



The Blue Coat School

SCHOOL MINIBUS POLICY

Approved by the Governors' Safeguarding and Health & Safety Committee

Signed: _____

(Mrs K Gilmore – Chair of Safeguarding and Health & Safety Committee)

Date: _____

This Policy was devised by the Bursar and The Estates & Compliance Manager in consultation with Governors and colleagues in the school.

Next review: Trinity 2026

SCHOOL MINIBUS POLICY

1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.1

The aims of this policy are to ensure that:

- The Blue Coat School Birmingham Limited (The Blue Coat School) complies with current legislation and guidance concerning the maintenance and driving of the school minibuses;
- The safety of minibus users (both drivers and passengers) and other road users and pedestrians is paramount at all times; and
- The Blue Coat School is meeting its health and safety and safeguarding obligations towards all members of the School community.

1.2

The objectives of this policy are as follows:

- The Blue Coat School follows guidance contained within [Driving School Minibuses – Advice for Schools and Local Authorities \(September 2013\)](#) which was published jointly by the Department for Education, Department for Transport and Association of Chief Police Managers.
- This Policy and the procedures contained within it have been written to provide any members of staff who may need to drive vehicles on behalf of the School with the necessary knowledge and information in the light of growing legislation regarding qualifications, insurance, operating, servicing and inspection requirements to safely operate our minibuses and carry passengers.
- The behaviour and competence of the minibus drivers will be fully assessed to ensure the safe operation of the minibuses and to keep employees and others free from harm.
- This Policy extends to the use of hired vehicles that are used by the School.
- A copy of this Policy will be provided to all minibus drivers and will be available on the staff intranet. A copy will also be available in the Bursar's Office, Main Reception and in the Pre-Prep Office.
- This Policy and the procedures contained within it will be reviewed regularly as part of the School's Health and Safety review.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 The Governing Body

2.1.1

The Governing Body of The Blue Coat School is responsible for ensuring that School minibuses operated on behalf of the School fully comply in every respect, with all legal transport and health and safety requirements. This responsibility is delegated to the Bursar to ensure its appropriate implementation.

2.1.2

The Governing Body will monitor the implementation of this Policy through the Safeguarding, Health and Safety Committee and review it on a regular basis.

2.2 Bursar

2.2.1

The Bursar will ensure that the School has appropriate safety procedures for the minibuses based on the ROSPA Advice for Minibus Safety and their code of practice (in addition to the DfE guidance). A copy of the full code of practice is available at www.rospa.com.

2.2.2

The Bursar will arrange appropriate insurance cover for the School minibuses.

2.3 Estates and Compliance Manager

2.3.1

The Estates and Compliance Manager will ensure that:

- Servicing of the minibuses is performed at the correct mileage and that the service record is kept read for inspection at any time.
- Mini-checks (fuel, water, oil and battery levels, tyre pressures and lights) are conducted and recorded by a trained member of the Estate Team on a weekly basis.
- Annual road tax is paid.

2.4 Minibus Drivers

2.4.1

Minibus Drivers must:

- Follow and comply fully with the requirements outlined below in Section 3: Procedure and Practices.
- Ensure that pre-use checks of the vehicle are conducted and complete the Vehicle Check List.
- Report any concerns about the safety and/or condition of the minibus to the Estates and Compliance Manager immediately.
- Familiarise themselves with the relevant ROSPA guidance (March 2016).
- Understand the personal legal implications if procedures are not adhered to.
- Comply fully with all road traffic laws, respecting speed limits and ensuring use of seatbelts at all times. For longer journeys, frequent rest breaks are to be taken.
- Inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team 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. Making genuine emergency 999 or 112 calls whilst driving is legal.
- Raise any queries relating to the driving of the School minibuses or the condition of the vehicles with the Bursar or Estates and Compliance Manager.

3. PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

3.1 Driver Eligibility

3.1.1

The following persons are entitled to drive a minibus:

- Drivers aged 21 must have had a valid full driving licence for at least 2 years and have incurred no penalty points during that period in order to drive a minibus. Minibus drivers must meet the driver licence requirements set out in Driving School Minibuses – Advice for Schools and Local Authorities (November 2014).
- Before being authorised to drive the minibus, staff must undergo a Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MIDAS) training course and pass an assessment. The assessment and training will be carried out by a MIDAS Driver Assessor Trainer.
- Additionally, staff will have MIDAS refresher training every four years to ensure that they maintain the necessary level of proficiency to drive the School minibus safely.
- 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 Bursar accordingly.
- The Driver Declaration Form will be issued to staff by the Estates and Compliance Manager. That form will be signed electronically by the driver and then filed electronically by the Estates and Compliance Manager.

- It is the licence holder's responsibility to notify the Bursar of any changes to the driver's licence. Where a driver informs the School that s/he has acquired penalty points on her/his licence, the Bursar, in consultation with the Headmaster, will determine whether s/he is permitted to drive a minibus.
- Only those named on the approved drivers list (a copy of which is held by the Bursar) will be eligible to drive a School minibus.

3.2 Vehicle Readiness and Maintenance

3.2.1 Servicing, MOT, Insurance and Taxation

- Servicing, MOT testing and quarterly safety checks will be carried out at the appropriate intervals, and in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
- A member of the Estate Team as directed by the Estates and Compliance Manager will conduct weekly mini-checks on fuel, water, oil and battery levels, tyre pressures and condition, and lights. A signed record will be maintained to demonstrate that these checks have been undertaken.
- A Minibus File is kept in each minibus containing information such as a copy of the Highway Code, emergency contact numbers, insurance documentation, a notepad and pen, etc. These are checked termly by the Estates and Compliance Manager and this is recorded in the Minibus Records folder in the Bursar's Office.

3.2.2 Minibus Bookings and Administration

- All bookings should be made using the electronic Google diary.
- A list of the pupils and staff on the journey, the journey details (to include departure and return times) is to be left with the School Reception prior to departure. The Reception staff should be provided with relevant contact numbers for staff using the vehicle(s).
- Drivers must sign for the vehicle in the booking diary when collecting the minibus keys from the Bursar's PA or Bursar (failure to do so may render the journey unauthorised for insurance purposes).
- Drivers must return the vehicle's keys and the Sat Nav to the Bursar's PA or Bursar on returning to school. They must also sign to say they have returned the keys. If the minibus is being returned out of school hours, the keys and Sat Nav should be handed in at the start of the next working day.

3.2.3 Pre-Use Vehicle Checks

- The School minibuses must be maintained to high levels. As well as MOT, servicing and the quarterly safety checks, 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.
- Drivers must complete a pre-use Vehicle Check List before using the minibus. On return to school this completed Check List must then be returned to the Bursar's PA with the keys. The Estates and Compliance Manager will take any action necessary. These lists will be retained by the School.
- Pre-use checks must include lights (headlights, hazards, brakes, reversing, side and indicators), horn, mirrors, doors (open, close and lock correctly), seatbelts and windscreen wipers (including windscreen wiper wash). A walk around the vehicle should occur 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 Estates and Compliance Manager.
- Mileage records should be used to monitor fuel consumption.
- Prior to the start of each journey, the driver is to go through a brief talk with pupils 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.

3.2.4 Fuel

- The School Minibuses have a fuel card that enables fuel to be purchased and charged to the School's account.
- A member of the Estate Team 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.

3.2.5 Equipment

- It is recommended that the following equipment is carried on board the Minibus. If items are used during a journey, the Minibus Driver must inform the School Matron or Estates and Compliance Manager who will replenish supplies:
 - First Aid Box containing
 - 10 Antiseptic wipes, foil packed
 - 1 conforming disposable bandage (not less than 7.5cm wide)
 - 2 triangular bandages
 - 1 packet of 24 assorted adhesive dressings
 - 3 large sterile un-medicated ambulance dressings (not less than 15x20cm)
 - 2 sterile eye pads with attachments
 - 12 assorted safety pins
 - 1 pair rustproof blunt-ended scissors
 - Disposable gloves
 - Mouth mask for resuscitation
 - Fire Extinguisher
 - At least one fire extinguisher (which complies with BS5432 or equivalent and has a minimum test rating of 8A or 21B) that contains foam.
 - Warning Triangle
 - This should be used in the event of breakdown and carefully positioned 50m behind the vehicle to warn other road users of the broken down vehicle.
 - Hi-Visibility Vests

3.2.6 Tidiness

- The minibus must be left tidy. Eating and drinking on it should be discouraged (exceptions can be made in circumstances of long delay).
- Bin bags are to be carried and made available for rubbish.
- Dirty/muddy kit (especially boots and shoes) must not be worn in the minibus.
- Clean tracksuits and/or footwear should be taken if pupils are likely to get muddy.

4. VEHICLE OPERATION

4.1.1 Capacity

- This is determined by the number of seats in the vehicle and must not be exceeded.

4.1.2 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. Pupils are to be informed that seatbelts are to be worn at all times when the vehicle is in motion.

4.1.3 Driving Rules

- Drivers are responsible for driving within the law and in accordance with the Highway Code (a copy is held in the Bursar's Office and in each minibus). The School will not refund fines or other costs incurred by drivers as result of any road traffic or parking offence. In the event that a speeding offence occurs in a leased vehicle the administration charge applied by the lease company will be recovered from the driver. Drivers must inform the Estates and Compliance Manager of any penalty points received whilst driving using a School minibus; failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.
- National speed limits apply to the School minibuses.
- It is School policy (and the law) that under normal road conditions, the minibuses should not be driven in the fast lane (outer most lane) of a motorway. These vehicles are electronically limited to 63mph.
- 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 Bursar 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 minibuses at any time.

4.1.4 Driver's Assistant

- With the exception of short journeys, a second member of staff or an adult volunteer will normally be on every journey as the driver's assistant.
- For short journeys of less than 60 minutes duration an assistant should not be needed unless circumstances require one – the minibus risk assessment will determine if a driver's assistant is needed.
- This person is responsible for observing behaviour and maintaining good order. They can also make and receive phone calls so the driver does not have to. They should also help with reversing and need to be visible at all times to the reversing driver. They should assist in a breakdown or accident and can act as a relief driver if they are trained and authorised to do so.

4.1.5 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.
- Drivers must always check behind the vehicle before reversing – if necessary, the driver should ask someone to watch the area into which s/he will be reversing.
- If the driver uses a guide, s/he should ensure the guide 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.
- Drivers must ensure rear view mirrors are clean and properly adjusted at all times.

4.1.6 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, smoking or even changing the radio channel. To this end, any action whilst driving, which could cause distraction must be avoided.

4.1.7 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).

4.1.8 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 under seats, on spare seats or in the overhead luggage compartments.
- If a trailer is used, the back doors of the minibus need to be able to open fully to help pupils 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 the 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.

4.1.9 Security

- Whenever the vehicle is left unattended, all windows are to be closed and doors locked.

5. ACCIDENT AND BREAKDOWN PROCEDURES

5.1 Breakdown Procedures

Standard breakdown procedures are to be followed where necessary:

- 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 a breakdown the minibus driver should use the contact details stored within the minibus. They should also contact school to inform staff of the breakdown and potential delay. School contact numbers are kept in the Minibus File.
- It is best to use a roadside emergency telephone if possible as this will pinpoint your location.
- 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.

5.2 Accident

5.2.1

In the event of an accident:

- Ensure the safety of everyone involved.
- Deal with any injured persons, if safe to do so.
- If necessary, call the emergency services.

5.2.2

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.

5.2.3

In the event of a minor incident such as scratching another vehicle or hitting a stationary object then details should be taken as above and the Bursar should be informed so that any appropriate further action can be taken.

5.2.4

In the event of a serious incident, emergency contact numbers are available in the Minibus File (carried on all journeys).

6. RELATED POLICIES, MONITORING AND POLICY REVIEW

6.1

This Policy applies to all children in the school including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception). It should be read in conjunction with other related whole school policies including: Behaviour Management and Exclusions, Health and Safety, and Safeguarding and Child Protection. The Staff Code of

Conduct sets out procedural guidance including guidance on the use of mobile phones and cameras. All staff are expected to sign this Code of Conduct annually.

6.2

The Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it complies with statutory requirements and to ensure that any changes in practices are accurately reflected. It will be presented to the Governors' Safeguarding, Health and Safety Committee for approval in the Trinity Term. The minutes of this meeting will be presented to the Governors.