



MELLERS PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Safe Use of the
School Minibus Policy**

Driving a minibus requires additional skills in order to be able to handle the vehicle safely. The weight and the size of the vehicle are greater. In addition the driver takes on the responsibility for the safety of passengers. Although rare, serious, sometimes fatal, accidents have occurred when minibuses are used by educational establishments. It is in order to minimise the risk of such accidents occurring that this Policy has been written.

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Check list for minibus driving

Before any members of staff or students are permitted to drive a minibus on School business they should check that they are compliant by using the following checklist: -

Licence issued before 1st January 1997

- 1 You hold a Nottingham City Council Approved Drivers Permit.
- 2 You have had your full driving licence issued before 1st January 1997.
- 3 You are over 25 but under 65 years of age. (under 25, see Appendix 1)
- 4 You have under gone Familiarisation training. (see Appendix 2)
- 5 You have completed and returned the Approval to drive a minibus form to Transport Department. (see Appendix 4) - valid for 3 years

Licence issued after 1st January 1997

- 1 You hold a Nottingham City Council Approved Drivers Permit.
- 2 You have had your full driving licence issued after 1st January 1997.
- 3 You are over 25 but under 65 years of age. (under 25, see Appendix 1)
- 4 You have obtained a PCV (Category D1) Licence. (see Appendix 2)
- 5 You have completed and returned the Approval to drive a minibus form to Transport Department. (see Appendix 4) - valid for 3 years

1 Application

This Policy applies to

- Any use of minibuses owned by the School
- Any minibus hired for teaching, and other school activities

The Code applies only to minibuses, which are defined as vehicles "constructed or adapted to carry more than eight, but not more than sixteen passengers, in addition to the driver".

The Code should be read in conjunction with any other School policies that relate to the use of vehicles. The requirements of this Code of Practice represent the minimum standard to be adopted. School may impose additional requirements if they consider it appropriate.

2 Roadworthiness of the vehicle

All minibuses owned by the School must be regularly maintained and kept in a roadworthy condition. The driver must check a hired vehicle very carefully on delivery.

Before taking over responsibility for any vehicle, all drivers must carry out the pre-journey checks listed in Appendix 5, **or** satisfy themselves that such checks have already been carried out by the operator prior to handing over the vehicle. The pre-journey checks must be carried out at least on a daily basis whilst the vehicle is in use.

3 Provision and use of Seat Belts

All minibuses purchased, leased or hired must have seat belts fitted to all seats. These should, as far as possible, be lap and diagonal belts, but where this is not feasible lap belts should be fitted. New minibuses must not have any sideways facing seats.

Seat belts should be worn at all times. Legally, adults are responsible for themselves wearing seatbelts however the School expects the driver or most senior member of staff present to enforce the wearing of seatbelts. The driver is legally responsible for ensuring that children (under 14) wear the seatbelts.

4 Loading of minibuses

The number of people and the weight of luggage carried must not exceed the maximum limits specified by the manufacturer of the vehicle. If a large amount of luggage is to be carried it may be necessary to reduce the number of passengers in order to remain within the maximum loading limits. All luggage that may shift due to the movement of the vehicle must be safely secured. The use of roof racks must comply with the guidance given by the manufacturer of the vehicle.

5 Towing of Trailers

Before towing a trailer, the checks described in Appendix 6 must be carried out.

If a trailer is being towed no passengers may be carried behind the front row of seats unless there is a side door which is easily accessible to passengers.

When towing a trailer, drivers must be very cautious about the vehicle speed. Vehicle/trailer combinations can become unstable at speeds below the legal maximum, particularly when being passed by fast moving large vehicles, in windy conditions, or when maneuvering. On long journeys the trailer and vehicle should be checked during each break.

6 Speed Limits

All speed limits must be complied with. The relevant limits are -

	For minibuses not towing a trailer	For minibuses towing a trailer
Motorways	70 m.p.h.	60 m.p.h.
Dual Carriageways	60 m.p.h.	60 m.p.h.
Other roads where a lower limit is not signposted	50 m.p.h.	50 m.p.h.

N.B. The outer (overtaking) lane of a three or four lane motorway must not be used

7 Competence of drivers and the provision of information and training

The skill and care exercised by the driver is undoubtedly the most important aspect of minibus safety. Driving a minibus, especially a fully laden 15-seater, over long distances is much more demanding than driving a private car.

All minibus drivers must be approved by the Headteacher. Approval may only be given

providing the following requirements are met.

- The driver is over 25 and under 65 years of age.
- The driver has a valid full driving licence. See Appendix 1 for detailed guidance on what constitutes a valid licence
- The driver has received adequate training and has been assessed as competent. See Appendix 2 for detailed requirements
- The driver has completed the approval form shown in Appendix 4. The completed form must be kept by the school/department. The form must be resubmitted every 3 years.

RoSPA publish a booklet "Essential Minibus Driving" which contains useful hints. Supplies (code number RSDR170) can be obtained from RoSPA, Cannon House, The Priory, Queensway, Birmingham B4 6BS. Tel: 0121 248 2000.

All drivers are required to inform the DVLA in Swansea of any physical or mental disability, which might affect their fitness to drive any vehicle. Special care must be taken over the use of any medication, prescribed or otherwise, which might affect driving ability.

8 Medically Restricted Licences

Since 1 January 1998, those with medically restricted licences are not automatically entitled to drive minibuses with up to 16 passenger seats and vehicles between 3.5 and 7.5 tonnes and to attach a trailer to these vehicles.

Drivers do not need to take action until their licence is next due for renewal after 1 January 1998. As long as licences remain valid, there will be no changes to existing entitlements. Three months prior to the expiry of the licence, the driver will be contacted about their entitlement by the DVLA.

Further information is available in the DVLA Fact Sheet INF40; a copy is available in the Transport Office. Alternatively, for licensing queries, contact the DVLA - 08702 400009.

9 Journey and Driving Times

Tiredness of the driver has often been a significant factor in accidents involving minibuses. The presence of a second driver should always be considered both on account of possible incapacity of the first driver and also because of tiredness.

There are legal requirements relating to driving times. The maximum number of hours that a driver may drive in any 24-hour period is 9 hours subject to a weekly maximum of 56 hours. Every driver must take a continuous rest period of at least 11 hours in every 24-hour period. Suitable arrangements, such as booking a hotel room, must be made for this rest period. The driver must not be tired at the start of a journey.

It is good practice for the maximum continuous period of driving not to exceed two and a half hours and for this to be followed by a minimum break of 10 minutes out of the vehicle. Time spent crawling in motorway type hold-ups should count as part of the driving period, as should any period spent driving to pick up a party.

10 Consumption of alcohol by any driver

It is an absolute rule that a driver does not consume any alcohol during or in the period before any journey. Since blood alcohol level should be zero during all driving activities, care should be exercised if consuming alcohol even on the previous day. Alcohol must not be consumed in the 8-hour period immediately prior to driving.

11 First Aid and Emergency Procedures

If a vehicle is involved in an accident:

- a. Make sure all passengers are safe and if necessary summon the emergency services for assistance
- b. Obtain the registration number(s) and insurance details of any other vehicle(s) involved
- c. Take the names, addresses and if appropriate vehicle registration number of any witnesses and the number and base station of any Police Officer who attends
- d. Write down as soon as possible after the accident all relevant details in a precise manner
- e. Report all the above details to Insurance Dept as soon as possible
- f. If you need any immediate or emergency assistance from the School, call the Office on 0115 9151796

The legal requirements for providing information after an accident are summarised in Appendix 7.

It is recommended that in addition to a first aid kit being kept on board, that a mobile phone is available for ease of communication from and to the minibus.

12 Overseas Travel

In all cases where vehicles seating more than 9 (driver plus eight passengers) are to be taken outside the British Isles, whether they belong to the school or are hired/borrowed from another organisation, Insurance must be informed in order that the correct documentation and insurance is obtained. (Vans with a gross vehicle weight not exceeding 3.5 tonnes are exempt.)

There are different types of documentation depending on whether the minibus is owned by the School or is hired. In both cases, the documentation is required whether the minibus is for transporting passengers or solely equipment.)

i For School-owned minibuses

An "own account certificate" is required when a member of staff is to drive a school minibus on school business. This document proves to relevant authorities that the vehicle is not being commercially operated.

The certificate is valid for 5 years and is obtained from the DETR's International Freight Office (Tel. 0191 201 4038). A copy of the certificate must accompany the vehicle on the trip.

ii For Hired minibuses

A waybill is required for journeys within the EU member states, Norway and Switzerland. Each waybill is specific to the vehicle and journey. It covers details of the purpose of the journey, the name of the vehicle operator, the trip organiser, names of drivers and number of passengers.

It is essential for the purpose of the trip that all the passengers return. If there are to be pick-ups or drop-offs, prior authorisation is required from the DETR.

The waybill is a two-part form, one part needs to be kept at the School and the other accompanies the vehicle. On return the two sections must be re-united and kept for 12 months in case of subsequent query. There is a small charge for the waybills which are obtainable from the Confederation of Passenger Transport (Tel. 0171 240 3131) or they are available from Insurance.

The operator of any hired vehicle should also be informed if the minibus is to be taken overseas.

There are specific requirements when driving minibuses abroad, e.g. a tachograph must be fitted and there are strict rules on driver's hours.

It is also necessary for any member of the School wishing to drive a minibus outside the UK to obtain full Passenger Carrying Vehicle entitlement on their licence, i.e. pass the full

D1 test. See Appendix 5 for the procedure to follow to obtain D1 entitlement. Further information and all forms are available from the Transport Dept.

13 Documentation

Drivers should carry their driving licences, the hire agreement and insurance certificate to assist in exchange of information as required in 11(b) above or by the police. Copies of the hire agreement and insurance certificate should be kept by the School. Details of insurance should be carried by the driver in order to exchange the information required in 11(b) above.

14 Administrative Issues

It is often an advantage in dealing with an emergency to have knowledge of the identities of the people present in the minibus. Wherever practicable a system should be in place whereby this information will be available. In the case of journeys organised by a school/department, the names could be kept on a list within the school/department.

15 Non-School business

Use of the School minibus for non-School business is not permitted.

Appendix 1

Driving Licence Requirements for Driving a Minibus

It is the policy of the School that only persons between the ages of 25 and 65 years will be permitted to drive a School owned or hired minibus.

The legal requirements relating to driving licences last changed on 1 January 1997 and form the basis of the requirements below. A distinction is made between the driving of minibuses for social purposes and the driving of minibuses in the course of employment. Anyone driving a minibus to take students on a trip would be considered to be acting in the course of his or her employment. The requirements apply to drivers of minibuses with 9-16 passenger seats.

Driving a minibus in the course of employment

Driving in the UK

In the UK, a community permit scheme enables drivers, subject to the following conditions, to drive the vehicle without needing to obtain a full D1 licence:

- The driver must be aged 21 or over and hold a full United Kingdom driving licence to drive a car and the licence must have been issued before 1 January 1997, **OR**
- The driver must hold a full driving licence, issued either by the United Kingdom or by another member state of the European Community, to drive Passenger Carrying Vehicles Category D1

Driving overseas

- The driver must have full entitlement on their licence for Passenger Carrying Vehicles Category D1

Appendix 2

Training and assessment of the competence of minibus drivers

The arrangements listed below reflect the changes in licensing requirements for minibus drivers on 1 January 1997 as given in Appendix 2 and are detailed for:

1. for drivers holding a full driving licence issued prior to 1 January 1997
2. for drivers holding a full driving license issued after 1 January 1997

It should be noted that the requirements below relate solely to training and the

assessment of competence to drive and supplement the licence requirements in Appendix 3.

1. Requirements for drivers holding a full driving licence issued prior to 1 January 1997

Those who have passed their car test before 1 January 1997 may continue to be able to drive minibuses (up to 16 passenger seats) with trailers exceeding 750 kg, subject to a vehicle/trailer combination limit of 8.25 tonnes (gross vehicle weight), until their 65th birthday.

Such drivers wishing to drive a minibus for the first time must receive familiarisation training and watch the video ("Steps to Safety Minibus Driving") available in the Safety Office. Drivers should be aware of the necessity of competent and safe driving when considering the potential risks involved in the transport of other persons.

School will organise familiarisation training for their first time minibus drivers. The Transport Office will provide this.

2. Requirements for drivers holding a full driving license issued after 1 January 1997

Drivers must hold a full driving licence to drive Passenger Carrying Vehicles (Category D1).

Those who pass their car test after 1 January 1997 may only drive minibuses (9-16 passenger seats) after passing an appropriate test and meeting higher medical standards. The standard car test only gives entitlement to drive category B vehicles i.e. those with a maximum of 8 passenger seats. To drive minibuses with 9 to 16 passenger seats with a trailer up to 750 kg requires Category D1 entitlement as a result of an additional test for this class of vehicle. This is a legal requirement.

One consequence of the above is that over time an increasing number of members of the School may need to drive a minibus but do not possess entitlement through having passed their car test before 1 January 1997. Provision will need to be made to enable these new drivers to pass the D1 test. For most experienced car drivers it should be possible to pass the test with minimal additional training. A one-hour familiarisation and assessment session should normally suffice - see details in section 1 of this appendix for providers.

To obtain D1 entitlement a two-stage test is required. There are fees for both the theory stage and the practical test. The tests are taken via the Transport Dept. A medical examination and the obtaining of provisional entitlement are also required. Forms D1 and D100 obtainable from Post Offices outline the procedure.

Procedure to be followed by those requiring D1 entitlement to drive a minibus (with 9-16 passenger seats) in the course of their School employment.

This is needed if driving outside the UK or by those who have passed their car test after 1st January 1997. There are three forms that need to be completed in order to arrange a D1 driving test. These can be obtained from the Transport Office along with a guide, Form D100, which contains guidance for the forms/application procedure.

Form D1 - Application for a driving licence. It is necessary to apply for a provisional licence (fees applicable) before being permitted to take the test. Existing entitlements under car driving licences do not act as a provisional licence for minibuses.

Form D750 - Application for photocard licence. All licences are now issued in a photocard format, i.e. credit card sized plastic card incorporating the holder's photograph.

Form D4 - Medical Examination. There are particular medical criteria that must be met to obtain entitlement to drive minibuses. A medical examination is required and the doctor carrying it out has to complete form D4, which is returned to the prospective driver. This form must accompany the other two forms with the initial application. The forms are sent to DVLA by the applicant and will need to be accompanied by the existing car licence.

Occupational Health can carry out the medical examination. Alternatively this can be done by the applicant's own GP. It should be noted that there is a fee for the medical if done by the GP and arrangements for reimbursement would need to be made.

The above three forms should be sent off together. It may take 3 weeks for the provisional licence to arrive. This is needed before the test may be taken. For those who passed their car test prior to 1.1.97 familiarisation training may be obtained before the provisional licence arrives due to entitlement to drive a minibus in the UK in connection with University business under the permit scheme.

Once the test has been passed the licence must be updated. This requires the completion of a further **Form D100** and a payment of a further fee. This is likely to take a further 3 weeks.

The driving test is in two parts. A theory test that must be passed before the practical test can be booked. Theory test results are normally issued 10 days after the test but can be given within the hour on payment of a small additional fee. It will then be possible to book and even take (subject to availability – which is quite good) the practical test.

Pre-journey checks to be made by driver on a daily basis whilst the vehicle is in use

- there is an adequate supply of water in the windscreen wash reservoir, and that windscreen wash and wipers function correctly
- there are correct fluid levels in hydraulic systems, particularly the braking system, and the engine oil level is correct
- there is an adequately stocked first aid kit; any items used from the kit should be replaced without delay.
- there is a vehicle fire extinguisher mounted in an easily accessible position
- all windows are clean in order to ensure good all round visibility
- tyres are inflated to the correct pressure and are free of dangerous cuts or cracks, tread depth is at least 1.6 mm, and wheel nuts are tight
- a spare wheel is carried and is also in good condition and correctly inflated.
- check that the brakes and steering operate correctly at the start of the journey

Checks to be carried out before towing a trailer.

- that the vehicle being used is appropriate for this use (seek professional advice through the Safety Office if in any doubt)
- that the gross weight of the vehicle plus the trailer is within the vehicle gross weight limit
- that the kerbside weight of the towing vehicle is clearly marked on the front nearside of the vehicle
- that the downward force from the loaded trailer on the towing ball is within the limits imposed by the towing vehicle manufacturer
- that the axle loads of the towing vehicle are not exceeded
- that a breakaway chain is in use, which will activate the handbrake should the coupling break. Advice on this matter should be sought from the trailer manufacturer or approved dealer
- that the unladen weight of the trailer and trailer tyre pressures are clearly marked on the trailer
- that the total gross weight (trailer weight plus maximum load to be carried) is clearly marked on the front of the trailer
- that the trailer handbrake/overrun brake functions properly
- that the trailer lights and indicators work
- that the load is securely lashed to the trailer body or frame
- that the load is evenly distributed and is mainly over the axle(s)
- that there is suitable marking of any rear overhang greater than one metre by using high visibility signage or other approved method (e.g. warning tape) or an approved light in hours of darkness or bad weather
- that the trailer is not wider than the towing vehicle
- that the trailer does not prevent the rear doors of the bus from opening

Legal Requirements for providing information after an accident

The information below is taken from The Highway Code, 1999.

If you are involved in an accident which causes damage or injury to any other person, or other vehicle, or any animal (horse, cattle, ass, mule, sheep, pig, goat or dog) not in your vehicle, or property

You **MUST**:

- stop;
- give your own and the vehicle owner's name and address and the registration **number** of the vehicle to anyone having reasonable grounds for requiring them;
- if you do not give your name and address at the time of the accident, report the accident to the police as soon as reasonably practicable, and in any case within 24 hours.

If any other person is injured and you do not produce your insurance certificate at the time of the accident to the police or to anyone who with reasonable grounds has requested it, you

MUST also:

- report the accident to the police as soon as possible, and in any case within 24 hours;
- produce your insurance certificate for the police within seven days (at any police station you select).

(Law RTA 1988 sec 170)