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**Norfolk
House
School**

Minibus Use Policy

This policy outlines the guidelines for the safe and responsible use of minibuses by staff and pupils at Norfolk House School, a for-profit independent school in the UK. Adherence to this policy is essential to ensure the safety of all passengers and compliance with relevant regulations.

The school operates its minibuses under a restricted operator's licence registered with the traffic commissioner.

1. Introduction

The school operates minibuses for various purposes, including transporting pupils to and from educational visits, sporting events, and other approved activities. This policy aims to ensure the safe and efficient operation of these vehicles, protect the well-being of passengers, and fulfill the school's obligations as a licence holder under the Traffic Commissioner.

2. Driver Requirements

All staff members designated to drive minibuses must:

- Hold a valid UK driving licence with the appropriate entitlement (D1 or D1 unrestricted by Code 101 for vehicles seating 9-16 passengers).
- Have successfully completed a minibus driving assessment approved by the school giving the driver CPC
- Undergo regular refresher training as deemed necessary by the school.
- Be medically fit to drive, as per DVLA guidelines.
- Adhere to all legal requirements regarding driving hours and rest periods.

3. Minibus Safety Checks (Before and After Driving)

Before each journey, the driver is responsible for conducting a thorough pre-journey safety check.

- **Tyres:** Condition, pressure, and tread depth.
- **Lights:** All exterior lights (headlights, brake lights, indicators, hazard lights) are functioning correctly.
- **Brakes:** Brake pedal feels firm and responsive.
- **Fluid Levels:** Oil, coolant, brake fluid, and windscreen washer fluid.
- **Windscreen Wipers:** Functionality and condition of blades.
- **Mirrors:** Clean and correctly adjusted.
- **Seats and Seatbelts:** All seatbelts are in good working order and accessible for use.
- **Emergency Equipment:** First aid kit, fire extinguisher, warning triangle, and high-visibility vests are present and accessible.
- **Fuel Level:** Sufficient fuel for the intended journey.

After each journey, the driver should

- Undertake a visual check of the bus
- Record Mileage
- Check Fuel
- Sign off that the bus left in good condition

Any defects or issues identified during the safety check must be reported immediately to (Person) for necessary action to be taken. The undertaking of daily checks will be signed off in the check book for each minibus, signed by the driver.

4. Maintenance Schedules

The school is committed to maintaining its minibuses to the highest safety standards. This includes:

- **Regular Servicing:** Minibuses will undergo routine servicing by qualified mechanics at intervals specified by the manufacturer or as recommended by the school's transport manager.
- **Weekly inspection:** all minibuses will undergo a weekly inspection, performed by the member of staff predominantly responsible for driving duties (Michael Mackey at the time of writing).
- **Annual Inspection:** All minibuses will undergo a professional annual safety inspection as part of the MOT requirements, to ensure compliance with roadworthiness standards.
- **Defect Reporting:** Any defects or issues reported by drivers or identified during inspections will be promptly addressed and rectified by qualified personnel.
- **Record Keeping:** Detailed records of all maintenance, servicing, and repairs will be kept for each minibus.

5. Safe Use of Minibuses on the Road

Drivers must adhere to the following guidelines when operating minibuses on public roads:

- **Speed Limits:** Observe and adhere to all legal speed limits.
- **Driving Style:** Drive defensively, anticipating potential hazards and maintaining a safe distance from other vehicles.
- **Passenger Management:** Ensure all passengers are seated and wearing seatbelts before commencing the journey. Supervise pupils throughout the journey.
- **Rest Breaks:** Take regular breaks on long journeys to combat fatigue.
- **Weather Conditions:** Adjust driving style and speed according to prevailing weather conditions.
- **Breakdowns/Accidents:** In the event of a breakdown or accident, follow established emergency procedures, ensure the safety of passengers, and report the incident immediately to the school.

7. Pupil Behaviour on Minibuses

Pupils using minibuses for journeys are expected to:

- Remain seated and wear their seatbelts at all times when the minibus is in motion.
- Speak quietly and respectfully, avoiding shouting or excessive noise.
- Keep the minibus tidy and free from litter.
- Follow all instructions from the driver and accompanying staff members.
- Not consume food or drink on the minibus without permission.
- Not distract the driver or other passengers.
- Report any concerns or issues to the driver or accompanying staff immediately.

Failure to adhere to these expectations may result in disciplinary action as per the school's behaviour policy.

8. Documentation

The following documentation must be completed and maintained for each minibus journey:

Document	Responsibility	Details
Pre-Journey Check Sheet	Driver	Completed before each journey, detailing safety checks and any reported defects.
Journey Log	Driver	Records of departure/arrival times, mileage, passengers, and purpose of journey.
Incident Report Form	Driver (if applicable)	Completed in the event of an accident, breakdown, or other incident.
Maintenance Records	School Transport Manager	Detailed records of all servicing, repairs, and inspections.
Driver Licences & Training Records	School HR/Transport Manager	Copies of valid driving licences and records of all relevant training.

9. Duties of the School under Licence to the Traffic Commissioner

As a holder of a Public Service Vehicle (PSV) Restricted Operator's Licence, the school has specific duties and responsibilities to the Traffic Commissioner, including but not limited to:

- Roadworthiness: Ensuring all minibuses are roadworthy and regularly maintained.
- Driver Standards: Ensuring all drivers are competent, qualified, and medically fit.
- Operating Centres: Maintaining suitable operating centres for vehicles.
- Record Keeping: Maintaining accurate records of vehicle maintenance, driver hours, and incidents.
- Reporting: Reporting significant events, such as serious accidents or convictions, to the Traffic Commissioner.
- Compliance: Adhering to all regulations and conditions of the PSV Operator's Licence.

Failure to comply with these duties may result in penalties, including fines, licence suspension, or revocation. The School Business Manager is responsible for overseeing compliance with the Traffic Commissioner's requirements.