



MINIBUS POLICY

Tees Valley Education Trust

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1. Introduction

Discovery Special Academy has procured its own school minibus. This significant investment is intended to create a wealth of new opportunities and enrichments for all students at the academy. It is however, important that all members of staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to the safe use and maintenance of the minibus.

This policy is based on the DfE Driving school minibuses advice: schools and local authorities. The guidance provides minimum standards for use of a minibus by schools. This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies and guidelines:

- Evolve Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Transportation of Children Policy
- Work Related Road Safety Policy

2. Definition of a Minibus

“Minibus” – a motor vehicle which is constructed or adapted to carry more than 8 but not more than 16 seated passengers in addition to the driver. (Construction and Use Regulations 1986).

3. Driver Requirements

Drivers who were issued with a full driving licence category B are entitled to drive the school minibus in the UK.

In addition to the correct driver licensing, all drivers:

- Will be over 21 years old
- Hold a category B licence for at least 2 years (standard car licence)
- All drivers are required to be between the ages of 21-65. The age may be extended to 65-70 subject to passing a MIDAS Test and in consultation with the Chief Operating officer and the academy insurance provider. (If you are 70 or over you will need to make a special application which involves meeting higher medical standards)
- Drivers with penalty points on their licence must seek recorded approval from their Line Manager before undertaking any journeys. Tees Valley Education insists on no more than 3 points to become and remain an approved driver. Should the driver accumulate more than 3 points, the Academy Business Manager must seek advice from academy insurance provider.
- Licence checks must be carried out six-monthly by the Academy Business Manager for all drivers of the school minibus and drivers of private cars used for transportation on behalf of the school in the course of their work. All drivers must

inform their Line Manager of any changes or endorsements to their licence immediately.

- The Academy Business Manager will ensure a robust system of near miss and incident reporting as part of the monitoring of drivers.

4. Minibus Speed Limits

The school minibus is governed by lower national speed limits. Where a speed limit is signed in numbers (e.g. 30mph) this limit applies. Where a national speed limit is signed the following applies:

- Single carriageway – 50mph
- Dual carriageway – 60mph
- Motorway – 70 mph

The school minibus is fitted with a speed limiter set at **62** mph. This is displayed in the drivers cab and on the rear door for other road users to see. **Speed limited minibuses are not permitted in the outside lane of a 3 or more lane motorway.**

5. Risk Assessment

The Headteacher is required to conduct a thorough risk assessment regarding the use of the minibus, and should consider:

- 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 minutes break after 4hrs.
- 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 cleaning chemicals, large equipment, or oxygen – **in the event that a child needs oxygen the academy will update the risk assessments and put all of the necessary measures in place, in line with insurers guidance, and health and safety advice.**
- The Driver 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).

6. Managers Responsibilities

The school minibus is managed by the Headteacher responsible for health and safety, in conjunction with the Academy Business Manager.

The Academy Business Manager has responsibility for the safe operation and daily use of the minibus, including security. The Academy Business Manager is responsible for maintaining driver records and logs as well as ensuring driver competence.

The Chief Operating Officer has responsibility for ensuring procurement, insurance and associated contracts are in line with Trust policies. The following additional documents will be issued in line with this policy.

7. Drivers Responsibilities

Drivers are required to:

- Check the safety of the vehicle before each and every journey, using the form provided.
- Drivers must report promptly any defects or concerns to the Academy Business Manager.
- Not drive a vehicle which they know to be defective e.g. bald tyres.
- Be fully familiar with the content of the risk assessment for the journey and the minibus information pack.
- Be familiar with routes and all arrangements detailed in the risk assessment.
- Ensure all loads are secured appropriately before departure.
- Ensure all access, egress and gangway routes are kept clear.
- Ensure seatbelts are worn correctly before commencing journey.
- Be familiar with the procedures in the event of breakdown or accident, or significant delay, including the details of recovery companies.
- Be familiar with the agreed code of conduct for passengers and avoidance of distracting the driver.
- Where relevant bring to the attention of a trip leader any concerns regarding passenger's conduct.
- Where supervisors are being used ensure they are spread throughout the vehicle and briefed appropriately on arrangements in the event of an emergency.
- Make an official announcement with reference to wearing seat belts.

- Display a prominent sign at each passenger seat equipped with a seat belt
- Ensure robust arrangements for dropping off at the end of a journey particularly where the drop is not the final destination. It is the driver's/supporting worker's duty to make every reasonable effort to ensure any drop off arrangements have been agreed with parents, carers and guardians and that the young person is left in a place of safety.
- Diesel particulate filter guidance to be adhered to as per manufacturer's instructions.

8. Reporting Driving Offences

School minibus drivers prosecuted for a driving offence which may result in a CD, DD, IN, or DR endorsement or potential disqualification, must notify the Headteacher as soon this occurs and not wait for the fact to be identified at the licence check. It is the responsibility of the minibus driver to inform the Headteacher in the event that their licence is suspended. Resumption of driving a minibus after a period of disqualification is at the absolute discretion of the Headteacher.

9. Prosecutions

The academy and trust do not accept responsibility for the payment of fines, nor the cost of legal representation in the event of a prosecution for a driving offence. Speeding fines, safety inspection violations, summons and other offences under The Road Traffic Act, including any associated administrative costs, are the minibus driver's responsibility. These fines are not reimbursable by the academy or trust. Neither do the academy or trust hold responsibility whatsoever for non-payment or late payment of such fines or administration costs. Any disputes are to be handled by the minibus driver.

Failure or refusal to comply with this rule may render drivers subject to disciplinary action and in some cases removal from driving the minibus. In circumstances where parking fines remain unpaid, the Academy Business Manager will investigate the reason for late or non-payment and may, if appropriate, take disciplinary action on grounds of misconduct.

The following must be reported to your Headteacher without delay whether the circumstances involve a minibus supplied by the academy or not: -

- If you are charged by the police or warned that charges may be brought against you
- If you receive a summons or letter informing you that the police are now not taking further action
- The result of any prosecution under The Road Traffic Act made against you.

10. Parking Tickets

The process for handling parking tickets and fine notifications is described below and it is primarily the responsibility of the driver to resolve such matters.

1. Fine notifications will generally be received at the Academy and will be copied to the driver of the minibus to deal with.
2. The driver is then fully responsible for handling them including any communication with the issuing body and for making payment of the fine. The driver can also request that the parking company change correspondence into their name so that it does not affect the academy.
3. If the driver does not agree to pay the charge, they are entitled to appeal it in accordance with the procedure set out in the notice. This normally includes a further independent appeal but the timescales for doing so are strict. The driver must attempt to do this directly and not through the academy.
4. If the driver does not change the parking ticket or fine notification into his or her name, does not make the payment, or loses the appeal, and the academy gets further correspondence, the academy will pay the ticket/fine and charge it back to the driver through payroll.
5. Parking fines are not to be claimed as business expenses.

11. Code of Conduct

A code of conduct agreement is attached as appendix 1. A digital copy will be provided in the Minibus Guide folder.

12. Record keeping and Administration

A copy of the insurance certificate is kept in the minibus. The insurance will cover:

- All activities for which the minibus is to be used.
- The total number of passengers allowed and the total weight (including passengers and luggage).

The following records must be kept:

- All documents relating to the vehicle and original manufacturers information. Masters held in the Headteacher's office 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 Academy office.
- Accident/incident book, including faults reported and rectified. Available in the Minibus folder.
- A list of authorised drivers – maintained by the Academy Business Manager and retained in the Headteachers Office.
- Copies of driving licences – maintained by the Academy Business Manager and retained in the Headteacher's office.

- Training and retraining forms – maintained by the Academy Business Manager and retained in the Headteacher’s office.
- 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 in the Academy office.
- First aid checklist and documentation/records relating to the first aid kit – maintained by the Academy Business Manager and retained in the Headteacher’s office.

The pre journey walk around check must be completed by the driver and a hard copy kept on file and in the vehicle during the trip.

13. Responsibility for keeping the Minibus pristine

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 Driver 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.

The Academy Business Manager in conjunction with the Headteacher will ensure that the bus is cleaned on a regular basis by the driver.

14. Documents and equipment maintained in the Minibus

1. Details of procedure for accidents and breakdowns
2. Pre-journey Safety Check form, issued with the keys and returned to the Headteacher’s office with the keys
3. Advice for minibus drivers
4. Advice for passenger assistants
5. Advice for children/young people
6. First aid kit
7. Fire extinguisher
8. High visibility tabards (16)
9. One high visibility coat for the driver
10. Emergency warning triangle to be used in compliance with the Highway Code 274
11. Emergency procedure instructions
12. Telephone contact numbers
13. Extracts from the vehicle manual’s / quick guide
14. A copy of the insurance certificate

15. Accident and near miss forms
16. A torch and spare batteries
17. A pen and pad
18. 3.5mm jack pin for iPad connection, to be used by an assistant, not the driver
19. All documentation is to be held in the Minibus folder
20. Dustpan and brush
21. Bin bags
22. Sick bags
23. Wipes and tissues



Appendix 1

TEES VALLEY EDUCATION CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MINI-BUS DRIVERS

Passenger Conduct

Every person on a minibus must wear a seatbelt. The driver must check that all passengers are wearing seat belts before commencing a journey. Drivers are required to observe all legal requirements, including speeds limits.

There must be a clear passage inside the minibus, free of luggage, for an emergency escape.

Any driver who is not a member of staff (such as a volunteer) shall be subject to the same requirements as staff.

Driver Conduct

All minibuses are monitored to a high standard and all drivers should report any defects to the academy office. All drivers should make a visual check of the minibus before starting a journey.

On a long distance journey when a member of staff is driving a minibus, it is not acceptable to expect them to exercise general supervisory responsibilities during the journey. The Headteacher, therefore, require that there is an adequate number of adults to drive/supervise students during the journey should a breakdown or emergency occur.

Fire extinguishers and first aid kits are carried in all minibuses. Please inform the Academy Business Manager if you use either item.

You must not carry a passenger without a seat being available. Standing passengers are not allowed in minibuses under any circumstances. Students should not share seats using the 3-for-2 rule as this rule is no longer applied to young people under the age of 14.

The driver is responsible for any penalties for traffic offences. If you receive a penalty for a traffic offence please report it to the Academy Business Manager.

Any breach of this policy will be investigated and disciplinary action taken if appropriate. Any driver found to have behaved irresponsibly will be removed from the list of approved drivers until they have undergone further training and/or disciplinary action.

Any breach of this policy due to the negligence of staff will not affect the legal rights of students and others travelling in the minibus in the event of an accident.

Drivers should consider:

- Their alcohol consumption the day before they drive the mini-bus.
- Their general level of fatigue prior to onset of the journey – wherever possible, drivers should avoid undertaking a long journey at the end of a school day without shared drivers.

BEFORE commencing journey, check the following:-

1. You have completed the log book with the journey details
2. You have completed the minibus check sheet and seating plan
3. Familiarised your passengers with Code of Conduct and emergency procedures
4. Satisfied yourself that you are fit and able to undertake the journey
5. Satisfied yourself that the minibus is in a roadworthy condition to be taken out and that there is sufficient diesel in the minibus

On RETURN to school:-

1. Ensure you have completed the log book with mileage details and recorded any mechanical faults detected during the trip
2. Make sure that passengers remove any litter or belongings from the bus on departure.
3. All doors and windows are properly closed and locked. Remember to check interior lights are not left on as this can flatten the battery if left overnight.
4. Check for damage to the interior of the minibus
5. The keys, minibus check sheet and bus are returned to the appropriate place.
6. An accident report form completed to report any accident or incident.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This Code of Practice is monitored, evaluated and reviewed by the Headteacher and Academy Business Manager every two years.

Dissemination of the Code of Practice

This code of practice is available on request to parents, the LA and other referral agents.

Other Policies that have Relevance are:

Educational Visits
Health and Safety
Risk Assessment
Work related Road Safety Policy
Transportation of Children Policy