

SCHOOL MINIBUS POLICY

Reviewed by:	Mr D Towers (Business Manager) Mr S Gabriel (Headteacher)
Approved by:	Full Governing Body
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Mission Statement

St Peter's RC High School is a community founded on mutual love and care for the individual in which the Faith of the Church underpins all our activities. Christ is our model in striving for excellence in all that we do and in valuing the unique contribution and gift of every member of our school community. St Peter's is committed to working with home and parish to enable all pupils to succeed in life.

Policy Aims

- To ensure that St Peters RC High Schools complies with current legislation and guidance concerning the maintenance and driving of the school minibuses.
- To ensure that the users of the school minibus are aware of their responsibilities.
(Part 3 of the Road Traffic Act 1988)
(Motor vehicles (Driving Licences) regulations 1999)
- To ensure the full safety of minibus users, drivers & passengers.
- To ensure that clear procedures are provided in relation to the use of the minibus.
- To ensure that St Peters RC High School is meeting its health and safety and safeguarding obligations towards all members of the school community.

Procedures and Practices

Driver Eligibility (A)

The School Business Manager (SBM) will maintain an approved list of employees who are eligible to drive the school minibuses.

The school will also prompt and arrange training where deemed necessary for the approved list of employees and new. This will be reviewed annually.

Only those drivers on the approved list will be allowed to drive the school minibuses.

Approved minibus drivers list – **See SBM for list**

Driver Eligibility (B)

This is non-statutory advice jointly produced by the Department for Education (DFE), the Department for Transport (DFT) and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) on driving licence entitlement when driving a school minibus.

This advice does not constitute legal advice nor is it a ruling on the law

- Drivers that have passed the (Car) driving test before 1st January 1997 will automatically have D1 entitlement.
- Drivers of a minibus must hold a licence with a D1 category and passed **MIDAS** to drive a minibus.
- Drivers who passed their test on or after the 1st January 1997 are required to take the DVSA Minibus PCV and apply for a PSV licence *unless* the conditions in **Driver Eligibility (C)** are met.

Driver Eligibility (C) – Volunteer Drivers

You might be able to drive a minibus with up to 16 passenger seats using your current car driving licence as long as there's no payment from or on behalf of the passengers (it's not for 'hire or reward').

You can drive a minibus within the UK as long as the following conditions apply:

- You're 21 or older
- You've had your driving licence for at least 2 years
- Passed **MIDAS** (School Policy) (D1 Desired)
- You meet the '[Group 2' GOV medical standards](#) if you're over 70 - check with your GP if you're not sure you meet the standards.
- You're driving on a voluntary basis and the minibus is used for social purposes by a non-commercial body.
- The maximum weight of the minibus is not more than 3.5 tonnes - or 4.25 tonnes including specialist equipment for disabled passengers, for example a wheelchair ramp
- You're not towing a trailer.

General Requirements

To drive a minibus (16 passenger seats with driver seat) with a gross weight in excess of 3.5 tonnes you must have a D1 category driving license and/or a MIDAS certificate (If you just have a MIDAS certificate then this is valid for 4 years). Drivers who passed their test after 1st January 1997 and wish to drive a minibus with a gross weight in excess of 3.5 tonnes are now required to pass a PCV minibus theory, medical and practical tests to obtain a D1 / MIDAS licence. If you passed your car driving test before 1 January 1997, you automatically gained a licence with Category D1 entitlement.

The Headteacher via the School Business Manager is responsible for ensuring that the driver holds a valid and suitable licence, and is also responsible for periodical licences checks to evidence:-

- Drivers must not drive contrary to medical advice
- No current endorseable offences, although single isolated offences in relation to speeding, parking or failing to obey a traffic signal is acceptable

The Headteacher via the school Business Manager should ensure that the driver receives the appropriate training prior to operating the vehicle and report accidents, which involve a third party on the 1st day to the Insurers.

St Peters RC High School's minibuses cannot be used for hire or reward (See Appendix A)

Mini-Bus Code of Practice and Procedure

- Only an authorised driver can drive the minibus - **SEE DRIVER ELIGIBILITY (A-C)**
The Minibus has 9 – 16 passengers' seats plus the driver.
Under no circumstances that more than 16 passengers may be carried.
- A Minibus Trip form, detailing the full names of the adults and children being transported, should be completed and a copy sent to the office before or on the day of travel.
- Where possible, at least 1 other adult should be present throughout each journey – Staff Escort.
- If the Staff Escort is to be located anywhere other than the front of the minibus then this reduces the capacity of the minibus to 14 passengers – the front two seats must be left vacant. (It is then up to the driver's discretion if those two front seats can be used)
- Drivers to sign keys Out/In at the admin office & collect the driver pack which includes –
 1. Recent Policy.
 2. Minibus Trip Form. (Appendix C)
 3. Pre-Drive Safety Check Form. (Appendix B)
 4. Copy of Insurance with Breakdown Number.
 5. Fuel Card.
 6. Notepad and Pen.
- Drivers must not operate the school minibuses whilst under the influence of drink or drugs, in accordance with the relevant driving laws.
- Driver is to complete the journey record on the Pre-Drive Safety Check form ***Before*** and ***After***.
- The driver must check vehicle before departure and complete a Pre-Drive Safety Check form - **SEE APPENDIX B**
- The driver must have emergency contact numbers to contact school staff both in office hours and outside of office hours.
- Keys must not be left in an unattended vehicle at any time.

- Smoking is prohibited on the minibus at any time.
- Exits/gangways should always be clear of obstructions (such as bags). Bags can go on spare seats and under seats.
- Before setting off, the driver and/or the staff escort must ensure that passengers are wearing seat belts.
- Students are to be informed that seatbelts are to be worn at all times when the vehicle is in motion.
- Whilst driving the minibus, drivers should ensure that all doors are unlocked to assist with emergency egress if the need arises.
- When parking please reverse into parking space where possible. Leave enough room so all sides of the minibus are approachable. If required use the staff escort as a banksman.
- The use of mobile phones is strictly prohibited whilst operating the vehicle.
- If an accident occurs, the mini bus driver or additional member of staff should ensure that the students are safe and uninjured.
- The driver should ensure that the details of other vehicles at the scene are taken and recorded. Where possible photographs should be taken.
- If the minibus is not drivable or injuries sustained to staff or students. The driver must telephone the emergency services.
Then telephone the senior member of staff on call to advise them of the incident.
- If the minibus breaks down the driver must call the recovery services.
- The minibuses will be serviced annually and have a valid MOT certificate and insurance in place.
- Whenever the vehicle is left unattended, all windows are to be closed and doors locked.

- 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.
 1. Do not take any risks you may have taken if you were driving alone.
 2. The performance of a minibus is very different to that of a car.
 3. Stopping distance is much longer for a minibus than for a car
 4. Try to handle the minibus gently, and be mindful of how the people in the back will feel.
- National speed limits apply to the school minibus. (School Minibus(s) is restricted to 66mph)
 - **Restricted road:** 30mph (Always check for repeater signs)
 - **Single carriageway:** 50mph
 - **Dual carriageway:** 60mph
 - **Motorway:** 70mph
- The driver to ensure that all rubbish is removed from vehicle.
- On return, the driver must ensure all doors locked, windows closed and lights off.
- The Driver/Escort must return the driver pack with all appropriate forms completed and report any faults or incidents.
- Please ensure vehicle keys are returned and signed for.
- Each Minibus to be fitted with a First Aid Kit & Fire Extinguisher.

Appendix A - Definitions

Minibus

A minibus is defined as a vehicle which has been constructed or adapted to carry more than 8, but no more than 16 seated passengers in addition to the driver. The gross vehicle weight should not be more than 5000 kg.

Hire or Reward

Any payment (in money or kind), which gives a person a right or expectation to be carried on a vehicle regardless of whether a profit is made or not. This payment may be a direct payment made by the person themselves, or on their behalf – such as a fare, a grant or even a donation to the operator. It may include other things in addition to the cost of travel – e.g. membership fees, grants, payments for access to specific events etc.

Volunteer Drivers

Volunteer drivers are exempt from holding a D1 Entitlement and are allowed to drive a minibus with up to 16 passenger seats (in addition to the driver) under certain circumstances list in **Driver Eligibility C**. This exemption was designed to help charities and other groups who would not be able to provide D1 training and testing for all their volunteer drivers.

Appendix B - PRE-DRIVE CHECKLIST (to be completed by driver before every journey)

Minibus Registration Plate:	
Date/time:	

INTERIOR CHECKS

Cab / driver area

- ☐ Mirrors adjusted, clean, unobstructed.
- ☐ Know location/function of all dashboard controls.
- ☐ Driver seat positioned so pedals/controls used comfortably.
- ☐ Brake pedal pressure feels firm (no sinking/spongy feel).
- ☐ No warning lights showing on dashboard once started.
- ☐ Horn works.
- ☐ Wipers and washers working.
- ☐ Fuel level sufficient and correct fuel type (diesel/petrol).
- ☐ Heating/ventilation working.

Passenger area

- ☐ Seats secure; all seatbelts present, undamaged, working.
- ☐ Aisles/exits clear; luggage stowed safely.
- ☐ No sharp edges or interior damage.
- ☐ Interior lights working.
- ☐ All doors unlocked and operate freely.

Safety / equipment

- ☐ Wheel brace and jack present.
- ☐ First aid kit present/complete; fire extinguisher(s) present and in date.
- ☐ Emergency kit onboard (hi-vis, torch, warning triangle, webbing cutter, etc.).
- ☐ Paperwork onboard: permit disc, insurance details, MOT, breakdown/emergency numbers, driver licence.
- ☐ If carrying wheelchair users: tie-downs, belts, harnesses available and serviceable.

EXTERIOR CHECKS

Fluids

- ☐ Oil level.
- ☐ Coolant level.
- ☐ Windscreen washer fluid.
- ☐ Brake fluid level.
- ☐ Power steering fluid (if applicable).

Glass / mirrors / lights

- ☐ Windscreen & windows clean, no cracks/damage.
- ☐ Wiper blades clean, not split/worn.
- ☐ Exterior mirrors clean, adjusted, unobstructed.
- ☐ All lights working & clean: headlights, brake lights, indicators, reverse, hazards.

Tyres / wheels

- ☐ Tyre pressures correct incl. spare (and inner/rear twins if fitted).
- ☐ Tread depth safe incl. spare (MiDAS/RoSPA recommend **≥3.0mm across centre $\frac{3}{4}$**).
- ☐ No cuts, bulges, nails, or sidewall damage.

Body / access

- ☐ Doors open/close properly.
- ☐ No unreported body damage or sharp edges.
- ☐ Check underneath for fluid leaks.

If fitted / used

- ☐ Lift operates safely and is stowed securely.
- ☐ Ramp operates safely and is stowed securely.
- ☐ Roof rack/trailer correctly fitted; load secure.
- ☐ Trailer lights & indicators work (if towing).

IF YOU FIND A DEFECT

- **Do not drive** if it affects safety/legal roadworthiness (brakes, tyres, lights, steering, leaks, seatbelts, doors, warning lights).
- Record the issue and report to the nominated fleet/site manager. MiDAS guidance stresses defects must be logged and rectified before use.)

Defects Identified:

Defects corrected:

Journey necessities

- ☐ Sufficient funds or other means of purchasing fuel and parking
- ☐ Taken school fuel card?
- ☐ AA card/recovery phone number
- ☐ School contact numbers and out-of-hours contact numbers
- ☐ Minibus phone present, operational and fully charged?
- ☐ I have read and understood my responsibilities outlined within this policy
- ☐ I have read and understood the speed limits outlined within this policy
- ☐ I am not under any medical advice not to drive
- ☐ I have not had a vehicle accident in the last 2 years
- ☐ I do not have any current enforceable offences on my driving licence
- ☐ I will not hand the fuel card over to another member of staff
- ☐ I will not hand the keys over to another member of staff to drive

I certify that all above checks have been made and any defects corrected. In the case that uncorrected defects remain, I will report these to the School Business Manager and **must not** drive the minibus until such time as they can be repaired.

Name	
Job Title	
Signed	
Date	

Appendix C - Minibus Trip Booking Form

Driver name:	
Supporting Adult/Staff Escort:	
Name of Person Submitting Form:	
Destination:	
Departure date/time:	
Return date/time:	
Passenger Name	
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Appendix D - Minibus Driver's Advice Sheet

This advice sheet has been produced as a summary guide of good practice for minibuses driver for St Peter's RC High School. We ask you to read and adhere to these guidelines. You should contact the Business Manager immediately if there is a problem with the minibus.

Remember, it is your responsibility:

- To tell ALL passengers to fasten their seatbelts
- To check & ensure the roadworthiness of the minibus, e.g.: the lights & brakes, before you start driving, including when you first collect the bus
- To ensure that all the exits are clear of luggage and are unlocked whilst the minibus is moving
- To ensure no passengers are carrying open containers of drink, or any flammable liquids
- To ensure the security of the vehicle whilst in use and whilst parked

Remember that you are typically driving around between 12 and 16 other people. Therefore do not take any risks that you may have taken if you were driving alone. Be aware of the amount of alcohol you consume on the evening before driving. Excess alcohol may still be present in your blood on the morning (and affect your driving ability).

Also please remember:-

- The performance of a minibus is very different to that of a car
- Try to handle the minibus gently, and think about how the people in the back will feel!
- You should have an escort with you to control the passages on the minibus
- Stopping distance is much longer for a minibus than for a car
- Leave about 4 seconds rather than 2 seconds between you and the vehicle in front in good weather, twice those in wet conditions, and still further on icy roads
- Always be able to stop comfortably on your own side of the road within the distance you can see to be clear

Current recommendations are that, after 2 hours of driving, you should take a break of at least 20 minutes. Make liberal use of service stations and never feel pressurised into carrying on if you are tired. It is better that people arrive back late than for an accident to occur due to driver tiredness. **Speed limits are as follows:-**

- 20mph - some urban areas
- 30mph – built up areas

- 50mph – single-carriageway roads
- 60mph – dual-carriageway roads and motorways

If you need to refuel the minibus **(Diesel)** there is an 'All Star fuel card' made out to St Peter's RC High School and is signed out with the school Business Manager. When signing back in, **you must also have the receipt with you.**

ALL transport is booked through the school office.