



**The Westminster
School**

Safe, Happy and learning Together

www.thewestminsterschool.co.uk

2023/2024

School Vehicle Policy

Building foundations and providing opportunities to create confident, aspirational, and independent members of our community.

Approved by Governing Body on:	21/03/2024
Signed by Chair of Governors:	<i>P. A. Evans</i>
Head Teacher:	O Flowers
Lead Personnel:	Lance Goodby – School Business Manager
Date of Review:	21/03/2026

The Aims of this Policy

To ensure that The Westminster School complies with current legislation and guidance concerning the maintenance and driving of school vehicles.

To ensure that the safety of school vehicle users (both drivers and passengers) and other road users and pedestrians is paramount at all times.

To ensure that The Westminster School is meeting its health and safety and safeguarding obligations towards all members of the school community.

Policy Statements

The school follows guidance contained within Driving School Minibuses – Advice for Schools and LA's (September 2013) which was published jointly by the Department for Education, Department for Transport and Association of Chief Police Officers.

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 the 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 assessed to ensure the safe operation of the minibuses and to keep employees and others free of harm

This policy extends to the use of other vehicles that are used by the school such as the School Pick Up Truck.

A copy of this policy will be provided to all minibus drivers and kept on the Policies Hub on SharePoint.

This policy and the procedures contained within it will be reviewed regularly as part of the school's Health and Safety review.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

The Governing Body 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 Head Teacher to ensure its appropriate implementation.

To monitor the implementation of this policy through the Link Governor for Health and Safety and review it on a regular basis.

Head Teacher

The Head Teacher will ensure that the school has appropriate safety procedures for the minibus 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

School Business Manager/Finance Officer

Ensure that servicing of the minibuses is performed at the correct mileage and that the service book kept and is ready for inspection at any time.

Ensure that mini checks (fuel, water, oil and battery levels, tyre pressures and lights) are conducted by an appropriately member of staff on a frequent basis.

The School Business Manager/Finance Officer will arrange for appropriate insurance cover and for the payment of annual road tax.

Minibus Drivers

Follow and comply fully with the requirements outlined in 'Procedures and Practices' section below. 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 Health and Safety Coordinator 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 seatbelts) and welfare of all passengers".

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.

Procedures and Practices

Drive Eligibility

Persons Entitled To Drive the Minibus

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) policy states that Drivers must be aged 25 or over and have been driving a vehicle on a regular basis for 4 years. 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 an initial medical examination undertaken by SMBC and they will need to complete an assessment conducted by an experienced and appropriately trained minibus driver. This would mean that the staff member would be taken out to familiarise themselves with the driving of the school minibus for a designated time of 1 hour, and demonstrate to a member of the SBMC Transport team that they are competent to perform specific manoeuvres (e.g. three point turn, reversing around a corner). After successfully completing the assessment and having been signed off by a member of the SMBC Transport Team they will be provided with a SMBC Permit.

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 SBM accordingly.

The driver declaration form will be kept on file in your individual personnel file.

It is the licence holder's responsibility to notify the SBM of any changes to the driver's licence.

Where a driver informs the school that he/she has acquired penalty points on his/her licence, the Head Teacher will determine whether he/she is permitted to drive the minibus (no more than 3 points).

Only those named on the approved drivers list (a copy of which is held by the SBM) will be eligible to drive the school minibuses. Approved Minibus Drivers must carry their SMBC Permit at all times.

Vehicle Readiness and Maintenance

Servicing, MOT, Insurance and Taxation

Servicing and MOT testing will be carried out at the appropriate intervals, and in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

Appropriately Trained members of staff as directed by the SBM, will conduct weekly mini-checks on fuel, water, oil and battery levels, tyre pressures and lights. A signed record will be maintained to demonstrate that these checks have been undertaken.

Minibus Bookings and Administration

The School Minibus is only to be used for school activities (or related at discretion of Head)

Not to be used for hire or reward.

All bookings should be made using the School Vehicle Booking Google Form.

A list of students and staff on the journey, and journey details (to include departure and return times) is to be left with the reception prior to departure. The admin office 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 SBM (failure to do so may render the journey unauthorised for insurance purposes), and collect the Minibus File, which contains a copy of the Highway Code, the Minibus Policy, spare checklists, a notepad and pen.

Drivers must return the vehicle's keys and the Minibus File to the SBM on returning to school. If the minibus is being returned out of school hours, the keys and minibus file should be handed in on the next working day.

Pre-Use Vehicle Checks

The school minibus must be maintained to high levels. As well as MOT and servicing, 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 are to be recorded on the Vehicle Check List found in the Minibus File, which must be signed for on collection and return of keys from the SBM. Completed Vehicle Check Lists are to be given to the SBM on return of the minibus who 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), steering, 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 SBM.

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 School Minibuses have a fuel card that enables fuel to be purchased and charged to the School's account. Every member of staff who is approved to drive the Minibus will have a fuel card assigned to them, this will be stored within the Finance Office. If you require your Fuel Card you will need to sign this out from the Finance Office and sign it back in and present your receipts upon return.

The SBM will periodically 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.

Equipment

It is recommended that the following equipment is carried on board the Minibus. If items are used during a journey, please inform the First Aid team at school who will replenish supplies:

Appropriately equipped First Aid Box. Fire Extinguisher - At least one fire extinguisher (which complies with BS 5432 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 Vest.

Tidiness

The Minibus should 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/footwear should be taken if students are likely to get muddy.

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/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 held in the SBMs Office and 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 SBM of any penalty points received whilst using the school minibus; failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

National speed limits apply to the school minibus. (School Minibus is restricted to 62mph)

Restricted road: 30mph

Single carriageway: 50mph

Dual carriageway: 60mph

Motorway: 70mph

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.

Driver Assistant

For short journeys expected to be less than 2 hours, an assistant should not be needed unless circumstances require one. The minibus risk assessment will determine if a driver assistant is needed.

This person should be positioned near the back of the minibus to observe behaviour and maintain 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.

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 7 drinks), eating, smoking, 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.).

Long Distance Driving

It is important to plan beforehand when driving long distances. The Highway Code states that to minimise risks, drivers should:

- make sure they are fit to drive.
- do not begin a journey if tired.
- get sufficient sleep before embarking on a long journey
- avoid undertaking long journeys between midnight and 6 am, when natural alertness is at a minimum
- plan your journey to take sufficient breaks. A minimum break of at least 15 minutes after every two hours of driving is recommended
- if you feel sleepy, stop in a safe place. Do not stop in an emergency area or on a hard shoulder of a motorway (see Rule 262 for guidance on places to take a break when travelling on motorways).

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 and Breakdown Procedures

Breakdown Process

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 breakdown contact the AA (card and details in minibus).

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.

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).

School Contact numbers are: 0121 561 6884

The Westminster School

General Any member of staff who has queries relating to the driving of the school minibus or the condition the vehicle should bring them to the attention of the SBM