



Highfields Independent School and Day Nursery

Code of Practice for the Safe Use of the Mini Bus

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| Last Reviewed: | Nov 2015 | Approved on: | |
| Committee Responsible: | Pupil and Personnel | Next Review: | Nov 2017 |
| Approved by: | Full Govs | | |

1. Roadworthiness of the Vehicle

The minibus owned by Highfields School must be regularly maintained and kept in Roadworthy condition.

Before taking over responsibility for any vehicle, all drivers must carry out the pre-journey checks and complete the Pre-Journey Check List Form [Appendix 1](#). The pre-journey checks must be carried out at least on a daily basis whilst the vehicle is in use.

2. Provision and Use of Seatbelts/Child seats.

All minibuses must have seatbelts fitted to all seats. These should, as far as possible, be lap and diagonal belts, but where this is not feasible lap belts should be fitted. Minibuses must not have any sideways facing seats.

All passengers, driver and escort(s) must wear seat belts. Where passengers are under 14 years old the driver is legally responsible for this and for passengers 14 and over this legal responsibility passes to the passenger themselves. However, school drivers must remind passengers of this legal requirement.

When carrying children under 3 years old or children aged 3 to 11 who are under 1.35 metres (approx 4ft 5ins) in height an appropriate child restraint must be used and the driver is legally responsible for this.

N.B. An appropriate child restraint is one which conforms to the United Nations standard, ECE regulation 44-03, is suitable for the child's weight and size and is correctly fitted according to the manufacturer's instructions.

3. Loading of Minibuses

The number of people and the weight of luggage carried must not exceed the maximum limits specified by the manufacturer of the vehicle. If a large amount of luggage is to be carried it may be necessary to reduce the number of passengers in order to remain within the maximum loading limits.

Any luggage should be properly restrained to prevent it causing injury in the event of an accident but they must not be stored in a way that blocks emergency exits from the minibus.

All luggage that may shift due to the movement of the vehicle must be safely secured. The use of roof racks on minibuses used by school is permitted as long as the luggage is secured safely.

4. Towing of Trailers

The school minibus is equipped to tow trailers. If you are considering towing a trailer, you must discuss your requirements with the Headmaster and agree an acceptable arrangement. Drivers must not drive minibuses with trailers unless they have received familiarisation training and had an assessment on driving the minibus with a trailer attached. Drivers should refer to [Appendix 2](#) for checks required prior to towing a trailer.

5. Speed limits

All speed limits must be complied with. The relevant limits (as Jan. 2007) are:

| | For minibuses not towing a trailer | For minibuses towing a trailer |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| Motorways | 70 m.p.h. | 60 m.p.h. |
| Dual carriageways | 60 m.p.h. | 60 m.p.h. |
| Other roads where a lower limit is not signposted. | 50 m.p.h. | 50 m.p.h. |

The outer lane (overtaking) lane of a three or four lane motorway must not be used.

N.B. The driver is legally responsible for all fines, etc, resulting from the use of the vehicle.

6. Competence of Drivers and the Provision of Information and Training

The skill and care exercised by the driver is undoubtedly the most important aspect of minibus safety. Driving a minibus, especially a fully-laden 16 seater over long distances, is much more demanding than driving a private car. The school operates an 'Approved Driver Scheme' so all minibus drivers must be approved by the Headmaster to become an approved minibus driver.

The school operates under a Section 19 Small Bus Permit Scheme where drivers applying to become 'Approved Drivers' must meet the following requirements:

- Be 21 years old or over
- Have held a full and appropriate car driving licence for at least three years
- Have completed a fit to drive form
- Have undertaken minibus driver familiarisation training.

To maintain their approved status drivers must:

- Present the driving licence for inspection when requested to do so.
- Be able to complete a pre-journey vehicle check.
- Notify the Headmaster of any convictions, and any pending prosecutions.
- Inform the Headmaster of any medical condition that could affect their ability to drive safely.
- Undertake their own continuous development to ensure driving skills and driving knowledge remains current.

All drivers are required to inform the Headmaster and the DVLA in Swansea of any physical or other disability, which might affect their fitness to drive any vehicle. Special care must be taken over the use of any medication, prescribed or otherwise, which might affect driving ability.

Note:

Drivers must maintain high standards of driving, show courtesy to other road users, and remember that they are representing the School when out driving the minibuses. Minibuses carry the School name and contact information and any complaints will be investigated.

If you want to apply to become an approved minibus driver the application process is explained in [Appendix 3](#) along with the forms you will need to complete.

7. Medically restricted licences

Since 1 January 1998, those with medically restricted licences are not automatically entitled to drive minibuses with up to 16 passenger seats and vehicles between 3.5 and 7.5 tonnes and to attach a trailer to these vehicles.

Drivers do not need to take action until their licence is next due for renewal after 1 January 1998. As long as licences remain valid, there will be no changes to existing entitlements. Three months prior to the expiry of the licence, the driver will be contacted about their entitlement by the DVLA.

8. Journey and Driving Times

Tiredness of the driver has often been a significant factor in accidents involving minibuses. The presence of a second driver should always be considered both on account of possible incapacity of the first driver and also because of tiredness.

There are legal requirements relating to driving times. The maximum number of hours that a driver may drive in any 24-hour period is 9 hours subject to a weekly maximum of 56 hours. Every driver must take a continuous rest period of at least 12 hours in every 24-hour period. Suitable arrangements, such as booking a hotel room, must be made for this rest period. The driver must not be tired at the start of a journey so where a person drives and carries out other work, they should reduce their driving hours accordingly. Where the driver is carrying out other work they should have a break of at least 15 minutes, free of responsibilities, before commencing a journey. It is good practice for the maximum continuous period of driving not to exceed 2.5 hours and for this to be followed by a minimum break of 15 minutes out of the vehicle. Time spent crawling in motorway type hold-ups should count as part of the driving period, as should any period spent driving to pick up a party.

9. Consumption of Alcohol by Any Driver

It is an absolute rule that any driver does not consume any alcohol during or in the period before any journey. Since blood alcohol level should be zero during all driving activities, care should be exercised if consuming alcohol even on the previous day. Alcohol must not be consumed in the 8-hour period immediately prior to driving.

Breaches in this respect would be dealt with through the school's Disciplinary Procedure.

10. Mobile Phones

Before using a mobile phone drivers must stop at a safe place away from the main carriageway, turn off the engine and apply the hand brake.

It is an offence under the road traffic act for a driver to make / take calls or to send a text message whilst driving.

Details of the legal restrictions and penalties can be found in [Appendix 4](#)

11. First Aid and Emergency Procedures

If a vehicle is involved in an accident:

- Make sure all passengers are safe and if necessary summon the emergency services for assistance.
- Obtain the registration number(s) and insurance details of any other vehicle(s) involved.
- Take the names, addresses and if appropriate vehicle registration number of any witnesses and the number and base station of any Police Officer who attends.
- Write down as soon as possible after the accident all relevant details in a precise manner.
- Report all the above details on an incident form and submit to Health and Safety Officer as soon as possible.
- If you need any immediate or emergency assistance from the school, call 01636 704103 and ask for the Headmaster.

The legal requirements for providing information after an accident are summarised in [Appendix 5](#).

It is recommended that in addition to a first aid kit being kept on board, that a mobile phone is available for ease of communication from and to the minibus.

12. First Aid Kit

The first aid box must be of a good, reliable quality and suitable for design. It must be readily available for use and contain:

- 10 antiseptic wipes, foil packed
- One conforming disposable bandage (not less than 7.5cm wide)
- Two triangular bandages
- One packet of assorted adhesive dressings
- Three sterile unmedicated ambulance dressings (not less than 15cm x 20cm)
- Two sterile eye pads with attachments
- 12 assorted safety pins
- One pair rustless blunt-ended scissors

BS Standard BS8599-1-2011 also recommends the following:

- Tearable non-woven hypoallergenic adhesive tape
- Disposable gloves
- Resuscitation face shield.
- Small absorbent wound dressings for finger injuries

13. Documentation

Drivers should carry their driving licence and a copy of the insurance certificate to assist in exchange of information as required in 10(b) above or by the police.

14. Administrative Issues

The minibus will not be allowed out of school on an offsite visit without the relevant paperwork (Out of school activities visit forms, risk assessments, etc.), being correctly completed and authorised by the relevant people. These forms are available in the Common Folder.

15. Non-School Business

Use of the school's minibuses for non-school business is not permitted.

16. Small Bus Permit

All minibuses owned by the school must display a "small bus permit". The Headmaster's PA will process permit application forms and ensure the school minibus displays a permit.

The use of vehicles under a small bus permit is restricted to the United Kingdom. Vehicles operating under permit may be subject to spot checks by vehicle inspectorate examiners.

17. Contacts for Further Advice and Information

The Headmaster
The Site Manager

18. MOT Tests

Minibuses with more than 12 seats must have an annual Class V MOT test conducted by a designated County or District Council or an appropriately authorised testing station.

19. Driving Licences

Drivers of minibuses with 9-16 seats normally require a Category D1PVC driving entitlement. However, any person aged 21 or above with a car licence obtained before 1 January 1997 can drive a minibus provided it is not being operated for 'hire' or 'reward'. A driver who passed his /her test on or after 1 January 1997 can drive a Category B vehicle only (smaller vehicles with no more than 8 passenger seats). An additional test and higher medical standards are needed to drive a minibus.

**Appendix 1
VEHICLE PRE-JOURNEY CHECK LIST**

Date: **Vehicle Registration:**

Driver: **Destination:**

Mileage Depart: **Mileage Return:**

Fuel Status on Departure: Empty: Quarter: Half: Three Quarters: Full

Fuel Status on Return: Empty: Quarter: Half: Three Quarters: Full

The following have been checked and any problems reported:

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Outside the vehicle | <input type="checkbox"/> | Status Indicators |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Fuel | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fuel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Fuel Cap | <input type="checkbox"/> | Oil |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Lights | <input type="checkbox"/> | Handbrake |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Reversing Lights | <input type="checkbox"/> | Direction Indicators |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Rear Fog Lights | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hazard warning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Door Locks | <input type="checkbox"/> | Speed Limiter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Tyre Conditions | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mirrors | <input type="checkbox"/> | Driver's Seat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Reversing Lens | <input type="checkbox"/> | Seat adjustment controls |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mirrors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Passenger Safety | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ventilation/Heating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Seat belts | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Door locks | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Controls |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rear fog lights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Emergency Kit | <input type="checkbox"/> | Foot pedal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lights (side/dip/full) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | First aid Kit | <input type="checkbox"/> | Horn |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Emergency Exits | <input type="checkbox"/> | Indicators |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Fire Extinguisher | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hazard warning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mobile Phone/radio | <input type="checkbox"/> | Reversing beepers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> | Windscreen wipers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Paperwork | <input type="checkbox"/> | Windscreen washers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Tax Disc | <input type="checkbox"/> | Choke/starting procedure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Breakdown | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Breakdown/recovery service doc | | |

Start: **Finish:** **Signature:**

ANY DAMAGE TO THE VEHICLE MUST BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY AND LOGGED ON THIS FORM.

Appendix 2

Checks to be carried out before towing a trailer.

Drivers must not tow a trailer over 750kg capacity, without E entitlement on their licence.

- that the vehicle being used is appropriate for this use (seek advice through the Health and Safety Officer/Facilities Manager if in any doubt)
- That the gross weight of the vehicle is within the vehicle gross weight limit.
- That the kerbside weight of the towing vehicle is clearly marked on the front nearside of the vehicle.
- That the downward force from the loaded trailer on the towing ball is within the limits imposed by the towing vehicle manufacturer.
- That the axle loads of the towing vehicle are not exceeded.
- That a breakaway chain is in use, which will activate the handbrake should the coupling break. Advice on this matter should be sought from the trailer manufacturer or approved dealer.
- That the unladen weight of the trailer and trailer tyre pressures are clearly marked on the trailer.
- That the total gross weight (trailer weight plus maximum load to be carried) is clearly marked on the front of the trailer.
- That the trailer handbrake/overrun brake functions properly.
- That the trailer lights and indicators work.
- That the load is securely lashed to the trailer body or frame.
- that the load is evenly distributed and is mainly over the axle(s)
- that there is suitable marking of any rear overhang greater than one metre by using high visibility signage or other approved method (e.g. warning tape) or an approved light in hours of darkness or bad weather.
- That the trailer is not wider than the towing vehicle.
- That the trailer does not prevent the rear doors of the bus from opening.

Appendix 3

Procedure for staff who want to become Approved Minibus Drivers

Discuss the matter with the Headmaster to ensure you have their support for you becoming a minibus driver.

Complete the staff application form and submit it for approval.

Complete and return all of the documents to the Headmaster.

You will be informed, by the Headmaster whether or not your application has been approved

If you have been given clearance to drive the minibus, the Headmaster will liaise with you to arrange your minibus familiarisation training sessions, with an approved minibus driver.

Appendix 4

Statement on penalties for the use of a handheld mobile phone while driving

- The use of a hand-held phone, or similar hand-held devices, while driving has been prohibited since 1 December 2003.
- The current penalty is a £60 roadside fixed penalty notice and three penalty points added to the drivers' licence. If a case goes to court, then in addition to the points, discretionary disqualification is added. The existing maximum fine of £1,000 (£2,500 in the case of a bus/coach or goods vehicle) remains unchanged.
- Provided that a phone can be operated without holding it, then hands-free equipment is not prohibited although DfT advice will remain that drivers should switch to voicemail and not use a mobile in the car at any time.
- A hand-held device is something that "is or must be held at some point during the course of making or receiving a call or performing any other interactive communication function".

- A device is "similar" to a mobile phone if it performs an interactive communication function by transmitting and receiving data.
 - Using any mobile phone when driving has been scientifically proven to be distracting. Those who drive poorly as the result of distraction from a conversation on a hands-free phone continue to risk prosecution for not having proper control of a vehicle - this is an offence under Regulation 104 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986. The penalties are exactly the same as for the hand-held phone offence.
 - Employers can also be prosecuted if they require their employees to use any phone to take or make calls while driving.
- Further information can be found on the Department for Transport's road safety website www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk

Appendix 5

Action to be taken if a vehicle is involved in an accident.

No two accidents are exactly the same and the actions taken will vary, dependent upon the circumstances. As a general guide the procedure should be as follows:

- Activate hazard-warning lights.
- Try to make sure the accident does not become any worse e.g., get someone to warn other traffic without endangering themselves – use a high visibility jacket.
- Telephone Ambulance Service or Police if necessary (and remain at the scene).
- Help those trapped or badly injured if you are able to do so.
- Attend to other passengers; get them to a safe place off the road and as far away from the vehicle as possible.
- Attend to minor injuries using the First Aid Box mounted in the vehicle.

If you are involved in an accident which causes damage or injury to any other person, or other vehicle, or any animal (horse, cattle, ass, mule, sheep, pig, goat or dog) not in your vehicle, or property you **legally you must:**

- a) Stop and remain at the scene.
- b) Give:
 - i) Your name and address
 - ii) The name and address of owner of the vehicle
 - iii) The registration mark of the vehicle

If b) cannot be done at the scene, you must report the accident to the Police as soon as possible, but in any case within 24 hours.

- c) Produce evidence of insurance to the Police or anyone who has reasonable grounds to ask for it.

Please refer anyone requiring details of the school's vehicle insurance to the School Office.

The following procedure should then be followed:

- If you have reported the incident as b) but cannot produce the Insurance Certificate at the time of the incident as c), then the Certificate must be produced within 7 days after the occurrence of the accident at a named Police station.
- Collect details of other drivers and vehicles and any witnesses and provide your details to the third party.
- Record details at the scene. This will prove of value when you are asked to complete an insurance accident claim form.
- When you return to school complete a School Accident Form.
- All accidents must be reported to the Headmaster.
- Drivers **must not** admit responsibility for an accident to the other party or to witnesses.
- Staff should not communicate with the media, they should refer them to the Headmaster for comment.

Appendix 6

Action to be taken in the event of a puncture / breakdown / vehicle fire etc.

Normal Roads

- Switch on hazard warning lights.
- Switch on sidelights if it is dark or visibility is reduced.
- Endeavour to position vehicle where it will create least danger – pull onto verge or hard shoulder.
- Remove occupants to a position away from the road and nominate someone to take charge and keep the group together.
- Ascertain fault and rectify if possible **Or**
- Call the school nominated breakdown/rescue service.
- Advise the Headmaster/Site Manager at school if necessary.

Motorways

If possible either:

- Leave Motorway by next exit.
- Drive to the next service area and call the school nominated breakdown/relay service.

If not possible then:

- Pull onto the hard shoulder as near as possible to an emergency telephone and as far over to the left as possible (but leave room for the nearside doors to open)
- Switch on hazard warning lights
- Switch on sidelights and head lights if it is dark or visibility is reduced
- Get passengers out of vehicle by the nearside door and assemble them well up the grass bank
- Elect one passenger as group leader and do not allow passengers to wander about
- Walk to nearest emergency phone (positioned at 1 mile intervals on hard shoulder - arrows on marker posts will indicate the direction of the nearest phone) and give full details to the operator
- Return to vehicle and wait for breakdown/rescue assistance. Do not wait in the vehicle wait over the barrier (with the passengers if possible)
- Ensure that group remains well away from Motorway
- Advise the Headmaster at school if necessary.

Please Note: The School's breakdown/rescue service is through Circle Insurance (Brokers) – 01623 491500 – out of normal hours 07794 001789. Insurer is ERS, policy number 50001338.

When you ring you will require the following information;

- Vehicle registration number and mileage
- Vehicle location (as accurately as possible)
- Customer number (this can be found on the membership card in the vehicle)
- Nature of the fault
- The weight of the vehicle (approx 3.75 tonnes)
- The number of passengers who may require transportation to safety.

The AA will either fix the problem so you can continue your journey or arrange transport for all your party to either your destination or back to College (whichever is closer).

Flat tyres

The minibus has a spare wheel but drivers should not attempt to change a wheel unless they have the competence to do so and the minibus is parked in a place where it is safe to change a wheel. All passengers should disembark the minibus and assemble in a safe place. Flat tyres you should treat it exactly the same as you would a breakdown.

Vehicle Fires:

In the case of a minibus fire the procedure to follow should be generally as a breakdown, but also:

- Unless already stationary, stop the vehicle where it is safe to do so.
- Everyone should be immediately evacuated and moved to a safe place as far away from the vehicle as possible.
- The driver should **never** attempt to tackle an under-bonnet engine fire. The fire extinguisher is provided to deal with cabin fires and thereby secure the safe evacuation of all passengers.
- Obtain assistance by ringing the Emergency Services.
- Contact the Headmaster/Site Manager as soon as it is safe to do so.
- On return to the school a report of the incident must be completed.

To be read in conjunction with the Minibus Policy.