



Driving Policy

September 2023

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Approved by: Chair of Trustees

Principal: Neil Bain

Contents

1. Statement of Intent	3
2. Aims and Purposes of the Driving Policy	3
3. Scope of Policy	3
4. Definitions	4
5. Responsibilities.....	4
6. Convictions or Disqualification	5
7. Risk Assessment	5
8. School/Service vehicle checks	5
9. School/Service vehicle maintenance	6
10. Accidents and Incidents.....	6
11. Minibus Transport and D1 Licence Requirements.....	7
12. Overloading	8
13. Private Vehicles.....	8
14. Mobile Phones and Hands-free Devices.....	8
15. Policy Review and Distribution.....	9

1. Statement of Intent

The Principal will ensure that only authorised drivers use school vehicles and journeys using school or private vehicles are planned and managed, in order to minimise risks to the health, safety and welfare of staff, pupils and visitors to the school.

The main purpose of this policy is to ensure vehicles are operated in a safe, efficient and effective manner to minimise risks to employees and others affected by our operations by implementing the following processes:

- Effective planning of vehicle provision, maintenance and use.
- Assessment of driver competency and qualification.
- Making sure that, the insurance and licencing are current free from penalties and meet legal requirements.
- Ensuring safe driving through training and monitoring.
- Maintaining effective co-operation and communication with all authorised drivers.
- Monitoring and review.

2. Aims and Purposes of the Driving Policy

- To provide a clear framework for ensuring that all employees who are required to drive for work are qualified and fit to drive, insured and competent to drive safely.
- To clarify the responsibilities of drivers and managerial staff in line with the expectations on these individuals to encourage a positive attitude towards safe driving at work.
- To ensure that vehicles which are used for work related journeys are suitable as well as roadworthy and journeys are planned and conducted safely.

3. Scope of Policy

- This policy applies to all school employees. The Principal also has a duty of care to volunteers and agency staff who are not employees and who drive on our behalf; this policy also applies to them.
- Employees who hold an LGV/HGV or PCV/licence are subject to a medical examination and driving assessment as part of licensing arrangements. The additional requirements within this policy also apply to these employees.

4. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions apply:

<u>Driving at Work</u> -	Refers to any work carried out on school business that involves the employee driving a vehicle and covers all journeys other than to and from their normal place of work.
<u>School/Service Vehicle</u> -	Any vehicle owned, leased or hired by the school.
<u>Private Vehicle</u> -	Any vehicle used by a person driving on school business which is not owned, leased or hired by the school.
<u>Minibus</u> -	A vehicle that can carry 9-16 passengers plus the driver.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 The Principal is responsible for ensuring that:

- local rules are published for driving at work activities and communicated to all members of that school or service.
- there is a mechanism in place to ensure that staff are qualified to drive school or service owned or leased vehicles via <https://www.gov.uk/check-driving-information>.
- there is a system in place to ensure that any school or service vehicle is maintained in a roadworthy condition and complies with legal requirements.

5.2 Staff are responsible for ensuring that they:

- hold the appropriate driving licence entitlement.
- are fully insured and have the appropriate insurance if they are driving on behalf of the school, which is current and updated yearly.
- are medically fit to drive.
- do not use a hand-held mobile phone or hands-free devices to make or receive calls whilst driving on school business.
- comply with the legislation with regard to the wearing of seatbelts whilst driving and make every effort to enforce the wearing of seatbelts for passengers in their vehicles.
- are satisfied that prior to any journey on school business that the vehicle they are driving is fit for its purpose and roadworthy.
- inform the person in charge of the vehicle if they become aware of any faults.
- where appropriate, are adequately insured to use their private vehicle for school business.

- report any accidents or incidents whilst driving on school business.
- comply with any school rules and risk assessment requirements for driving at work activities.

6. Convictions or disqualification

- Where employees are required to drive school owned, leased or hired vehicles or their own vehicle as an essential part of their duties, they must inform their line manager of any convictions (including penalty points) or periods of disqualification immediately.
- If managers are notified that an individual has been disqualified from driving due to a motoring offence, they must relieve the person of all driving duties with immediate effect and seek advice from their reporting manager regarding the most appropriate course of action.

7. Risk Assessment

Employers must conduct suitable risk assessments and ensure that:

- Work related journeys are safe.
- Staff are fit and are competent to drive safely.
- Vehicles are fit for purpose and in a safe condition.

For journeys or driving activities that present additional risks a more detailed assessment should be completed and recorded. Examples of where this would be appropriate include:

- non-routine long-distance journeys.
- trips that include driving overseas.
- driving that is expected to take place in severe weather conditions.
- journeys that involve lone working in remote or potentially dangerous areas.
- trips that involve driving types of vehicles that are not normally driven or where the driver may be inexperienced or have a poor accident record.
- the transport of dangerous goods or animals.
- the transport of large numbers of passengers for example in a minibus.

8. School/Service vehicle checks

- The driver has primary responsibility for the operation of any vehicle and must be satisfied that the vehicle is fit for its purpose and roadworthy.
- Please refer to the 'Pre-Use vehicle check list'.

- Compliance with this requirement is achieved by the Principal and drivers taking responsibility for the majority of periodic maintenance checks of the vehicles.
- Department checks should include monitoring of fluid levels (oil, coolant and screen wash) and tyre pressures. It is recommended that these checks and associated maintenance are recorded on a weekly basis (the frequency of checks must be risk based depending on the frequency and type of use).
- It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that the record of weekly checks is up to date and then to undertake their own driver basic safety checks and adjustments.
- Please refer to the Vehicle Pre-use Check and Maintenance Guidance document for additional detail. The pre-use check guidance only outlines the minimum requirements for safety checks; some vehicles may require additional checks such as inspection of lifts, safety signage, safety equipment such as reversing alarms, guards on dangerous parts and rotating beacons.

9. School/Service vehicle maintenance

- The management will ensure that when choosing vehicles to be used on behalf of the school that they are entirely suitable for the intended purpose and that utmost importance is placed on safety features.
- Vehicle inspections and maintenance should only be conducted by a competent person. The manufacturers' recommended service intervals and warranties should be adhered to which will ensure so far as reasonably practicable, the on-going safety of the vehicle. The maintenance schedule must also include the annual MOT test.
- A maintenance log must be kept up to date for each vehicle containing all information relating to that vehicle. It is recommended that service records are kept for at least 5 years.
- It is recommended that routine checks are made of minibuses at set intervals which are time-based rather than mileage-based, e.g. every 6 weeks. Any specialist equipment such as tail lifts should be inspected according to the legal requirements and any manufacturer's recommendations.

10. Accidents and Incidents

- Where employees who are driving on school/service business are involved in road traffic accidents or incidents which result in damage to vehicles, loss or damage to property or persons they must report it for insurance purposes and as a work-related accident/near miss.

- The accident and insurance investigation should take into account any reasonable cause to review driver competency and additional training needs.
- This applies to accidents in a school owned or leased vehicle as well as in an individual's private vehicle.

11. Minibus Transport and D1 Licence Requirements

A higher level of competence is required to drive a minibus, as:

- the vehicle is larger/heavier (requires greater stopping distances).
- more passengers are taken leading to increased stress on the driver e.g. extra responsibility, noise and distraction.
- minibuses tend to be used for long distances and on an infrequent basis.

In addition:

- The school policy is that all drivers are required to complete a Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MIDAS) or equivalent minibus driving training course (usually one day) before being permitted to drive.
- All Drivers of minibuses must hold a D1 Licence (those who obtained a license before January 1997 will have one). All those who do not have a D1 license will be required to complete a D1 licence test before being permitted to drive.
- Re-assessment should take place at least every 4 years and more often if an incident or risk assessment merits it.
- Driver fatigue or distraction has been highlighted as a factor in recent minibus incidents nationally.
- For journeys not exceeding 1 hour, a single teacher/driver **may** be considered adequate, subject to the nature of the group and the driver's ability and confidence to manage that group.
- For journeys involving between 1 hour and 4 hours of driving, a second responsible adult should be present to supervise the group.
- For journeys involving over 4 hours of driving, the second adult should be a suitably qualified minibus driver. For journeys involving over 4 hours, at least one of the drivers should have had a rest period of at least one hour prior to the start of the journey. Further regular rest periods must be taken – a 15 minute break every 2 hours is recommended.
- Drivers must not drive if unwell or if on medication or receiving medical treatment which advises against driving.
- Students and staff travelling in minibuses must wear seat belts by law.

12. Overloading

- The minibus is overloaded if the total weight (bus + fuel + passengers + luggage) exceeds the **maximum laden weight** for the vehicle. This weight is printed on the vehicle and in the handbook. For guidance, the vehicle should only carry passengers, driver and hand luggage.
- The use of a trailer greatly increases the maximum laden weight and is **essential** when transporting a full load of older students plus luggage.
- Liability for driving an overladen vehicle remains with the driver and is not transferable.

13. Private Vehicles

- If parents' or teachers' private vehicles are used, the vehicles must be roadworthy and adequately insured.
- Standard car insurance is for 'social, domestic and pleasure' purposes only, permits travel to and from your normal place of work, but **does not** cover the use of the vehicle whilst at work. Members of staff who use their own car in connection with work whether only very occasionally or more frequently must ensure that they have 'business use' cover on their personal policy.
- Documentation must be checked by a competent member of staff through <https://www.gov.uk/check-driving-information> and all cars must be fitted with suitable child restraints. Parents must provide specific permission for their child to be transported in a private vehicle.

14. Mobile Phones and Hands-free Devices

- Mobile phones are now used in many different ways and high mileage or school vehicle drivers are more likely than most to use a mobile phone while driving and very often they are using the phone for work purposes.
- It is illegal to use a hand-held mobile phone while driving. This includes using the phone for calls, texts, emails, photos, to go online or for any other reason.
- There are financial penalties for using a mobile phone whilst driving as well as penalty points. In addition, drivers can be taken to court and be banned from driving or receive heavier fines.
- New drivers, who have had their driving licence for less than two years, will have their licence revoked after a single offence.
- Whilst using a hands-free phone while driving is not specifically illegal, drivers who do so could be charged with 'failing to have proper control of their vehicle'.
- As a result of this, it is the policy of the school that there will be no use of mobile phones whilst driving on school business and this includes both hand held and hands free devices. Phones should remain off during journeys and in order to make an essential call, the driver should pull over and park in a safe area before proceeding.

Senior Managers must:

- lead by example, both in the way they drive themselves and by not tolerating poor driving practice among colleagues.
- never use a mobile phone while driving.
- they do not expect staff to answer calls, or otherwise use a mobile phone when they are driving. In cases of emergency the school will contact the second staff member present not the driver.
- staff understand their responsibilities not to use a hand-held or hands-free mobile phone while driving.
- staff plan journeys to include rest stops which also provide opportunities to check messages and return calls.
- work practices do not pressurise staff to use a mobile phone while driving.
- compliance with the mobile phone policy is included in team meetings and staff appraisals and periodic checks are conducted to ensure that the policy is being followed.
- they follow our monitoring, reporting and investigation procedures to help learn lessons which could help improve our future road safety performance.

Staff who drive for work must:

- never use a hand-held or hands-free phone while driving.
- plan journeys so they include rest stops when messages can be checked and calls returned.
- ensure their phone is switched off and can take messages while they are driving, or allow a passenger to use the phone.
- co-operate with monitoring, reporting and investigation procedures.

15. Policy Review and Distribution

Review Procedures

The Driving Policy for the school is to be reviewed annually by the school management with notification being given to the Principal on the results of the review.

Amendments

Amendments are to be introduced on the approval of the school management. The Principal is to be advised on the nature of any amendments.

Distribution of Copies

Copies of the policy and any amendments will be distributed to: Principal; The Facilities Manager; School Health and Safety Representative; All Staff; and Administration office.