

The Spalding Special Schools Federation MINIBUS POLICY

1. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL

The proper maintenance of a passenger carrying vehicle is of the utmost importance. The driver and the school are responsible for the condition of the vehicle. This applies to both our own minibus and to any that are leased or hired by the school.

The Site Manager is the person responsible for the operation and maintenance of the school minibus. He will ensure that :

- a) the vehicle is licensed in the correct category and that the Road Fund Licence, MOT and permit are valid. (See 3)
- b) the insurance covers all requirements and is valid. (See 6)
- c) the vehicles drivers` driving licences are of the correct category, are valid, do not have excess penalty points and comply with the insurance and legal requirements. This will be achieved by an initial check and subsequently, every six months. The Premises Manager will keep a record of all approved drivers and licence checks. (See 4)
- d) the drivers of the vehicle receive appropriate familiarisation training. (See 5)
- e) the vehicle is being maintained correctly, the vehicle checks are being carried out and defects are being reported and rectified. (See 7)
- f) the drivers are aware of the school minibus policy relating to the loading of the vehicle (See 9) and the use of seat-belts. (See 10)
- g) the drivers are aware of and conform to the school`s drivers hours (See 11) and unplanned incident plan. (See 13)

2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DRIVER

The driver has ultimate responsibility for traffic related matters whilst the vehicle is on the highway. This responsibility covers personal driving standards, payments for parking, payment of any fines for road traffic offences, road worthiness of the vehicle and the conduct of the pupils carried in the vehicle. An additional adult should be carried to supervise the students. If conduct of the students becomes in any way distracting to the driver, then the vehicle must be stopped as soon as it is safe.

To ensure safe operation of the minibus, the driver will comply with the following:

- a) fulfil the requirements of the driver licensing laws (See MP.4) and possess the competence to drive the vehicle (See MP.5)
- b) be familiar with aspects of the vehicle and carry out visual pre-journey vehicle maintenance checks (See MP.8). A defect report should be completed when faults are detected and passed to the Site Manager.
- c) observe safe loading practices for the vehicle (See MP.9).
- d) ensure that seat belts are secured at the beginning of each journey and that passengers are reminded of the necessity to keep them fastened. If a pupil refuses to wear a seat belt, he or she should not be allowed to travel on the school minibus. (See MP 10).
- e) conform to the school`s drivers` hours rules (See MP11).
- f) be familiar with the school`s set procedure for dealing with unplanned incidents (See MP13).

A driver must not attempt to drive the vehicle if he/she is feeling tired or unwell. The driver must never drive if she/he is under the influence of alcohol or drugs. A driver on prescribed medication must always ask his/her doctor whether it is safe to drive.

A mobile telephone should be carried by the driver for use in an emergency. The phone number should be left with reception before departure. If reception is closed, contact should be made with the Site Manager or the School Business Manager and the number given to either manager.

*****Drivers are responsible for ensuring the minibuses are left in clean order after each journey. i.e no litter, mud swept out, belongings removed.*****

3 VEHICLE LICENSING

A Minibus Permit will be obtained from the County Council. This allows the school to charge for transport services without the need for a PSV licence. Only pupils, students of any school, college, university or community group and staff or other helpers accompanying them are allowed to use the minibus along with governors and staff of The Spalding Special Schools Federation. All members of staff employed by the Spalding Special Schools Federation are eligible to drive the minibuses under the Federations Section 19 permit provided that they have met the criteria stated in sections 4 & 5 of this policy. Any other school, college, university or community group wishing to use the

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minibuses must have their own organisations section 19 permit. If they do not have a section 19 permit, use of the minibuses will be dependent upon a member of Federation staff driving, for which a charge may be applied for their time.

The minibuses cannot be used for private hire where there is no connection to either school, college, university or community group.

When used by groups, other than the schools within the Federation, minibuses will be fully fuelled and must be returned fully fuelled. The site manager will agree any body work defects with the hirer and the hirer must inform the site manager of any defects or damage incurred to the minibuses whilst out on hire.

Any charge or voluntary contribution will be made on a non-profit making basis. A charge covers more than the payment of a fare; it covers any payment which gives passengers the right to be carried. It could be part of a larger payment for accommodation, entry to a venue or a subscription to a club.

Where a minibus is hired from a supplier it is the responsibility of the member of staff hiring the vehicle to ensure that the necessary permit is obtained from the Premises Manager and installed in the Minibus.

4 DRIVER LICENSING

Drivers of the minibus will:

- a) have a full current driving licence of the correct category.
- b) be over 25 years of age with at least 5 years of driving experience*.
- c) have no driving offences, except normal speeding fines, then no more than six current penalty points will be allowed by the insurance company unless notified to the insurance company and their agreement obtained for that member of staff to drive the minibus.
- d) not suffer from heart disease, epilepsy or type 1 diabetes.

* Unless, exceptionally, agreed with the insurance company as a named driver.

5 DRIVER ASSESSMENT/TRAINING

A driver of the minibus is responsible for the safety of the vehicle and its passengers. It is therefore essential that they undertake some familiarisation training and assessment before first driving the minibus.

In this connection no member of staff may drive the minibus until they have taken the Site Manager for a drive in the vehicle and satisfied him of his/her competence to drive it. In addition a rolling programme is in place to ensure all eligible drivers on the school staff take the Road Safety Partnership training and test. All drivers must also sign a letter accepting the conditions laid down within the Minibus Policy.

6 VEHICLE INSURANCE

The minibuses are insured on a fully comprehensive basis with a reputable insurance company. (Currently via Minibus Plus).

7 VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

The driver and the school are responsible for the condition of the vehicle, whether our own, leased, or hired. The Site Manager is the member of staff responsible for ensuring the correct maintenance of our vehicle and for ensuring that systems are in place and followed with regard to the following elements:

- a) vehicle running checks. These will be carried out weekly by the School Site Management Team. A checklist will be used for this, signed, dated and retained by the Site Manager. (See 8)
- b) reporting of defects. These will be reported in writing by drivers to the Site Manager or School Business Manager, and will show the nature of the defect, when and by whom it was reported and will have a section to record the action taken to rectify it, when and by whom. Where a defect is found which is considered to render the minibus as being unroadworthy, it will be noted in the minibus log-book. The vehicle keys will be drawn from circulation and the minibus will not be used until the defect has been corrected.
- c) safety inspections and services. The vehicle will be serviced in accordance with the manufacturers recommended schedule of servicing. A safety inspection will be carried out by the servicing agent at approximately eight week intervals and also for the MOT pre-test service and inspection. A safety inspection form will be completed by the "inspector" at this time. It will list all items checked and indicate the condition of those items. The person carrying out any repairs required should sign, date and state any rectifying action taken.

All records of checks, defect reports and safety inspections will be kept by the Site Manager for at least 15 months.

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8 VEHICLE CHECKS FOR THE DRIVER

The driver must be familiar with the position of all the controls, including the fire extinguisher, first aid kit, spare wheel and tools.

Before starting the journey, the driver will carry out a visual safety check; these will include:-

- a) walking round the vehicle checking that the bodywork/glass is intact and that the doors open freely and close securely. Checking seats and seat belts/restraints.
- b) checking that the driver's seat and rear view mirrors are secure and intact and adjusted as necessary.
- c) checking windscreen washers and wipers.
- d) checking lights, indicators, horn and warning lights and instruments.
- e) checking tyres for condition (including the spare).

The School Site Management Team will carry out a full check as outlined below on a weekly basis:-

- a) walking round the vehicle checking that the bodywork/glass is intact and that the doors open freely and close securely. Checking seats and seat belts/restraints.
- b) checking that the driver's seat and rear view mirrors are secure, intact and adjustable.
- c) checking windscreen washers and wipers.
- d) checking lights, indicators, horn and warning lights and instruments.
- e) checking tyres for condition and pressure (including the spare).
- f) checking engine coolant and oil levels.
- g) checking screen washer fluid level.
- h) checking brake fluid and battery levels.

Any defects will be recorded, reported to the Site Manager or School Business Manager, and rectified before the vehicle is used.

9 SAFE LOADING

The minibus must not be overloaded. Where passengers and luggage are to be carried, then the combined weight must be assessed. Our minibus will be close to its maximum gross vehicle weight with a full complement of 17 people (including the driver) with hand luggage, and a full tank of fuel.

If luggage is carried in the minibus it must not restrict the gangway. All gangways and exits must be kept clear and it must always be possible to open emergency exits from the inside. A roof rack must not be used on the minibus but a trailer of approved design may be fitted in order to carry excess luggage. (Subject to insurance).

When a trailer is fitted the maximum speed must not exceed 50mph.

Without a trailer the maximum speed must not exceed 60mph.

10 SEAT BELTS

Seat belts/restraints are fitted to all seats. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that the seat belts/restraints are secured at the beginning of each journey and that passengers are reminded of the necessity to keep them fastened. A pupil refusing to fasten a seat belt should not be allowed to use the school minibus.

11 DRIVER'S HOURS

It is important that the driver is not tired, particularly after a day at work, or a long period teaching. The following restrictions will apply:

- a) After a full day's work, when the destination is more than 1.5 hours driving time away (equivalent to 60 miles) **two** drivers will be taken and the drivers change after approximately 2 hours or 2.5 hours if no return journey is involved.
- b) After a half day's work, when the destination is more than 2 hours driving time away (equivalent to 80 miles), **two** drivers will be taken and the drivers change after approximately 2.5 hours or 3 hours if no return journey is involved.
- c) At weekends and during holidays no driver shall drive for more than 6 hours on any one working day. Continuous driving must not exceed 3 hours after which a break of at least 30 minutes must be taken in which the driver is able to obtain rest and refreshment.
- d) The working day must not exceed 16 hours between the times of starting and finishing work (including work other than driving and off duty periods during the school day.)

12 JOURNEYS ABROAD

The school minibus may not be used for any journey abroad, without the permission of the Governing Body.

13 UNPLANNED INCIDENTS

Journeys involving the school minibus will always be staffed on the basis of two approved adults* to provide for accident/emergency situations except on local journeys which are defined as those within a 35 mile radius of the school. A memo "Instructions in the event of illness or a minibus breakdown" is kept in the minibus and should be

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referred to should such an incident occur. Should the driver become ill he/she should not attempt to drive the minibus but should seek assistance as outlined in the above memo.

In the event of an incident whilst on a journey that is likely to cause a delay of any kind, the school or contact should be informed as soon as possible.

* An approved adult is a person of 21 years or above who has been recognised as such by the senior member of staff responsible for school journeys.

14 INTERNAL PROCEDURES

The booking of the minibus is to be made with the Site Manager giving an indication as to whether an approved driver is available.

The minibus keys are located in the School Office from where they may be borrowed. A second set of keys are retained in the Site Managers Office.

All pupils will sign a safe use of minibus document every year, indicating their acceptance of rules regarding conduct on the minibus. All staff travelling on school minibuses will make themselves aware of requirements and expectations of behaviour.

The minibus uses diesel fuel and is kept topped up by the Site Management team. If diesel fuel is obtained elsewhere, a receipt must be obtained and submitted with the account for the journey.

At the end of each journey the driver is to ensure that:

- a) all rubbish is correctly disposed of.
- b) the minibus is checked for cleanliness.
- c) the minibus journey log sheet is completed.
- d) the minibus is parked in a parking bay.
- e) the minibus lights, both internal and external, are switched off.
- f) the minibus doors are locked.
- g) the minibus keys are returned to the school office.
- h) a defect log sheet is completed outlining any faults identified as necessary and passed to the Site Manager or School Business Manager.