where they should be fully supervised.
- A visual check of the minibus should be undertaken before continuing the journey.

DEFECTS

Category A

- Defect to steering, brakes, clutch, tyres
- Damage to swept portion of windscreen
- Damage to doors which prevents their secure closure or which prevents them from being opened easily as intended by the manufacturer
- Damage to the bodywork which results in loose panels or jagged projections
- Damage to bodywork which results in restriction to steering lock or which otherwise results in contact with a tyre
- Insecure seat(s)
- Engine Oil light failing to extinguish within 5 seconds
- Abnormal noise from engine, gearbox or rear axle
- Difficulty in changing gear or clutch slip
- Failure of lights or indicators.
- Defect to windscreen wipers which impairs their ability to clear the windscreen
- Inoperable seat belts

Category B

All items of cosmetic or minor nature which do not impair security and safety of driver and/or passenger, vehicle handling, driver's view of the road or the welfare of the engine and transmission.

MAINTENANCE PROCEDURES

Before each journey

The driver will check:

- tyres - inflation, condition of sidewalls and tread
- body (exterior) - general condition, door mirrors, fuel filler cap
- body (interior) - seat mountings, seat belts, interior rear-view mirror, general tidiness and condition
- windscreen - condition
- wipers - condition - inspect and replace as necessary
- controls - checked for unusual play/wear

Routine Servicing and Repairs

Minibus to be serviced, by approved contractor, in accordance with manufacturer's specifications.

Defect report

On receipt of a defect report the Principal will examine the vehicle to determine, as far as is possible, the nature of the defect and will decide whether to effect a repair or to refer the matter to an approved garage. If the defect renders the vehicle un-roadworthy the keys will be withdrawn.

This policy was reviewed by Leadership Team: November 2017

Due to be Reviewed: November 2018