StJohn Fisher CatholicCollege

Minibus Policy

Date: September 2026

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Introduction

The Academy Minibus is a valuable school resource, which helps to provide learners with access to school visits as well as to numerous sporting activities. It is essential that all users of this resource are aware of the legal and procedural responsibilities pertaining to its use.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to provide guidance on how best to use the academy minibuses and in doing so detail the safe operating procedures for use including the checks that must be carried out before and after use by drivers. It will also provide information about who is permitted to drive minibuses and the times that they may do so.

Responsibilities

The Academy will:

- ensure that minibuses are maintained in a roadworthy condition, and are checked and serviced (see Annex A);
- ensure that minibuses will not be used until defects which have safety implications are rectified;
- ensure that the proper insurance, licences and permits are held and kept up to date;
- ensure that all minibuses conform to the relevant legislation;
- maintain a list of authorized drivers;
- refund the cost of parking.

The Academy will not:

- pay fines for parking, speeding or other motoring offences;
- provide legal support for staff charged with the above.

Academy personnel will:

- operate minibuses in accordance with the policy document;
- use minibuses (where appropriate) in preference to hiring buses;
- not drive minibuses unless they are on the list of authorised drivers;
- ensure that only authorised drivers are selected and available when organising the use of the minibus;
- inform the Academy of any change in their health which affects their ability to drive;
- refrain from consuming alcohol, for the twelve hours preceding and throughout the period of time in charge of the vehicle;
- refrain from driving while taking medication which carries warnings to this effect;
- refrain from smoking while in the vehicle;

- complete a Minibus Risk Assessment prior to commencement of the journey in accordance with Annex B;

- ensure that the minibus(es) are cleared of litter/belongings at the end of each use and that any damage to interior fittings or exterior of the minibus is reported to Premises staff.

Operating Procedures Bookings

All bookings are to be made via email to the school email address Minibus.sjfcc@ctkcc.co.uk.

Authorisation to Drive

- Drivers who hold a full D1 (or D) PCV entitlement can drive minibuses;

There are, however, circumstances when a driver can drive a minibus within the UK when they hold a car (category B) licence. These circumstances vary depending on when the driver passed their car driving test. These arrangements only apply when driving the minibus in the UK not if driving abroad. If you passed your category B:

a) (car) driving test before 1 January 1997, you can drive a minibus that is not being used for hire or reward as these licences automatically include category D1 (101) (not for hire or reward) entitlement. This means school staff with such a licence can drive a minibus carrying up to 16 passengers with no maximum weight restriction on the vehicle. Drivers with a D1 + E (101) entitlement can tow a trailer over 750 kg.

b) driving test on or after 1 January 1997, you may drive a minibus that is not being used for hire and reward if the following conditions are met:

- you are over 21 and have held a category B licence for at least 2 years;
- the minibus is used by a non-commercial body for social purposes;
- you receive no payment other than the recovery of your out of pocket expenses (e.g. fuel and parking costs);
- you provide the service on a voluntary basis;
- the total weight of the minibus including passengers is not more than 3.5 tonnes – plus up to 750kg of equipment for disabled passengers, for example a wheelchair ramp;
- you do not tow a trailer.

- Once on the list, drivers are obliged to advise the Headteacher of any change in circumstances which might have a bearing on their insurability. This will include notification of motoring offences occurring between annual declarations. No-one may drive the minibus if they have more than 6 points on their licence;

- Use of the minibus will not be considered to be "Authorised" unless the

Minibus has been booked correctly in advance via the Receptionist;

- Keys are to be collected immediately before use and returned immediately after use. If, however, the vehicle is thought to have a potentially hazardous defect (see Annex C) keys should be returned to the Site Team and the Site Team contacted immediately with details of the defect;

- Prior to any journey, the named driver must complete a visual check of the vehicle. This must be completed using a Vehicle Check Sheet contained within the Minibus folder. You should remember that as the driver, you will be held legally responsible for driving with any defect. See Annex C for check sheet;

- Personal use of the minibuses is not permitted without the express written permission of theHeadteacher.

Safety

When taking charge of a minibus, drivers must satisfy themselves that the vehicle is in a fit condition for use in accordance with Annex C and that there is an adequate supply of fuel for the intended journey.

When in charge of a party and/or when driving a minibus, staff must ensure that:

- the maximum permitted number of passengers is not exceeded;

- seat belts are worn correctly at all times;

- all luggage or other material is loaded securely in a safe manner and that it presents no danger to occupants of the minibus or to other road users;

- The fitted dashcam is working correctly;

- all current road traffic legislation is observed;

- drivers must ensure they are properly rested before starting a journey, plan rest stops of 20 minutes at least every 2 hours and/or carry a relief driver;

- the minibus must not be driven with a Category A Defect (see Annex D);

- hazard warning flashers are for emergency use only;

- hi-Visibility vest(s) are provided for the driver(s) and must be used in the event of a breakdown or traffic incident requiring you to exit the vehicle;

- if the vehicle breaks down on the motorway please evacuate the vehicle;

- if the journey is long (over 1 hour total journey time) or if the route involves

motorway driving, then a second member of staff must be present.

What to take

Before setting off on your journey you must ensure that you have a full list of all members of the party including emergency contact telephone numbers, medical/SEN/behavioural information and the relevant parental consent.

You must also have the contact number of a designated member of staff who should have copies of the Risk Assessment for the trip along with the full list of participants, contact numbers etc.

You must also have a copy of the minibus insurance details, breakdown cover details, a copy of the current MOT certificate, a first aid kit, a fire extinguisher, a road map, a mobile phone, torch, a pen & paper and a means of paying for fuel.

Journey planning

It is essential that all journeys are planned properly. Although Sat Nav equipment can assist with this it should not be a replacement for a comprehensive route plan.

Remember that your plan should include time to carry out pre and post-journey checks.

You should also take into account the roof clearance of the vehicle which is displayed on the dashboard of the minibus.

Annual Declaration

All drivers will be required to annually confirm they remain authorised, medically fit to drive and have less than 6 points on their driving licence. You will be notified by the Academy Finance Manager when this annual declaration is to be made.

Restrictions on Driving Hours

The maximum length of time you are permitted to drive a minibus in a 24-hour period is 9 hours. This does not include driving your own vehicle to and from work.
The maximum time spent working is 11 hours. This includes all duties such as teaching, preparation, office work, site work and/or driving the minibus etc. These 11 hours can be spread over a 15-hour period but at least 4 hours must be off duty. If you are driving after a day's work, you should always observe the Highway Code.

The maximum length of continuous driving is 2 hours. The minimum length of break is 20 minutes and during this period, drivers should not be required to supervise pupils.

Reporting and Recording

Drivers will sign for the keys, fuel card (if necessary) and vehicle folder from the Site Office at the time of collection. Drivers are responsible for completing the necessary

entries in the Minibus Log, at the start and end of each journey.

Drivers must report all Category A Defects (see Annex D) to the Academy Finance Manager and Site Staff immediately, who will retain the keys to prevent the use of the minibus and make an appropriate entry in the Minibus Log.

Drivers must report all Category B Defects (see Annex D) to the Academy Finance Manager and Site staff as soon as possible and make an appropriate entry in the Minibus Log.

Vehicle defect report can be found at Annex E.

Defect report

On receipt of a defect report Premises staff will examine the vehicle to determine, as far as is possible, the nature of the defect and will decide whether to effect a repair or to refer the matter to an approved workshop facility. If the defect renders the vehicle un-roadworthy the keys will be withdrawn, the Log and Minibus diary marked accordingly.

Routine Servicing and Repairs

The minibus must be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's servicing and maintenance specifications.

A **safety inspection must be carried out at least every 10 weeks** by a competent person. The inspection must cover the vehicle's roadworthiness and any defects identified must be rectified before the vehicle is used where the defect affects safety.

A **Section 19 Permit** must be held where required for the operation of the minibus. The minibus must only be operated in accordance with the conditions of the Section 19 Permit and all applicable legal requirements.

A daily/pre-use walkaround check must also be completed before the minibus is used, with any defects reported and dealt with appropriately. Records of safety inspections, defects and remedial work must beretained.

The Minibus is to be serviced by Leaseplan UK in accordance with manufacturer's specifications.

Action in the event of a breakdown or accident

If you are involved in an accident or the vehicle breaks down, you are to remain with the vehicle at all times and ensure emergency services are called as necessary. If involved in an accident, you are to exchange the following minimum details with the driver of any other vehicle(s) involved:

- Name and address of driver
- Details of vehicle owner and address (if different from above)
- Registration number(s)
- Make, model and colour of the vehicle(s)
- Name of insurer

You should also make note of any other vehicles close by and the details of any witnesses, the road and weather conditions and any other relevant information which may be of use to the insurers. If it is safe to do so, it can also be helpful to take photographs of the scene and any damage caused to all vehicles and/or property. The minibus is fitted with an internal and external recording dashcam to accurately record all events outside and inside the vehicle.

You should not make any admission of liability.

In the event of a breakdown or accident, where it is safe and necessary to do so, learners should be removed from the vehicle and taken to a safe area away from the accident site, where they should be fully supervised.

If the damage is minor, a visual check of the vehicle should be undertaken before the journey resumes.

If the vehicle is unserviceable as a result of an accident or breakdown, you are to call the breakdown service to effect recovery of the vehicle. In addition, you are to contact the Academy main office by telephone, as soon as possible, giving details of the location and the problem. Remember to give the office the number from which you are calling. This will enable alternative transport to be provided if required.

In all instances, you must report all accidents, however minor, to the Headteacher as soon as possible.

You should also inform your destination contact of the circumstances and revised arrival time if you are able to continue your journey.

Out of Hours

Should any incident occur out of normal school hours, you are to contact a member of the SLT, usually the emergency contact identified through the completed risk assessment, at the earliest opportunity and provide the following information:

- Nature ofincident;
- Location ofincident;
- Details of anyinjuries;
- Details of any damage to/roadworthiness of minibus;
- Action taken;
- What additional support (if any) is required.

Dealing with Illness

It is very important that all members of the party provide contact numbers in case they become ill. Any passengers who have medical conditions which could affect them on the journey must be identified in the Risk Assessment and provisions made for such an eventuality.

Should the driver become ill, they will need to make a decision if they are fit to complete the journey. If they are not fit to continue, they must phone their emergency contact to arrange a replacement driver or alternative arrangements to be made.

Fuel

The minibus uses **Diesel Fuel**. A fuel card should be drawn with the keys when the minibus is collected. Fuel cards may be used to refuel vehicles belonging to the Academy or hired by the Academy in connection with official and properly authorised activities. Vehicles are to be refuelled on completion of the journey prior to returning the keys. In emergencies,staff may purchase sufficient fuel in order to return to the academy using their own cash/debit/credit card.

In all cases VAT receipts for fuel purchased must be returned to the Bursar with the keys and fuel card on completion of the journey.

Please note staff obtaining fuel should not claim Nectar points or use other similar reward schemes as this is contrary to financial regulations.

The use of a fuel card to refuel a private vehicle is forbidden and doing so is likely to lead to disciplinary action.

Code of Conduct for Students/Passengers

Learners must not be on the minibus unless a member of staff is present. The driver is to state the following to learners before the commencement of every journey:

- **Seatbelts must be worn at all times. This is a legal requirement (it is the driver's responsibility to checkthis);**
- **Everyone to remain seated at all times;**
- **No noisy or boisterous behaviour is permitted;**
- **No flags, banners, scarves etc are to be trailed from the vehicle;**
- **Identify entry and exit doors that must be used (it is recommended that side doors be used except in emergencies).**

If at any time learners/passengers distract the driver, s/he should stop the bus until they are settled. Do not try to continue. Remember that they may also be distracting other drivers. All learners, staff and parents are aware that the minibus is fitted with an internal and external recording dashcam to support accurate recording of actions.

Where possible, park the minibus with the side doors to the kerb. Where this is not possible, learners should remain seated until you are able to supervise them from the road.

Technical information

MOT and Insurance Certificate - See section 7 of minibus folder

Vehicle Height -	2.40m
Vehicle Weight -	3500Kg gross mass, 2268Kg kerb mass
Tyre Pressures -	Front 54lbs/in^2
	Rear 69lbs/in^2

Driving at work and the use of mobile telephones

In accordance with legislation, drivers are not permitted to use mobile telephones or other similar handheld devices whilst driving, or if the vehicle is stationary in a traffic jam or parked at traffic lights. Details of the policy adopted by the Academy can be found at section 10 of the Minibus folder.

Annex A

Maintenance Procedures – Academy Responsibilities

Premises staff are to ensure the minibus is serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's guidance and presented for service when required and MOT in accordance with current regulations.

In addition, Premises staff will conduct a weekly visual inspection of the minibus in accordance to the following check-list:

- Fuel level
- Tyres – pressure, tread depth and signs of damage (including spare wheel)
- Lights including indicators and hazard warning lights
- Vehicle jack
- Horn
- Wipers and glass, with particular attention being paid to windscreen and rear windows and include windscreen washer liquid.
- Safety equipment – Hi-Viz vest (2), warning triangle, fire extinguisher, first aid kit, torch, latex gloves (5 prs) and notebook and pen
- Seat belts for damage and serviceability
- Steering
- Brakes
- Vehicle body
- Correctly working dashcam

All checks are to be recorded on the checklist provided at Appendix 1 to Annex A and defects are to be recorded on the vehicle defect report.

Appendix 1 to Annex A

Weekly Vehicle Inspection Checklist

Vehicle Registration Number:DK18 AJU Mileage:

Item	Checks to be conducted	Serviceable Y/N
Tyres	To include pressures, condition of sidewalls and tread (to include spare wheel)	
Engine compartment	Engine oil level, coolant level, brake fluid level, air and fuel filters, screen wash	
Body (exterior)	General condition, door mirrors, fuel filler cap, door locks	
Windscreen	Condition – chips/cracks etc	
Windscreen wipers	Condition - inspect and replace as necessary	
All lights	Including head/side lights, indicators, hazard warning lights, reversing lights and fog lights	
Horn		
Fuel level		E_____F
Brakes	Including hand brake	
Steering		
Seat belts	General condition and serviceability	
Safety equipment	Ensure all items are present and serviceable	

I confirm the above checks have been completed and any defects have been recorded and reported.

Name:

Signature :

Date:

Annex B

Minibus Risk Assessment Form/Journey Checklist

Section 1:

To be completed by the driver at least 7 working days in advance of the journey and passed to the Headteacher forapproval.

When is the planned journey to take place?	Date:	Time:
Name of proposed driver:		
Does the designated driver meet the requirements to drive the minibus as listed in the school minibus policy?		Yes/No*
Has the driver read and understood the School Minibus Policy?		Yes/No*
How many students will be going on the trip?		
Have emergency contact details for all members of the party been obtained?		Yes/No*
Are there any members of the party with identified SEN?		Yes/No*
What additional measures will you take as a result of these needs?		
Are there any members of the party with identified behavioural problems?		Yes/No*
What additional measures will you take to accommodate these students?		
If there are students with SEN or behavioural problems will a second member of staff bepresent?		Yes/No*
Has a journey plan been produced?		Yes/No*
How long do you estimate the journey will take?		
If the journey is over an hour will a second member of staff be present?		Yes No*
How far is the journey?		
Will the journey take the driver over their allowed driving/working limit?		Yes/No*
Will the journey involve motorway driving?		Yes/No*
If 'Yes' will a second member of staff be present?		Yes/No*
Who will the emergency contact for the trip be?		
Has the minibus been booked with the Receptionist?		Yes/No*
Journey approved by Headteacher)		Yes/No*
Headteacher's signature:	Date:	

***Section 2*:**

To be completed by the driver immediately before departure.

Have you carried out the checks listed in the minibus policy?	Yes/No*
Do you feel fit to drive?	Yes/No*
If a second member of staff is required are they present and are they aware of any students with SEN / specific behavioural requirements?	Yes/No*
Do you have the list of contact numbers for all members of the party?	Yes/No*
Do you have the phone number of the emergency contact?	Yes/No*
Do you have the insurance details for the minibus?	Yes/No*
Do you have a copy of the MOT certificate?	Yes/No*
Is there sufficient fuel for the journey or have you made provision for purchasing more?	Yes/No*
Do you have a mobile phone with you?	Yes/No*
Have you gone through the code of conduct with students as described in the school minibus policy?	Yes/No*

If you have answered 'No' to any of the questions in Section 2 you should not undertake the journey.

***Section 3*:**

To be completed by the driver on return.

Have you completed a check of the minibus and recorded any defects in the 'log book'?	Yes/No*
Have you ensured all items (equipment/pupil belongings etc) have been removed from the minibus?	Yes/No*
Has all rubbish been removed from the minibus?	Yes/No*
Has the minibus been refuelled?	Yes/No*
Have you checked that all windows are closed and doors locked?	Yes/No*

Please sign and return this form to the Academy Finance Manager ASAP. Note that by signing below, you are confirming you have completed the above checks and are aware of the implications of falsely completing the form.

Drivers Signature:	Date:

Annex C

Checks Prior to Departure.

The following checks are to be conducted by the minibus driver prior to the commencement of any journey and returned to the Site Team on completion of journey:

Check to be conducted	Serviceable ( )
Look for external damage or fluids under the vehicle	
Confirm the handbrake is working	
Confirm the fire extinguisher is present and serviceable	
Confirm first aid kit is present	
Check all lights – side-lights, headlights, indicators, hazard warning lights and reversing lights	
Check all tyres (for pressure and damage) and ensure wheel nuts are secure	
Check mirrors for damage	
Check windscreen is clean and undamaged	
Check windscreen wipers/washer are serviceable	
Check horn is working	
Check brakes are working	
Check steering	
Check all warning lights are normal – especially oil pressure, battery charging and handbrake	
Check all seatbelts are fitted and operating correctly	
Check that the fitted dashcam is working correctly	
Fuel level **Start**	E_____F
Fuel level **End**	E_____F

Annex D

Category A Defects

The following defects are annotated as Category A defects and the vehicle must not be used until repairs have been effected:

- Defect to steering, brakes, clutch, tyres
- Damage to swept portion ofwindscreen
- Damage to doors which prevents their secure closure or which prevents them from being opened easily as intended by the manufacturer
- Damage to the bodywork which results in loose panels or jagged projections
- Damage to bodywork which results in restriction to steering lock or which otherwise results in contact withatyre
- Insecure seat(s)
- Engine Oil light failing to extinguish within 5 seconds
- Abnormal noise from engine, gearbox or rear axle
- Difficultyin changing gear or clutch slip
- Failure of lights or indicators (including hazard warning lights).
- Defect to windscreen wipers/washers which impairs their ability to clear the windscreen
- Inoperable seatbelts

Category B Defects

All items of cosmetic or minor nature which do not impair security and safety of driver and/or passenger, vehicle handling, drivers view of the road or the welfare of the engine and transmission.

Annex E

Vehicle Defect Report: DK18 AJU

Date of Pre-Journey Inspection	
Name of person carrying out inspection	
Defect Identified	
Date and time reported to Premises staff	

For completion by Premises staff

Action taken:	
Is the vehicle roadworthy?	Yes / No*

Name

Signatur

e Date

Please return to the Academy Finance Manager when complete