
SAINT NICHOLAS SCHOOL

SCHOOL MINIBUS POLICY

Reviewed April 2016

Review Date April 2018

GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE OPERATION OF SCHOOL MINIBUSES

1. RESPONSIBILITY

The Bursar is responsible for all aspects of School minibus maintenance and operation. However, members of staff are responsible for their minibus for the period of hire, and drivers are directly responsible for the safe operation of their vehicle. Drivers, in particular, must read these guidelines and regulations carefully, and observe the requirements of the Road Traffic Act.

2. AGE LIMIT

No driver under the age of 21 or 71 and over may drive a School minibus without the prior approval of the Estates Manager.

3. DRIVING LICENCES

3.1 Teachers and other staff intending to drive School minibuses must submit their driving licence to the Estates Manager who will also carry out an annual check of licences; this is an insurance requirement.

3.2 If you first held a licence to drive cars **AFTER** 1 Jan 97, you can drive our school minibus under the special licence we have for a charity vehicle(Section 19).

4. TRAINING

Minibuses do handle differently to cars and all potential minibus drivers are required to undergo minibus driver awareness training. The Estates Manager should be approached if driver training is required.

5. BOOKING

All minibuses must be booked by using the diary booking system held in the Office and each booking must have individually named drivers on the day of use.

6. SAFETY

6.1 Always observe speed limits and avoid unnecessarily high speeds. **REMEMBER**, minibus stopping distances and cornering abilities are very different from those of a car, and acceleration is slower than that of a car.

6.2 Remember to allow for the extra width and length of the vehicle, particularly when overtaking.

6.3 Always make sure that the back door is **UNLOCKED** when driving so that passengers can escape in case of accident or fire.

6.4 It is a legal requirement that all passengers wear a seat belt. A child aged 3 – 11 and less than 1.5m should wherever possible sit in the rear of the minibus. Where capacity means that all rear seats are

filled, a child may be seated in the front of the minibus. The driver is responsible for ensuring that all are wearing their seat belt.

6.5 Ensure that luggage is stowed securely.

6.6 Avoid motorway travel in fog; if you must travel in fog, take an alternative route.

6.7 Do not allow passengers to throw objects out of the windows; if any damage is caused to persons or property in this way, the driver can be held legally responsible.

6.8 It is illegal to use a hand-held mobile telephone whilst driving.

6.9 It is a legal requirement that a fire extinguisher and first aid box are carried in each vehicle. Drivers should check that the minibus is so equipped before starting their journey.

6.10 The maximum driving time without a break is 2 hours or a distance of 100 miles, whichever one comes first, after which the driver must break. The minimum length of break is 30 minutes, with refreshments. If the total planned journey time exceeds 4 hours, a second driver is required.

7. ECONOMY

Avoid high speeds, sudden acceleration and braking (economy apart, these also tend to make the passengers feel ill). Maximum speeds are: 50 mph on single carriageways or 60 mph on motorways and dual carriageways. Avoid high revs.

8. INSURANCE

8.1 Drivers need to complete a Drivers Declaration form held by the Estates Manager. Always carry your driving licence with you.

8.2 Overloading. Vehicles should not be overloaded and there should be the correct number of seats for travelling passengers.

9. ACCIDENTS

In the event of an accident, follow the instructions on the accident sheet, which you will find in the glove box of the vehicle. In particular, obtain all relevant information at the time of the accident and under no circumstances admit liability. A photograph at the scene is often useful. Report all accidents to the Bursar as soon as possible.

10. BREAKDOWN AND EMERGENCY

In the event of a breakdown which cannot be rectified, the School Minibus is covered for emergency assistance and the number is kept in the Glove compartment.. A fully charged mobile telephone for your trip is available from the maintenance team.

11. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

11.1 Petrol/Diesel. The Estates Manager has a credit card so please advise when the fuel reaches a quarter of a tank. Take care - ensure that you fill up with the correct fuel i.e. unleaded or diesel.

11.2 Cleanliness. It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that the minibus is left in a clean and tidy condition.

11.4 Punctures. Each vehicle is equipped with a spare tyre, jack and wheel brace.

Each vehicle is equipped with an emergency tyre repair kit. (Seals and repairs punctures.)

11.5 Parking. When parking, lock the vehicle and leave nothing on display to attract the attention of a would-be thief. Minibuses parked overnight away from the School must, where possible, be parked in a secure area and not so as to cause an obstruction. Avoid multi-storey car parks where possible; turning and parking is often more difficult with a minibus.

11.6 Long Expeditions. Where a minibus is away for two or more consecutive days, the driver is responsible for checking oil, water, brake/clutch fluid levels and tyre pressures daily.

11.7 Fines. All fines, of any nature, are attributable to the driver of the particular vehicle.

11.9 Faults. All faults are to be reported to the Estates Manager in person or to the Administrator in the Bursary via e-mail at y.mardel@saintnicholasschool.net.

Further Reading:

Passenger Transport provided by Voluntary Groups under the Section 19 permit systems – Operators Guide PSV 385

Driving a Minibus (DVLA guidelines)

Drivers Hours and Tachograph Rules – PSV 375

Minibus and Coach Seat Belts – VSE 1/96 & MOT Testing of Seat Belts

DETR Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness