

# SCHOOL MINIBUS POLICY

Policy/Procedure Title	School Minibus Policy
Approved by	
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## The Aims of this Policy

- To ensure that The Propeller Academy Trust (comprising of Fitzwaryn and Kingfisher Schools) complies with current legislation and guidance concerning the maintenance and driving of the school minibuses.
- To ensure that the safety of minibus users (both drivers and passengers) and other road users and pedestrians is paramount at all times.
- To ensure that The Propeller Academy Trust is meeting its health and safety and safeguarding obligations towards all members of the school community.

## Policy Statements

- The school follows guidance from GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/driving-school-minibuses-advice-for-schools-and-local-authorities/driving-school-minibuses-advice-for-schools-and-local-authorities> published 4th September 2013 which was published jointly by the Department for Education (DfE), Department for Transport (DfT) and Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).
- This policy and the procedures contained within it have been written to provide any members of staff who may need to drive vehicles on behalf of the school with the necessary knowledge and information in the light of growing legislation regarding the qualifications, insurance, operating, servicing and inspection requirements to safely operate our minibuses and carry passengers.
- The behaviour and competence of the minibus drivers will be fully assessed to ensure the safe operation of the minibuses and to keep employees and others free of harm, all drivers will undergo driver training and test carried out by an OCC recognised tester.
- This policy extends to the use of hired vehicles that may be used by the school on rare occasion.
- A copy of this policy will be available to all minibus drivers, there will be a copy in the individual minibus folders on the minibuses and a copy will be kept in the school office minibus folder and on our policy's page on our website and updated in line with current legislation.
- This policy and the procedures contained within it will be reviewed regularly as part of the school's Health and Safety review.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### The Governing Body

- The Governing Body of each school is responsible for ensuring that school minibuses operated on behalf of the school fully comply in every respect, with all legal transport and health and safety requirements. This responsibility is delegated to the Headteacher to ensure its appropriate implementation.
- To monitor the implementation of this policy through the Link Governor for Health and Safety and review it on a regular basis.

### Headteacher

- The Headteacher will ensure that the school has appropriate safety procedures for all of the minibuses based on the ROSPA Advice for Minibus Safety and their code of practice (in addition to the DfE guidance). A copy of the full code of practice is available at [www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)

### Servicing of Minibuses

- We have a service contract with Oxford Direct Services (ODC) for the inspections, servicing maintenance and repair of all of our minibuses. All records are kept in the minibus folder in the front office.
- All school minibuses are inspected every 10 weeks, they are serviced annually including a full MOT.

- Vehicles with hoists and ramps have LOLAR inspections every 6 months to comply with current regulations.
- Any faults are reported to the Site Manager for the relevant school who makes the necessary arrangements with ODC for immediate attention.
- School minibuses are classed as “Disable Passenger Vehicles” and are registered as such for road tax.

## Minibus Drivers

- Follow and comply fully with the requirements outlined in ‘Procedures and Practices’ section below.
- Ensure that pre-use checks of the vehicle are conducted and complete the Vehicle Check List (see Appendix One).
- Report any concerns about the safety and / or condition of the minibus to the relevant Site Manager / office staff immediately.
- Familiarise themselves with the relevant guidance.(ROSPA)  
<https://www.rospa.com/rospaweb/docs/advice-services/road-safety/practitioners/minibus-code-of-practice.pdf>
- Understand the personal legal implications if procedures are not adhered to. *For example, “It is the driver’s licence that will suffer if the vehicle is found to be defective. It is also the driver’s responsibility to ensure the safety (including the use of seat belts) and welfare of all passengers”. ROSPA February 2008*
- Comply fully with all road traffic laws, respecting speed limits and ensuring use of seatbelts at all times. For longer journeys, frequent rest breaks are to be taken.
- Inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team immediately if unfit to undertake a journey in order that alternative arrangements can be made.
- Never use a mobile phone (hand held or hands free) as the driver of the vehicle unless it is parked in a safe place with the engine switched off. Making genuine emergency 999 or 112 calls whilst driving is legal if you are not able to stop and park at that moment.

## Procedures and Practices

### Driver Eligibility

#### Persons Entitled to Drive the Minibus

- Drivers must be aged 21 or over and held a full UK licence for at least 2 years. Minibus drivers must meet the driver licence requirements set out in GOV.UK “What is a minibus and who can drive one” (please see link above under Policy Statements).
- *Before* being authorised to drive the minibus, staff must undergo the OCC minibus training and test, and pass. You will not be able to drive until your OCC drivers permit has been issued from OCC. New potential drivers are allowed to practice in the minibus provided they have a fully qualified driver sat next to them.
- Additionally, staff will re-take the training and test every five years (or more often if they request it) to ensure that they maintain the necessary level of proficiency to drive the school minibuses safely.
- Drivers must be medically fit and legally qualified to drive a minibus and are required to complete and sign a driver declaration form to that effect before driving the minibus, they must let SLT know if anything changes to affect them driving a school minibus safely.
- Staff with a medical condition that needs to be declared to the insurers should advise SLT accordingly.
- The driver declaration form will be kept on file in the Finance office.
- It is the licence holder’s responsibility to notify SLT of any changes to their driver’s licence.
- Where a driver informs the school that he/she has acquired penalty points on his/her licence, the Headteacher will determine whether he/she is permitted to drive the minibus.

- Only those named on the approved drivers list (a copy of which is held by the office staff) will be eligible to drive the school minibuses.

### **Vehicle Readiness**

- It is the driver's responsibility to ensure all of the vehicle pre-checks are completed before the vehicle is driven.
- The driver is also responsible for ensuring all passengers including wheelchair users are strapped in correctly.
- It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure the vehicle has sufficient fuel for their journey/trip.
- The minibus should be filled up with fuel before it gets to quarter of a tank. Fitzwaryn School have an account at Broadway Motors Wantage where you can fill any of their school minibuses and just sign for the fuel. Kingfisher School use the school credit card when re-fueling, you should let the Site Manager know when this is needed.
- Please ensure you leave enough fuel in the minibus for the next user.

### **Minibus Bookings and Administration**

- All bookings should be made using the minibus booking sheets in the Front Office.
- A list of students and staff on the journey, and journey details (to include departure and return times) is to be left with the school office prior to departure. The office should be provided with relevant contact numbers for staff using the vehicle(s).
- Drivers must sign for the vehicle (out and in) in the minibus book when collecting the minibus keys from the front Office. (Keys should not be taken for minibuses that are booked out on the minibus timetable, likewise you must not remove anyone's booking without permission). Ensure that you have all necessary equipment for your trip, including but not limited to, list of emergency contact numbers, insurance and breakdown information, mobile phone, first aid kit and any necessary pupil medication.
- Drivers must return the vehicle's keys to the Front Office on returning to school. If the minibus is being returned out of school hours, the keys should be handed in on the next working day. Minibus keys must never be left where they can be easily accessed, they should always be stored securely.

### **Pre -Use Vehicle Checks**

- The school minibuses must be maintained to high levels. As well as servicing, MOT and 10 weekly inspections, drivers should satisfy themselves that the vehicle is safe to drive. If the serviceability of the vehicle is in doubt, it is not to be used until it has been looked at/repared.
- Pre-use checks are to be recorded on the Vehicle Check List found in the Minibus File which must be signed for on completion. Any faults must be reported immediately and recorded in the key issue minibus book, the relevant school contact must also be notified immediately so the necessary arrangements can be made. These lists will be retained by the School.
- Pre-use checks must include lights (headlights, hazards, brakes, reversing, side and indicators), horn, mirrors, doors (open, close and lock correctly), steering, seatbelts and windscreen wipers (including windscreen wiper wash). A walk around the vehicle should occur to check for damage / defects and to assess tyre condition.
- If the driver has concerns about the condition of the vehicle it must not be used and these concerns must be reported to the appropriate person at each school immediately.
- Mileage records should be used to help monitor fuel consumption.

- Prior to the start of each journey, the driver is to go through a brief talk with students regarding the wearing of seatbelts, journey time, being seated at all times, behavior, noise levels and escape procedures. The journey is not to commence unless the requirements of the driver are complied with.

## **Fuel**

- The School Minibuses should ideally not get below half a tank, but must never be left with less than a quarter of a tank of fuel. Fitzwaryn School has an account at the local fuel station (Broadway Motors) where you can fill up and just sign for the fuel on the schools account. Kingfisher school uses their school credit card when filling up their minibuses.
- It is the responsibility of the minibus driver to ensure there is sufficient fuel for their entire journey including any delays that might occur. You can fill up before or at the end of your journey as necessary.
- The fuel level should not go below a quarter, this helps prevent primer damage and fuel tank sediment entering the engine.

## **Equipment**

It is recommended that the following equipment is carried on board the Minibus. If items are used during a journey, please inform the First Aid team member for stock replenishment at school who will replenish supplies:

- **First Aid Box containing**
  - 10 antiseptic wipes, foil packed
  - 1 conforming disposable bandage (not less than 7.5cm wide)
  - 2 triangular bandages
  - 1 packet of 24 assorted adhesive dressings
  - 3 large sterile un-medicated ambulance dressings (not less than 15cmx20cm)
  - 2 sterile eye pads with attachments
  - 12 assorted safety pins
  - 1 pair rustproof blunt-ended scissors
  - Disposable gloves
  - Mouth mask for resuscitation

## **Fire Extinguisher**

- At least one fire extinguisher but generally two, (which complies with BS 5432 or equivalent and has a minimum test rating of 8A or 21B) that contains foam can be found in the minibuses. They are normally situated, one at the front of the bus by the driver's seat and one at the rear of the bus just inside the rear doors.

- **Warning Triangle**

- This should be used in the event of breakdown and carefully positioned 50m behind the vehicle to warn other road users of the broken down vehicle, only do this if you feel it is safe to do so. This can be found in the overhead storage area.

- **Hi-Visibility Vest**

## **Tidiness**

- The Minibus should be left tidy. Eating and drinking on it should be discouraged (exceptions can be made in circumstances of long delay or for medical needs).
- Bin bags are to be carried and made available for rubbish.
- Dirty/muddy kit (especially boots and shoes) must not be worn in the minibus.
- Clean clothes and / or footwear should be taken if students are likely to get muddy.

## **Vehicle Operation**

### **Capacity**

- Fitzwaryn School has two minibuses with a maximum capacity of 17 seats including driver, one with maximum capacity of 13 including driver these three minibuses have wheelchair access, if a wheelchair user is being transported this will reduce the number of seats in the bus, you will need to remove two/three seats for a wheelchair. Teachers and TA's are responsible for ensuring the bus is ready for their trip, if seats need to be removed they must be replaced on your return so they are ready for the next user. Any member of staff can fasten pupils into the minibus, only trained staff can secure a wheelchair user, it is the responsibility of the driver to ensure all passengers are secured safely and wearing seatbelts, that a wheelchair user is securely fastened into position with all appropriate straps. Fitzwaryn also has one minibus with a maximum of 15 seats that has no wheelchair capacity, the same rules for securing passengers and luggage applies as above.
- Kingfisher School has three minibuses, two with a maximum capacity of 17 seats including driver, one of these minibuses has wheelchair access, if a wheelchair user is being transported this will reduce the number of seats in the bus, you will need to remove two/three seats for a wheelchair. Kingfisher also has one minibus with a maximum capacity of 9 seats.

### **Seat Belts/Luggage**

- Before setting off, the driver and/or driver's assistant/TA's must ensure that passengers are wearing seat belts and any luggage is securely stowed. Students are to be informed that seatbelts are to be worn at all times when the vehicle is in motion and should only be removed when they are instructed to do so.
- The driver must check they are happy that all passengers are securely fastened and any luggage is stowed appropriately, the driver has ultimate responsibility for all passengers and luggage.

### **Driving Rules**

- Drivers are responsible for driving within the law and in accordance with the Highway Code. The School will not refund fines or other costs incurred by drivers as a result of any road traffic or parking offence. Drivers must inform the school immediately of any penalty points received whilst using the school minibus.
- National speed limits apply to the school minibus. Note: on a 60mph carriageway you should not drive above 50mph
- All of our minibuses are limited to 62mph, you should bear this in mind if you are intending to overtake.
- It is school policy that under normal road conditions, a minibus should not be driven in the third lane of a motorway.
- Vehicles are not to be driven by anyone who has consumed any amount of alcohol or illegal substance.
- Some medication may impair a driver's ability and employees who are taking medicines of this nature are not to drive vehicles.
- All accidents, whether or not they cause injury to persons or damage to property, are to be reported immediately to the school, if needed the emergency services must be called and the RAC, when calling you should state that you are a school for children with special educational needs and if you have any wheelchair users, specific medical needs or vulnerable passengers, you should be given priority breakdown service.
- Keys must not be left in an unattended vehicle at any time.
- Due consideration must be given to parking in secure areas as much as possible, particularly where overnight stays are required.
- Vehicles must not be driven at any time if the load being carried exceeds the maximum allowable weight capacity.
- Smoking is prohibited on the minibuses at all times.

## **Other staff on bus**

- These persons should be positioned near the back of the minibus to observe behaviour and maintain good order, by the side door for safety and as the needs of the class. They can also make and receive phone calls so the driver does not have to. They should assist in a breakdown or accident and can act as a relief driver if they are trained and authorised to do so.

## **Reversing of vehicles**

- Reversing vehicles can be particularly hazardous. The best way of avoiding a reversing accident is to avoid reversing a vehicle wherever possible.
- Always check behind your vehicle before reversing – if necessary, ask someone to watch the area into which you will be reversing.
- If you use a guide, ensure they can be seen at all times whilst manoeuvring.
- Ensure rear view mirrors are clean and properly adjusted at all times.
- Ensure all windows are clean and clear.

## **Distraction during driving**

- The use of mobile phones is strictly prohibited whilst operating the vehicle. There are other similar activities, which can be unsafe and thus may attract the attention of the police, such as drinking (soft drinks), eating, smoking, or even changing a radio channel. To this end, any action whilst driving, which could cause distraction must be avoided.

## **Tiredness**

- Driving when tired greatly increases the risk of an accident. The Highway Code recommends that a driver takes a minimum break of at least 15 minutes after every two hours of driving. However, after a full working day, drivers **MUST NOT** drive for a continuous period of more than two hours without taking a suitable break.
- If an authorised relief driver is available to drive, a journey can be continued without a break.
- Drivers should use common sense to ascertain their suitability to drive at a given time (consider tiredness, recent alcohol or medicine consumption, illness etc).

## **Safety**

- Whilst driving the minibus, drivers should ensure that all doors are unlocked to assist with emergency egress if the need arises.
- Drivers should ensure that internal lights are off whilst driving so that their vision is not impaired by the internal light.
- Exits/gangways should be clear of obstructions (such as bags) at all times. Bags can go on spare seats and under seats.
- If a trailer is used, the back doors of the minibus need to be able to open fully to help students escape safely if necessary.
- Dealing with 'road rage':
  - If threatened by another driver, do not retaliate by flashing lights, sounding the horn or making offensive gestures; this only attracts a response and will often make a situation worse.
  - If forced to stop, stay in the vehicle with windows closed and doors locked and be prepared to drive off.
  - If necessary, use your mobile phone to contact the police for assistance.
  - Note the registration number of the vehicle, and the make and colour, plus a description of the driver and occupants and give the police these details.
- Unsafe situations: if you feel that driving cannot be in complete safety, do not continue. Members of staff are not required to put themselves at risk at any time whilst driving on behalf of the school.

## **Security**

- Whenever the vehicle is left unattended, all windows/sun roofs are to be closed and doors locked.

## Accident and Breakdown Procedures

### Breakdown Procedures

Standard breakdown procedures are to be followed where necessary:

- If on a public road and it is safe to do so, get out of the vehicle on the safe side – nearest the path or verge, and move away from the vehicle.
- If on a motorway, follow the instructions of the emergency operator, which may include staying in the vehicle, or getting out of the vehicle and not getting back into the vehicle again.
- Avoid going near the traffic flow and exercise extreme caution at all times.
- If possible, leave a motorway, dual carriageway or main road if a fault occurs, which will reduce the risk of collision, but park in a well-lit place so that the vehicle can be seen by other road users.
- In the event of breakdown contact the RAC (Details in Yellow folder):
  - RAC contact phone number: 0333 202 3000
  - All the information you need is in the Yellow folder
- It is best to use a roadside emergency telephone if possible as this will pinpoint your location.
- School should also be contacted, when practical, in the event of a breakdown.
- Staff should not change a tyre or attempt repairs. This should be carried out by a breakdown team.

### Accident

In the event of an accident:

1. Deal with any injured persons.
  2. Ensure the safety of everyone involved.
  3. If necessary, call the emergency services.
- In all cases, stop at the scene and take the names, addresses and telephone numbers of people involved, including independent witnesses. Take photos of the accident scene from various angles if possible. Breakdown procedures should be carried out if necessary.
  - In the event of a serious incident, emergency contact numbers are available in the Minibus File (carried on all journeys).
  - School Contact numbers are:
    - Main School Number – Fitzwaryn 01235 764504
    - Main school Nunber - Kingfisher 01235 555512
    - Out of Hours Emergency SLT – numbers in the file

### General

Any member of staff who has queries relating to the driving of the school minibus or the condition of the vehicle should bring them to the attention of the Site Manager, Finance Manager and SLT.

