



The Castle School
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Use of Minibuses Policy

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Headteacher: James Lamb

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The purpose of this document is to catalogue the various procedures that must be followed to ensure the safe use of the school's minibuses. This document will be given to all minibus drivers as part of the overall induction package and reissued to staff at the commencement of each academic year.

Driver Authorisation and Training

All persons authorised to drive must have the correct licence and be competent to drive a school vehicle containing children safely.

The Castle School operates standard minibuses that require a driver to have D1 entitlement on their driving licence. Currently the Castle School also operates one lightweight minibus. Due to the weight of the vehicle and its adaptations for carrying passengers who use wheelchairs, it can be driven by somebody who only holds a standard car licence. They do not need a D1 licence to drive this bus.

Drivers who have D1 entitlement can be divided into two categories: those that gained D1 entitlement when they passed their car test prior to 1997 (they have potentially never driven a minibus or similar size vehicle) and those that have had to do specific lessons and a DVLA theory and practical test to gain D1 entitlement. (They would have passed their car test after 1997.)

In order to manage the risks posed by the various categories of licenced drivers stated above and to comply with the requirements of the insurance policy, all drivers must:-

- Be over the age of 21.
- Complete a Risk Assessment Form 14A under the Driving for Work Regulations. A copy of this form will be held in the drivers personnel file.
- Be licensed to drive the relevant category of vehicles.
- Have at least two years' experience as a qualified driver
- Hold a current driving licence for the type of minibus they will be driving with no more than 6 penalty points.
- Present their driving licence for inspection at the start of each academic year.
- Notify the Headteacher as soon as they become aware of any proceedings or action which might give rise to a conviction or endorsement.
- Notify the Headteacher as soon as they become aware of any health issues which could pose a safety risk or prohibit them from driving.

In addition drivers who only have a car licence or who have automatic D1 entitlement gained when they passed their car test must:

- Undergo a two hour training / assessment session once every 3 years and prior to being allowed to drive a minibus with children in.

Those drivers who have successfully completed DVLA D1 specific lessons and test must:

- Undergo a one hour training / assessment once every 5 years and prior to being allowed to drive a minibus with children in.

All drivers will be given the opportunity of a vehicle familiarisation session with a member of the Site Team to include:-

- Pre-journey checks
- Pre-journey documentation
- Road testing.

A list of authorised mini bus drivers will be maintained electronically. The Head Teacher may withdraw authorisation at any time.

Drivers' Hours

If a school trip involves a driver being in charge on an extended day, then a second adult should accompany the party and that person must also be authorised to share the driving to reduce the possibility of driver fatigue. Drivers must not exceed driving hours as set out in EU/AETR rules.

Drivers' Responsibilities

Whilst a weekly check of the condition of the minibuses will be carried out, drivers are responsible for the following checks before embarking on their trips:

- (a) Complete log book in minibus stating details of journey, etc.
- (b) Do a visual inspection of the minibus which includes tyre pressure checks and that the windscreen and glass is clean and can be seen through.
- (c) Check brakes to see that they are functioning correctly.
- (d) Check fire extinguisher and first aid kit are in position.
- (e) Ensure that mirrors and seat are in the correct driving position.
- (f) Check that all lights are functioning correctly.
- (g) Ensure that all seat belts are worn. This includes all passengers, who must wear a seat belt.
- (h) Ensure that the windscreen washer system works, has sufficient washing fluid and that wipers are functioning correctly.
- (i) Ensure that the vehicle is correctly loaded and that no more than sixteen passengers are being carried.
- (j) Ensure that emergency exits are never obstructed.
- (k) Ensure that all doors are correctly closed.
- (l) Check that there is enough fuel for the journey.
- (m) As soon as possible after moving off, the driver should carry out a running brake test and at the same time, check the operation of the seat belts.

- (n) At intervals throughout the journey, all instruments and warning lights should be checked and necessary action taken if a fault is indicated.
- (o) Make sure that no rubbish is left on the vehicle and ensure that no damage has occurred to the interior of the vehicle.
- (p) Throughout the journey, ensure there is no smoking.

At the end of the journey the driver must complete the log book and lock and make the vehicle secure before returning the keys promptly to the front office.

NB: If during your initial checks a defect which would render the minibus un-roadworthy is identified, any planned journey must be suspended/abandoned pending liaison with the person in charge of the minibus.

Passenger Responsibilities

- (i) Should wear seat belts and always remain in their seats until instructed otherwise.
- (ii) Should never distract the driver by shouting, etc.
- (iii) Pupils should not eat or drink on the vehicle.
- (iv) Must make sure that escape routes are not blocked by bags, etc.
- (v) Pupils are ambassadors of the Trust and must never bring its name into disrepute by gesturing, etc.
- (vi) Passengers found to have vandalised the minibus may face a life-time ban from using it again and may be asked to pay for the cost of any relevant repairs.

Accident Procedures

The safety of students and staff is the first priority and in the event of an accident, the driver must stop the vehicle in a place of safety. If this is not possible then, providing it is safe to do so, the occupants of the bus should be moved off the bus to a place of safety. If any personal injury or damage to third party property is caused the driver must be prepared to give his/her name and address and details of the owner of the vehicle (the school) to any person reasonably requiring the same. If for any reason the driver is not able to give these details at the time then he/she must report in person to a Police Station as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event not later than twenty-four hours after the accident.

The accident must be reported as soon as possible to the Premises Manager who will provide the appropriate forms for completion and forwarding to insurers.

Breakdown Cover

All Trust minibuses have breakdown cover, either provided by the leasing company for leased vehicles or through the school's insurance provider. Contact details and the membership number is attached to the minibus windscreen or in the minibus folder. The facilities available include:-

BREAKDOWN AND RECOVERY SERVICE

First Aid

All minibuses contain first aid boxes which are checked each half term. The contents of these boxes include:-

- Antiseptic wipes
- Bandages
- Plasters
- Eye pads
- Scissors
- Safety pins.

If any item from the First Aid kit is used this must be reported to the Welfare Officer at The Castle School as soon as possible to enable it to be replaced.

Purchase of Fuel

The school holds Fuel Cards which can be used at a variety of garages. The site team will fill up the minibuses as and when required.

If staff require additional fuel, they may collect the fuel card from the Premises Manager. Receipts for fuel should be given to the finance office.

Please remember that all the minibuses operate on diesel fuel. When filling with fuel ensure that the ignition is turned off and that there are no naked lights in the vicinity.

Care and the Cleaning of Minibuses

Minibuses are expensive to purchase/lease. Please help to ensure that their working lives are extended for the maximum possible period. As past experience suggests that the inside wears out before the body and mechanics, it is important that the condition of the interior is checked at the end of each journey.

Pupils should not be allowed to wear muddy boots in the minibus and should be encouraged to get changed at the end of matches in order to stop them sitting on the seats with damp and dirty clothing.

Booking of Minibuses

Bookings are made by contacting the Receptionist, who maintains the bookings by using an online booking system. Additional minibuses can be hired, but consideration needs to be given to how this will be funded.

The minibus can be booked for any educational or community based activity. They may be made available to other educational establishments. However if used for any private purpose they will not be covered by the insurance arrangements and alternative insurance must be arranged by the user to the satisfaction of the Premises Manager.

When booking a minibus, staff must ensure on the day of travel that they use the specific minibus which was booked.

Daily Checks

The Site Team has responsibility for conducting weekly checks of the minibus and passing on their findings to the Premises Manager (or in his absence the Trust Premises Manager).

Any defects in the minibuses noted by staff should be notified immediately to the Premises Manager, who will then determine whether or not the vehicle should be taken off the road and repairs carried out.

The Premises Manager ensures that the annual MOT and servicing is carried out by Milestone Infrastructure (formally Skanska), or the relevant leasing company. In addition, each vehicle is subject to a safety inspection every 10 weeks by SEV Automotive & Plant, or the relevant leasing company.

School Journeys – Parental Consent

It is a requirement that the written general consent of parents should be obtained for children to travel in the Trust's vehicles in connection with authorised school activities. It is suggested that a consent form is given to children when they start at each school.

Incorrect Use of a Minibus

Any driver who commits a traffic offence will be liable for any penalty imposed as a consequence.

Dashcams / Trackers

Where possible dashcams and trackers will be fitted to new minibuses that are either leased or purchased by the Trust. Information regarding location and speed of the vehicle is recorded and will be used to monitor the standards of driving. Footage from dashcams will be recorded and will be available for review by an investigating officer in the event of an accident or complaint

involving a school minibus. A review of tracker data will be undertaken monthly by the Premises Manager to monitor driving standards.

Keys

Keys are kept in the front office. They can be collected at any time between 8.30 am and 4.30 pm but should not be collected too early to maximise the availability of the minibus for use by others. Equally they should be returned promptly.