



Minibus Policy

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1	November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New policy
2	November 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minor changes – removed reference to old post title.

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Introduction

1. Mulberry Schools Trust (MST) has procured its own minibuses for the use by, and benefit of each school within the trust. It is important that all members of staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to the safe use and maintenance of the minibuses.
2. The rules and regulations for the use of school minibuses are complex. This policy is based on prevailing legislation and guidance from a number of sources, including a 2013 joint document from Department for Education, Department for Transport and Association of Chief Police Officers <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/driving-school-minibuses-advice-for-schools-and-local-authorities> and also advice from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) <https://www.rospa.com/rospaweb/docs/advice-services/road-safety/practitioners/minibus-code-of-practice.pdf>

Roles and Responsibilities

3. **The Trust Board**
 - The MST Board is responsible for ensuring that school minibuses operated on behalf of the schools in the trust fully comply in every respect, with all legal transport and health and safety requirements. This responsibility is delegated to the Headteacher at each school to ensure its appropriate implementation.
 - To monitor the implementation of this policy through the MST Health and Safety Committee.
4. **Principal/Headteacher/Head of School**
 - The Headteacher will ensure that the school has appropriate safety procedures based on up to date guidance.
5. **Fleet Manager**
 - The Fleet Manager (Deputy Premises Manager at Mulberry Academy Shoreditch or other designated person) will ensure that servicing and MOT testing of the minibuses is performed at the correct mileage and that the service book kept is ready for inspection at any time.
 - Ensure that mini-checks (fuel, water, oil and battery levels, tyre pressures and lights) are conducted by a trained member of the staff on a half termly basis.
 - Will liaise with the CFO to arrange for appropriate insurance cover and for the payment of annual road tax and roadside assistance membership.
6. **Minibus Drivers**
 - Follow and comply fully with the requirements outlined in this policy.

- Ensure that pre-use checks of the vehicle are conducted and complete the Vehicle Check List (**Appendix One**).
- Report any concerns about the safety and / or condition of the minibus to the Fleet Manager immediately.
- Familiarise themselves with the relevant ROSPA guidance.
- 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.
- Inform the headteacher or trip lead 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.
- Be familiar with the procedures in the event of breakdown or accident, or significant delay, including the details of recovery companies.

Classifications and Driver Eligibility

Important Classifications

7. Conditions for applying exemptions to hold full D1 (passenger vehicle) driving licence

The eligibility of drivers to use the minibuses operated by MST (paragraph 8 below) is predicated on compliance with certain legislative exemptions. These exemptions are based on conditions currently in place. These conditions are;

- MST operates ‘Minibus Lite’ vehicles. These are 16 passenger vehicles less than 3.5 tonnes in weight or 4.25 tonnes if including specialist equipment to carry disabled passengers. (This vehicle weight permits holders of car/van B / B1 full driving licences to drive MSTs minibuses).
- Drivers permitted to drive MST minibuses do so on a voluntary basis (it is not voluntary if the job description states minibus driving as a duty. Note - this condition is relevant for those drivers who do not hold a D1 category license and passed their driving test after 1997).
- MST does not charge passengers to travel on any MST minibus (if charges were to be made, MST could apply for a section 19 permit allowing charges).

Should any of the above conditions change, then this policy would need to be reviewed.

Driver Eligibility

8. Persons Entitled to drive MST Minibuses

- Drivers must be aged over 21 and under 70 years old.
- All drivers must hold a full UK driving licence category B (or D or D1).
- The driving licence must have been held for a minimum of 2 yrs.
- Before being authorised to drive the minibus, staff must undergo a proficiency test conducted by the Fleet Manager or their deputy at each school. If a staff member states a preference for undertaking a Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MIDAS) training course this may be accommodated by the individual school within financial resources.
- 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.
- Staff with a medical condition that needs to be declared to the insurers should advise the CFO accordingly.
- The driver declaration form will be kept on file by the Fleet Manager.
- It is the licence holder's responsibility to notify the Fleet Manager immediately of any changes to their driving 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. MST insists on no more than three points to become and remain an approved driver.
- Any pending cases or convictions which are driving related but which have not been concluded must also be notified to the headteacher of the the school.
- Licence checks must be carried out annually by the Fleet Manager or their deputy at each school for all drivers of the school minibus.
- Only those named on the approved drivers list held by the Fleet Manager or CFO will be eligible to drive the school minibuses.

Risk Assessment

9. Staff responsible for leading a school trip will include the use of the minibus within the overall risk assessment for the trip. Factors to consider with regards to the minibus would include;

- Drivers must be suitably rested before undertaking long journeys particularly when the event is planned after a member of staff has completed a standard working day.
- Any journeys expected to be over 4 hours long will require 2 drivers.
- Drivers should plan journey times to accommodate a 15 minute break or change of drivers every 2hrs, and a 30 minute break after 4hrs.
- Where appropriate, formal consent will be obtained from parents and guardians.
- When transporting young people or vulnerable adults on trips, the risk assessment process must consider if an additional adult(s) is required for supervision during the journey. MST policy is that for journeys of up to 20 miles

in distance, additional supervision is not considered necessary unless otherwise identified through the risk assessment process.

- All staff must be familiar with the emergency arrangements, including firefighting equipment, safe disembarkation in event of emergency, first aid provision and any special medical needs.
- All staff must be advised of agreed pick up and drop off arrangements, and ensure appropriate safe systems are in place in the event of drop offs requested by passengers outside of those agreed plans.
- All staff must know how to conduct a safe emergency stop which includes stopping in a place of safety and disembarking away from the vehicle on motorways. Staff must be familiar with the vehicle details for contacting recovery services etc.
- Ensure drivers have access to a mobile phone, (not to be used by the driver whilst the vehicle is in motion), to use in an emergency, with relevant contact numbers for managers, base location and intended end of journey location. Emergencies can be two way i.e. involve students or adults, the second adult will then deal with emergency circumstances.
- All staff must be aware that the school minibus is not to be used for carrying hazardous substances such as oxygen, cleaning chemicals, or large equipment.
- Drivers satisfying required conditions are able to drive the minibus; in this event the importance of road safety cannot be understated especially in the carriage of school children. Only competent and trained drivers will be used for this purpose.
- The trip lead will ensure arrangements are in place to enable equipment to be secured (luggage and/or heavy items must be secured so they cannot cause injury in the event of a sudden stop or collision).

Record Keeping and Administration

10. The following records must be kept by the fleet manager or School Business Manager in each school:

- All documents relating to the vehicle and original manufacturers information. Masters held by the CFO with extracts maintained in the minibus.
- An operating log including booking the vehicle in and out, held on a trip basis in the minibus and returned to the Fleet Manager or their deputy at each site.
- Accident/incident book, including faults reported and rectified. Available in the Minibus folder.
- A list of authorised drivers – maintained by the Fleet Manager.
- Copies of driving licences – maintained by the Fleet Manager.
- Training and retraining forms – maintained by the Fleet Manager.
- Medical check details, kept strictly confidential – maintained by the Fleet Manager.
- Emergency equipment logs e.g. (fire extinguisher service records).
- Details of any vetting conducted.
- Contact names and details of managers in event of serious incident – maintained in the minibus.
- Maintenance and safety check documents – maintained by the Fleet Manager.
- First aid checklist – maintained by the Fleet Manager.

- Documentation/records relating to fire extinguishers – maintained by the Fleet Manager.
- Documentation/records relating to the first aid kit – maintained by the Fleet Manager.

Minibus Booking

11. All booking are to be managed locally at each school within the trust. This will be overseen by the Fleet Manager, but operated by a designated administrator at each site. Trip risk assessments must be completed and handed to the Fleet Manager (or their deputy at each site) as part of the documentation for the trip 3 days before use. When the risk assessment and booking have been confirmed the keys will be issued and daily check log completed on the day of the journey.
12. As a shared resource, it is important that it is maintained in such a way that all users have a positive experience. It is the responsibility of the trip organiser to ensure that on the return of the minibus it is clean and tidy. Bin bags will be provided in the minibus and a dustpan and brush is also provided should it be required.

Procedures

Pre-Use Vehicle Checks

- The minibus must be maintained to high levels. As well as MOT, servicing and half termly checks coordinated by the Fleet Manager, 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 repaired.
- 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 take place 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 Fleet Manager or their local deputy.
- 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, behaviour, noise levels and escape procedures. The journey is not to commence unless the requirements of the driver are complied with.

Fuel

- The Fleet Manager or their local deputy will regularly check the school minibuses to ensure that the vehicles have adequate fuel (at least half a tank). It may, however, be necessary for the minibus driver to refuel whilst on a journey.

- The diesel level should not go below a quarter, this helps prevent primer damage and fuel tank sediment entering the engine.

Vehicle Operation

Capacity

- No more than 16 passengers and a driver may be carried in the school minibus.

Seat Belts Luggage

- Before setting off, the driver and/or driver's assistant 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.

Driving Rules

- Drivers are responsible for driving within the law and in accordance with the Highway Code (a copy is stored in each minibus). 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 Fleet Manager of any penalty points received whilst using the school minibus; failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.
- National speed limits apply to the school minibus.
- 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 to the school as soon as possible after they occur.
- 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 minibus at any time.

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 – if two members of staff are present, one must at all times be the guide when reversing.
- Ensure rear view mirrors are clean and properly adjusted at all times.

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, 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 are to be closed and doors locked.

Accident & Breakdown Procedures

Breakdown Procedures

Standard breakdown procedures are to be followed where necessary;

- Whenever the vehicle is left unattended, all windows are to be closed and doors locked
- If on a public road, get out of the vehicle on the safe side – nearest the path or verge.
- 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 the roadside assistance/ recovery membership details are kept in the vehicle:

- It is best to use a roadside emergency telephone if possible as this will pinpoint your location.
- The 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).

Documents and Equipment Maintained in the minibus

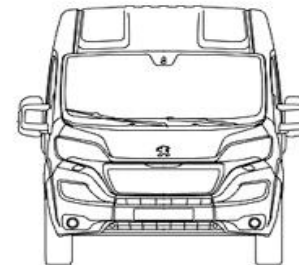
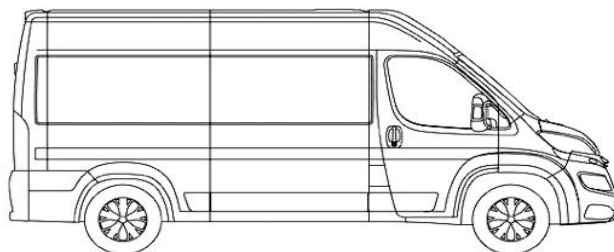
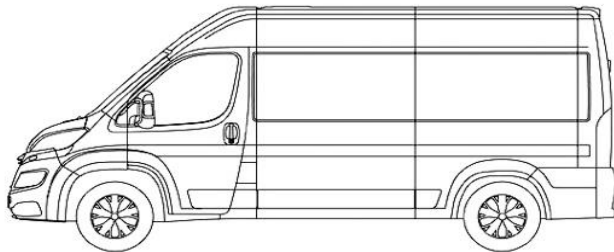
- i. Details of procedure for accidents and breakdowns.
- ii. Pre Journey Safety Check form, issued with the keys and returned to the Fleet Manager or their deputy with the keys.
- iii. Drivers hours reminder sheets.
- iv. Advice for minibus drivers
- v. Advice for passenger assistants
- vi. Advice for children/young people
- vii. First aid kit
- viii. Fire extinguisher
- ix. High visibility tabards (16)
- x. One high visibility coat for the driver
- xi. Emergency warning triangle to be used in compliance with the Highway Code 274
- xii. Emergency procedure instructions
- xiii. Telephone contact numbers
- xiv. Extracts from the vehicle manual's / quick guide
- xv. A copy of the insurance certificate
- xvi. Accident and near miss forms
- xvii. A torch and spare batteries
- xviii. A pen and pad
- xix. 3.5mm jack pin for iPod connection, to be used by an assistant, not the driver
- xx. All documentation is to be held in the Minibus folder
- xxi. Dustpan and brush
- xxii. Bin bags
- xxiii. Sick bags
- xxiv. Wipes and tissues
- xxv. Optional – Satellite Navigation System, to be hidden when not in use

Appendix 1 - Minibus Pre Use/Check Sheet

Please tick if satisfactory

Bodywork	Panels ext/int				Warning Lights	
	Seats				Gauges	
	Windows				Seats	
Cleanliness/defects	Windows				Seat Belts	
Fluid	Oil				Horn	
	Coolant				Reverse Alarm (lights off)	
	Brake/clutch				Mirrors	
	Windscreen Washer				Steering	Excess Play
	Fuel				Pulling to one side	
Wheels (visual check)	Tyres				Brakes	Handbrake
	Pressure					Footbrake
	Damage					Pulling to one side
					First Aid Kit	
Lights	Front/rear				Fire Extinguisher	
	Brake				Jack and tools	
	Indicator					
	Hazard					
	Fog					
	Interior					
	Reverse					

Mileage out		Department		Signed out by	
Mileage in		Fuel Purchased		signature	
Loaned to name		signature		Date	



Condition of the vehicle.

If there are defects to the minibus please highlight them on the diagram above or if you have any other comments regarding the vehicle please write them here.

As the driver you are at all times legally responsible for any contraventions.

Driver declaration:

- A) I have inspected the minibus before and after the loan and noted any damage or defects above.
- B) I am responsible for the payment of any parking fines/penalties and any fines levied against me from a conviction in association with my use of the minibus.

Note: the school can arrange to pay the London congestion charge with prior notice

Drivers signature:

Date: