

SEPTEMBER 2024



MINIBUS DRIVER AND SAFETY POLICY

**HORIZONS EDUCATION TRUST, AMERICAN LANE,
HUNTINGDON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE PE29 1TQ**

DOCUMENT CONTROL	
ISSUED	CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS VERSION
<p>Date reviewed: September 2024 Date of next review: September 2025 Reviewer: Jon Panther – Operations Manager Date of ratification by Governing Board: TBC</p>	<p>Policy Reviewed and one point added;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For a person to drive a minibus on Horizons Education Trust business, their driving licence must not have:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> any more than 6 points any drink/drug drive endorsements within last 10 years had a disqualification within the last 5 years and/or more than one current speeding endorsement.” <p>Prestley Wood contact details added.</p>

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THE AIMS OF THIS POLICY

- To ensure that Horizons Education Trust complies with current legislation and guidance concerning the maintenance and driving of the school minibuses.
- To ensure that the safety of minibus users (both drivers and passengers) and other road users and pedestrians is paramount at all times.
- To ensure that Horizons Education Trust 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 Local Authorities (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 fully 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 hired vehicles that are used by the school.
- A copy of this policy will be provided to all minibus drivers and will be kept in the Staff Handbook and retained by the Health and Safety Committee.
- This policy and the procedures contained within it will be reviewed regularly as part of the school's Health and Safety review.
- All staff have a statutory obligation to follow and co-operate with the requirements of this policy. Breach or failure to observe the provisions of this document may lead to action being taken under the School Disciplinary Procedure.
- Definitions Minibus A minibus is defined as a vehicle which has been constructed or adapted to carry more than 8, but no more than 16 seated passengers in addition to the driver.

The minibuses must:

- Be used on behalf of a non-profit making organisation
- Be used for social purposes (i.e., on behalf of the community)
- Not for hire or reward
- Without a trailer attached
- Have a maximum of 16 passengers
- Not exceed their maximum load weight of 3.5 tonnes (4.25 incl disabled ramp).
- Food is not to be consumed on the school minibus

DRIVER

PERSONS ENTITLED TO DRIVE THE MINIBUS

- 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 an external MIDAS Driver Assessor Trainer.
- All drivers should ensure that they are aware of the minibus generic risk assessment.
- To drive a minibus, such drivers need to gain a category D1 (or D) PCV entitlement on their licence by meeting higher medical standards and passing the DVSA's theory and practical minibus test.
- If you passed your practical car test (licence category B) before 1 January 1997 you would automatically also acquire licence categories [BE](#), [C1](#), [C1E](#), [D1](#) and [D1E](#).

A D1 licence is not always required if you want to drive a minibus that has 16 passenger seats or less and is shorter than 8 metres in length.

DRIVING A MINIBUS WITHOUT D1 ENTITLEMENT

- For a driver without D1 on their licence they can only drive a minibus up to a gross vehicle weight of 3,500kgs or 4, 250kgs if the bus is accessible.
- If your car licence does not allow you to drive minibuses, there are certain circumstances where you may still be able to do so. You may drive a minibus with up to 16 passenger seats provided you can meet all conditions below:
 - You drive on behalf of a non-commercial body for social purposes but not for hire or reward
 - You are aged 21 or over; you have held a car (category B) licence for at least 2 years; you are providing your service on a voluntary basis; the minibus maximum weight is not more than 3.5 tonnes excluding any specialist equipment for the carriage of disabled passengers. Minibuses up to 4.25 tonnes will be permitted in certain circumstances if the bus is accessible.
 - Drivers wishing to drive a minibus under 3.5 tons, must have a B licence and have also passed MIDAS training
- 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.

DRIVING LICENCE

- Horizons Education Trust is responsible for ensuring that everyone who drives a minibus has a valid driving licence and will check the driving licence(s) of their drivers annually (or more often) and keep a record of the check. The paper counterpart to the driving license was abolished in June 2015, so it's no longer possible to check whether a driver's licence has any endorsements just by looking at the licence. Horizons Education Trust use the online "Check someone's driving information" tool. The Premises Manager / Caretaker performs this duty using the last eight characters of the driving licence number and a check code from the driver whose licence is being checked. Drivers can obtain this code at View Your Driving Licence Information. The code must be used within 21 days of issue and can only be used once. It's a criminal offence to obtain someone else's personal information without their permission.

- Seat belts provided in the minibus are adjustable and staff should ensure that they are adjusted correctly to the children being transported.

- Driver is to complete all safety pre-checks of vehicle and complete a sheet from the daily record book located inside the minibus. They are also to log of the journey Mileage Record Book also located inside the minibus.

- If defects are found on pre-journey inspection, an alternative minibus should be sourced, and defect reported to the school's Admin or premise manager who will contact Fleet Services to make arrangements for repair.

- The Admin Officers will inform other minibus drivers in the school via email, that the minibus is in need of repair/service, and they will then send an email to all staff informing them that the minibus is out of action, with an indication of duration if known.

- A Minibus Trip form, detailing the full names of the adults and children being transported, should be completed as a risk assessment.

- 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 accordingly.

- It is the licence holder's responsibility to notify the Head of School or Premises Manager / Caretaker 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 Headteacher will determine whether he/she is permitted to drive the minibus. However, any more than 6 points on your licence will automatically exclude you from driving the minibus.

- Only those named on the approved drivers list (a copy of which is held by the Premises Manager / Caretaker will be eligible to drive the school minibuses.

- All drivers will be asked at the beginning of the academic year if they are willing to continue to drive and to forward a copy of both sides of their licence to the Premises Manager / Caretaker.

- If any drivers are unfortunate to obtain endorsements to their licence during the year, they are required to inform the head teacher and Premises Manager / Caretaker if endorsements are present on a driver's licence.
- For a person to drive a minibus on Horizons Education Trust business, their driving licence must not have:-
 - any more than 6 points
 - any drink/drug drive endorsements within last 10 years
 - had a disqualification within the last 5 years and/or
 - more than one current speeding endorsement."

DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Drivers are responsible for driving within the law and in accordance with the Highway Code (a copy is held in the Finance Office and in each minibus). The school will not refund fines or other costs incurred by drivers because of any road traffic or parking offence. Drivers must inform the Premises Manager / Caretaker of any penalty points received whilst using the school minibus; failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.
- National speed limits apply to the school minibus. (Copy of in the minibus folder).
- 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.
- When not in use, the minibus will be parked in the compound and always kept locked.
- Due consideration must be given to parking in secure areas as much as possible.
- Minibus keys are retained in the key safe located in the admin office and must be returned after use; a spare set is kept by the Premises Manager / Caretaker.
- Keys must not be left in an unattended vehicle at any time.
- Whenever the vehicle is left unattended, all windows are to be closed and doors locked.
- Report any concerns about the safety and / or condition of the minibus to the Health and Safety committee immediately.
- 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.

PRE-USE VEHICLE CHECKS

- In accordance with the MIDAS regulations, the driver should make an internal and external visual check of the minibus before each journey, ensuring tyres are fully inflated, lights including indicator and brake lights are working, horn and handbrakes are functioning etc. All other MIDAS regulations must be always adhered to.
- Driver is to complete the journey record in the Mileage Record Book.

MINIBUS BOOKINGS AND ADMINISTRATION

- All bookings should be made using the minibus booking form located in the site shared drive.
- A list of students and staff on the journey, and journey details (to include departure and return times) is to be left with the school office prior to departure. The office should be provided with relevant contact numbers for staff using the vehicle(s).
- Drivers must sign for the vehicle in the booking form when collecting the minibus keys from the admin Office (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.
- Drivers must return the vehicle's keys and the Minibus File to the Finance/School Office 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.
- All bookings should be made using the online booking form located on the site shared drive.
- A list of students and staff on the journey, and journey details (to include departure and return times) is to be left with the school office prior to departure. The office should be provided with relevant contact numbers for staff using the vehicle(s).
- Any/all defects noted on post journey, will be reported to the Admin Officers and the Premises Manager / Caretaker who will inform the other school minibus drivers to the effect and, to ensure that the minibus is in a 'fit and purposeful state' for the next user.
- All authorisation and medical forms, medication, and mobile telephones to be carried by the additional adult in the Minibus to avoid distraction to the driver.
- All gangways and exits kept clear of baggage, belongings etc.
- All passengers and driver to be correctly secured using seat belts.
- Passengers must not be allowed to distract the driver.
- Mobiles phones are not to be used by the driver while driving.

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
- Warning Triangle ARE NOT TO BE USED ON MOTORWAYS
- Include personal mobile phone details (or take school mobile) on a school minibus register which is to be retained in the admin office during the journey. Mobile phones must remain switched on or checked frequently for messages
- A first aid kit always remains on the bus and must be replenished after use.

SERVICING AND MAINTENANCE OF THE MINIBUS

INSURANCE

- Finance manager will arrange for appropriate insurance cover and the payment of annual road tax.
- Copies are in the vehicle handbook.

PREMISES MANAGER / CARETAKER

- Will ensure that servicing of the minibus is performed at the correct mileage, and that service book is ready for inspection at any time.
- Will ensure the mot is in date and arrange renewal.

FUEL

- The School Minibuses have a fuel card that enables fuel to be purchased and charged to the school's account. □ The schools fuel card is retained by the Premises Manager / Caretaker and must be returned immediately after use; fuel receipts must be forwarded to the school's admin.
- The premise manager will regularly check the school minibuses to ensure that the vehicles have adequate fuel (at least half a tank). It may, however it may be necessary for the minibus driver to report when the fuel level is low. (BELOW A QUARTER OF A TANK).
- The diesel level should not go below a quarter; this helps prevent primer damage and fuel tank sediment entering the engine.
- Parking fees will be reimbursed to school staff by the accounts department upon presentation of a receipt attached to an authorised claim form which has been authorised by the Headteacher.
- Any penalties incurred while driving the vehicle will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, but drivers may be liable for them.

- The minibus must be left clean and tidy ready for the next user after each journey e.g., litter, debris etc., removed and thrown away.
- The minibus has a thorough valet each term.
- Any damage incurred or mechanical faults found must be entered on the defect sheet and reported to the Premises Manager / Caretaker and admin office for action.

DRIVER'S ASSISTANT

- A second member of staff or an adult volunteer will normally be on every journey as the driver's assistant.
- The assistant is not expected to ride shotgun in the front of the bus but sit in the rear with the passengers.
- Drivers and other accompanying adults should not swap with each other during short journeys.
- During longer journeys, swaps when due, should be logged on the out and about sheet, detailing times etc.

ACCIDENT

- 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:
 - Riverside Meadows St Neots 01223 471791
 - Riverside Meadows Wisbech 01345 454241
 - Riverside Meadows out of hours 07950 456121 - Premises Manager
 - Spring Common Academy Huntingdon 01480 377403
 - Spring Common Academy out of hours 07471 355620 - Caretaker
 - Prestley Wood Academy Alconbury Weald 01480 710036
 - Prestley Wood Academy out of hours 07591 339315 - Site Manager

ACCIDENT AND 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 breakdown use contact school numbers above.
- It is advised 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.

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.

Policy agreed on: _____

Signed on behalf of the Trustees _____

Committee: _____

Author: _____

Review date (optional): _____

Website Y/N