



Mini Bus Policy

The Woodlands

Approved by:	L Candler S Green	Date: Sept 24
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Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the safety of minibus users (both drivers and passengers) and other road users and pedestrians is paramount at all times

Policy

This policy relates to The Woodlands minibus which is used to transport pupils. The Woodlands has 1 leased minibus. This policy is to be read in conjunction with 'Staff travel' policy and the 'Driving at work' Policy

Authorisation to drive the school minibus

All drivers that wish to drive a minibus heavier than 3.5 tons must hold a D1 licence and have passed Driver Risk Assessment. Drivers wishing to drive a minibus under 3.5 tons, must have a B licence and have also passed MIDAS mini bus awareness training. - a nationally recognised standard of assessment and training of mini bus drivers. This includes:

- familiarisation of the vehicle
- vehicle checks that should be carried out before and after a journey
- practical driving test to include reversing
- emergency procedures
- passenger care

Once completed the driver is issued with a certificate which is renewable every four years. The driver assessor also undergoes re-training every two years. If, at any time, the safe practice of the driver is brought into question, the driver will be required to undergo further training before being permitted to drive the mini bus again.

The driver is authorised to drive until any of the conditions below are met (all drivers have a duty of care to inform SLT Member if any condition below is met during the school year):

- Accumulating more than 6 live points on their licence
- Have a collision in the minibus unless it was clearly the fault of a third party
- Have complaints about their driving confirmed
- Acquire a medical condition that would affect their ability to drive
- They reach an age not covered by The Woodlands insurance policy
- Not driven a minibus for more than 2 academic years, in this case the individual would have to complete MIDAS mini bus training before being permitted to drive
- There is a change in DBS clearance

A central record is held of copies of driving licences for those members of staff who are authorised to drive the mini bus and this is updated annually by the MIDAS instructor, who will also carry out a Driver Licence Check annually on the Gov.uk website.

On a long-distance journey when a member of staff is driving a minibus, it is not acceptable to expect them to exercise general supervisory responsibilities during the journey. The members, therefore, require that there is an adequate number of adults to supervise the pupils.

When a driver undertakes a single planned journey of up to two hours, a rest break is voluntary. There must be a second driver for any minibus undertaking a planned single journey of more than three hours. Neither driver may drive for more than two hours without a mandatory rest.

Procedure

All drivers must follow the Minibus Protocol below

Before setting off

- On journeys where an escort is present, the items below should be divided between the escort and the driver, with the driver concentrating on items directly related to driving the vehicle.
- Allow sufficient time for the journey
- Conduct a pre- journey safety check (to include fire extinguisher and first aid kit) using County Council defect booklet, located in the minibus
- Never allow passengers to board until the vehicle is at a complete standstill
- Wherever possible, park the mini bus adjacent to the pavement for boarding
- Ensure pupils are supervised whilst boarding the vehicle, especially if using the rear door
- Make sure everyone is sitting, one to a seat and that ALL passengers are using a seat belt, and facing the front, annotated on the seating plan and minibus checklist.
- Have a seating plan for the mini bus, making it easy to identify damage. No pupils to sit in front or back seats when alternative seating is available.
- If school bus signs are used, make sure that they do not obscure the driver's vision
- Check that other adults have relevant medication for pupils with them
- Check no bags are blocking the gangways or doors.
- Check mirrors before moving away in case anyone is approaching the vehicle
- Know the height, width, length and weight of the vehicle and position of the petrol cap.

During the journey

Drivers and escorts have a duty of care to their passengers

- The passengers must be made aware of what behaviour is expected of them during the journey, and why boisterous behaviour is inappropriate. Distracting the driver with questions and noisy behaviour is likely to cause an accident.
- The driver and escort must make sure that all the passengers are wearing properly adjusted seat belts at all times during the journey, any occurrences to be noted on seating plan and minibus checklist.
- Where possible, one of the escorts should be a qualified driver in case of emergencies.
- Escorts should be aware of what duties are expected of them
- Drivers and escorts know the emergency procedures as set out by DCC
- All equipment is safely stored and aisles and exits are clear
- The doors are closed, but not locked, before moving off
- **Poor behaviour will be dealt with appropriately**

At the end of the journey

- Ensure the children are supervised when leaving the vehicle, after parking adjacent to the pavement
- Avoid unnecessary reversing, but if it is unavoidable, use an adult to assist, but do not stand directly behind the vehicle
- Report any problems to the operator
- Check there is sufficient fuel for the next user
- Tidy all rubbish, sweep floors and wipe dirty surfaces
- Mini bus will be checked on return for damage and cleanliness check.

Emergency procedures

- If the vehicle breaks down or there is an accident, give clear and firm instructions to the passengers and see that they remain together and supervised – their safety is paramount
- If there is a risk of fire, evacuate the vehicle and move the occupants to a safe place
- If the vehicle breaks down on the motorway, only stop on the hard shoulder, and as far away from the carriageway and passing traffic as possible. Ensure the passengers stay together and are supervised

ALL THE ABOVE IS COVERED IN MIDAS TRAINING WHICH ALL STAFF UNDERGO PRIOR TO DRIVING THE MINIBUS WITH PASSENGERS

Mini bus – additional notes for drivers/escorts

If the mini buses are used to collect pupils from home, the following is additional guidance

- All drivers need proof of current MIDAS certificate and copy of driving licence prior to undertaking these duties
- When minibuses are on site, keys to buses need to be left in the main office
- Fuel cards- each key has fob, each driver has their own number, can be used in any council yard
- If pupils do not arrive, wait no longer than a few minutes and inform relevant person on arrival at school
- If a pupil absconds from the mini bus inform The Woodlands and parents immediately when it is safe to do so
- Pupils must NOT smoke on the bus
- If staff are unable to carry out their driving duties, report to relevant member of SLT as soon as possible to ensure a replacement can be found

Maintenance

As a minimum the minibuses will be serviced annually or in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines and have a valid MOT certificate and insurance in place.

Maintenance of the minibuses will be routinely checked by a minibus technician, which should include tyre pressure, washer bottles, coolant etc.

Before the minibus is driven a Pre Drive Safety Check will be done by the driver and any defects will be reported to MIDAS Instructor to arrange repair.

Monitoring & Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy will be regularly monitored by the MIDAS Instructor and Business Manager

Implementation & Review

This policy will be available to all Woodlands staff and published on The Woodlands website for parent/carer information. The policy will be reviewed annually or as required.

MIDAS Mini Bus Driver Awareness Scheme

Information available from:

Community Transport Association UK
Highbank, Halton Street
Hyde, Cheshire, SK14 2NY
Tel: 0161 366 6685
MiDAS@communitytransport.com