

MINIBUS POLICY

Policy Created August 2013, updated August 2014

Ratified by the Outwood Grange Academies Trust Board August 2014

To be reviewed August 2016 by the Outwood Grange Academies Trust Board

Ref: OGAT

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Introduction

The use of minibuses owned by Outwood Grange Academies Trust (OGAT) requires to be regulated in order to maintain a high standard of safety for staff, students and other users. The following conditions will apply to the use of these minibuses.

1. Procedure for using an Academy minibus

1. Book the minibus via the Site Management team. Only authorised drivers can book the buses.
2. Keys and minibus pack are to be collected from the site office and signed out (only authorised drivers are authorised to sign for the keys and pack)
3. Complete the driver checklist and logbook
4. Ensure that all your passengers are safely wearing their seatbelts.
5. Ensure that the bus is clear of rubbish and debris when returned.
6. Sign in the keys and pack back in to the site office (do not simply pass on the keys/pack to another driver as you will be held responsible for the minibus until you have signed the keys/pack back in to the office)

2. Authority to Drive

Only authorised staff may drive an academy minibus. No person shall drive a vehicle owned by OGAT without first having obtained permission to undertake the journey from the person having charge of the vehicle. Any person driving such a vehicle without having first obtained permission or be holder of valid authorisation will be deemed to be driving without the consent of the owner, and may be liable to prosecution under the Road Traffic Acts for such an offence.

The absolute minimum requirements to become an authorised driver and to comply with our insurance are that the drivers:

- are over the age of 21,
- have category D1 on their licence,
- have at least two years experience as a qualified driver
- hold a current full driving licence with no more than 6 penalty points. If a driver has less than 6 points, the driver may still be precluded if the points are for dangerous driving.

Prior to transporting students for the first time, all drivers will be given the opportunity of either a vehicle familiarisation session with a member of the Site Team or a more formal training session with The Academy's Driver Training Company. These sessions will include:-

- Daily vehicle checks
- Pre-journey checks
- General driving safety
- Road testing
- Emergency stop
- Use of mirrors and indicators
- Reversing using mirrors only
- Passenger safety
- Passenger comfort

All new drivers will be added to the list of authorised minibus drivers which is held in the Facilities Manager's office.

Staff who passed the test to drive a car after 01.01.98 are required to successfully complete a PSV test to drive the academy minibuses.

3. Hours of Driving

Driving hours as laid down in Transport legislation and must be complied with. Drivers should plan their journey to include plenty of breaks. Think of distance, breaking and stopping points, arrival and departure times.

The Trust recommends that staff members should carry out no more than three hours continuous driving after which the accumulated length of break from driving should be at least 45 minutes

During a normal working day drivers should not drive for more than six hours in total. Drivers should not be required to supervise students during their breaks, as this would not be a break for the driver. With each additional driving period, the break time should be extended. Drivers should **NEVER** be expected to do full days' work or be awake for full day and then drive for several hours in the evening. Staff should re-arrange their work schedule if this is the case.

It is the academy's policy that if there is an academy trip which involves a driver being in charge on an extended day, then a second adult should accompany the party and that person should be competent to share the driving to reduce the possibility of driver fatigue. An extended day is anything beyond 7.00 pm when the teacher started work at 8.45 am. This requirement is non-negotiable.

4. Seating Capacity

The number of passengers including the driver must not exceed the number of seats provided. In all cases the driver must ensure that all passengers use their seatbelts.

5. Responsibilities of the Driver

The driver will be responsible for the collection and return of the minibus they must sign out the keys and minibus pack and conduct the following tasks before commencement of the journey:-

a) Each driver is not only responsible for the safe driving of the vehicle, but also for ensuring that its operation is legal in all respects. The vehicle should be checked in order that it complies with being roadworthy, taxed, insured, and hold a current MOT certificate.

b) The driver should check over the vehicle as per checklist **Appendix 1** and, should any listed mechanical defect be found the vehicle **MUST NOT BE DRIVEN**.

c) The site manager will check the vehicle on a weekly basis as per **Appendix 2**

d) A check of the vehicle to make sure it is not overloaded

e) Ensure that all doors are securely fastened

f) Ensure that the vehicle is carrying a fully stocked first aid kit, fire extinguisher and current instructions in the event of a breakdown, **Breakdown recovery card** and a mobile phone for emergencies. **NB. Please follow the code of practice for the use of mobile phones (issued with phone)**

g) **Drivers should also refer to the guidance notes on appendix 4**

The following tasks will be completed by the driver at the end of the journey:-

- Completion of the logbook
- The reporting of any defects which occurred during the journey (if applicable)
- Return of keys and minibus pack including mobile phone to the Site Office.

6. Trailing

As the use of trailers is restricted under legislation, special permission must be obtained from the Academy if any form of trailer is to be used. If permission is granted, trailers **MUST not exceed 950kg laden weight.**

If roof racks are to be used, luggage and equipment stowed on the roof rack must be securely tied down and not exceed 90kg in weight.

7. Excisable Liquor

No excisable liquor will be carried on the vehicle.

8. Road Accidents/Breakdown

The driver of the vehicle must stop, and if so required by any person having reasonable cause to so demand, give his/her name and the name of the Company insuring the vehicle

Under NO circumstances must a driver, if involved in a motor accident, admit liability for the accident.

Details of breakdown numbers and insurance details are held in the minibus pack.

9. Responsibility of the Academy

The Academy will be responsible for licensing and insuring the vehicles, and all servicing and repairs.

Should fuel be obtained during a trip, payment should be made by the driver. Receipts showing VAT number should be obtained and forwarded to the finance department together with completed expenses claim form for reimbursement.

10. The Academy will not:-

Pay fines for parking, speeding or any other motoring offences.

Provide legal support for staff charged with any of the above.

11. Withdrawal of Permission

Any misuse of the vehicle whether through failure to comply with regulation laid down by the academy or misconduct of the passengers will mean withdrawal of the privilege of use for a specific period of time. Further instances will result in complete withdrawal of privilege of use.

12. Insurance

All Passengers traveling in the minibus are covered by Academy insurance. The minibus driver however must hold a current Minibus permit or their insurance cover may be void.

Drivers should ensure that the number of passengers carried should NOT exceed the number of seats otherwise the insurance cover will be void.

13. Speed Limits

Drivers are asked to note the following speed limits and MUST adhere to them at all times:

Maximum speeds under road traffic law

MOTORWAYS	70 MPH
DUAL CARRIAGEWAYS	60 MPH
ALL OTHER ROADS	50 MPH
BUILT UP AREAS	30 MPH

14. Traveling Abroad

The school minibuses are not to be taken abroad unless with express permission of the Academy Principal and with all relevant insurance confirmed. The driver will also need to demonstrate competence and knowledge of road safety in the relevant country.

15. Passengers

Drivers cannot safely drive and supervise students at the same time. It is neither predictable nor safe. Additional staff are required on the bus to appropriately supervise students.

Consideration should always be given to the safety of the passengers waiting for the minibus to arrive and during the time they are boarding and leaving the minibus at pick-up and drop-off places. Always identify a safe pick-up point.

Passenger comfort is important. The minibus must not be too hot, cold or stuffy. The driver must be aware that driving too fast, especially when this may involve vehicle swing and sway, is likely to induce travel sickness. There must also be regular and appropriate rest stops.

Passengers must be made aware of what type of behaviour is expected of them.

16. Drinking and Driving

Alcohol takes a long time to disperse through the body; therefore, persons intending to drive an academy minibus should not do so if alcohol has been consumed within 24 hours prior to driving. Drivers under medication such as painkillers should also be extra cautious as some narcotics can cause drowsiness and reduce the ability to react quickly.

17. Obtaining a Permit

Members of staff who require to be authorised to drive a School minibus must in the first instance contact the Business Manager. The academy retains the right to refuse a permit to any member of staff with an unsatisfactory amount of penalty points or unsuitable endorsement on his/her current driving license.

18. Adverse Weather Conditions

Where there is adverse weather conditions forecast the driver is advised not to plan or undertake a journey unless absolutely necessary.

In periods of ice and snow the driver must use their discretion to decide whether a road is passable or not, and where possible choose a safer alternative. When the air temperature is below –12C diesel fuel will stop flowing due to wax build up in the pipeline. Drivers are advised not to attempt journeys in such low temperature conditions.

At their discretion drivers may abandon a journey and take students back to the academy (or other safe environment).

In the event that the transport becomes stuck because of blocked roads, students should be instructed to stay in the bus until help arrives.

19. Mobile Phones

Mobile Phones are available from the academy when undertaking an academy trip.

Staff are reminded that the use of hand held mobile phones whilst driving is a CRIMINAL OFFENCE.

Appendix 1

Minibus Vehicle Safety (Drivers Checklist)

- Mirrors are correctly adjusted
- Position and function of all dashboard controls
- Position of driving seat so that all pedals can be operated comfortably
- Wipers and washers are working properly
- Fuel level
- Possession of drivers pack (Mobile phone, insurance, logbook, defects book)
- Complete the mileage logbook (and defects book if necessary)
- Trailer lights and indicators are working (as required)
- Check that students are using seatbelts
- Ensure all exits are clear of bags and equipment
- Ensure that the bus is clean when returned

NOTES:

Date: _____

Signed: _____

This form is to be returned when signing in the keys and minibus pack

Appendix 2

Minibus Vehicle Weekly Maintenance Checklist

- Check windscreen (front and rear) washer fluid level and top up and wiper blades
- Check windscreen and windows are clean and undamaged
- Check the operation of all lights and lenses for damage
- Check the tyre pressures and reset as necessary
- Visually examine the tyres for tread, wear and damage
- Check that all doors open and close properly
- Clean the mirrors
- Check that wheel brace and jack are in the minibus
- Check location and contents of the first aid kit and fire extinguisher
- Check body exterior - general condition, fuel filler cap
- Check body interior - seat mountings, seat belts, interior mirrors
- Check oil level and top up is required
- Check coolant level and top up if required
- Check controls for unusual play / wear
- Check general tidiness of bus

NOTES:

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Appendix 3

Pre-drive Safety Checklist/Long Distance Journeys

Before every long distance journey, the driver should conduct a pre-drive safety check. He/she should walk round the vehicle, including the trailer if applicable, to check for visible defects, and check the item listed below.

EXTERIOR CHECK

- Windscreen washer fluid level
- Windscreen and windows are clean and undamaged
- Lights, including brake lights and indicators are clean and working
- Tyre pressures, including the spare (and trailer if applicable)
- Tyre tread
- Doors open and close properly
- Trailer brake light and indicators work if applicable
- Roof rack or trailer is properly fitted, and all luggage is securely held
- In addition the following should be checked by the GARAGE servicing the vehicle: oil level, coolant level, brake fluid level, brakes, lights

INTERIOR CHECK

- Mirrors are correctly adjusted, clean and unobstructed
- Position and function of all the dashboard controls
- Position of driving seat so that all pedals can be operated comfortably
- Pressure on brake pedal
- Lights and indicators are working
- Wipers and washers are working properly
- Fuel level (and type of fuel used: diesel or petrol)
- Seat belts are working properly
- Location of wheel brace and jack
- Location and contents of first aid kit and fire extinguisher
- Location of relevant paperwork (permit, insurance, MOT, emergency number, maps and driving license, MOBILE PHONE)
- Breakdown information, First aid box
- Luggage is securely stowed and exits and aisles are clear

Appendix 4

Advice for Minibus Drivers

The items below should be divided between the driver and the supervising member(s) of staff, with the driver concentrating on those tasks which directly relate to driving the vehicle.

Before Setting Off

- Allow sufficient time for the journey, avoid long spells of driving and plan breaks
- Never allow passengers to board until the vehicle is at a complete standstill, and safely parked by an adjacent pavement or other traffic free area
- Plan which passengers will be in the front seats and next to doors
- DO NOT overload the capacity of the minibus and ensure that all passengers are wearing seatbelts
- Always ensure that the ambulant disabled passengers are seated safely and comfortable and that passengers traveling in their wheelchairs are safely restrained. Wheelchairs not in use must also be securely stored.
- Make sure there is a complete list of the passengers being carried with a note of any special medical or other needs.
- Take care when using passenger lifts and other specialist equipment. Always comply with the manufacturer 'instructions

During the Journey

- DO NOT allow any inappropriate or dangerous behaviour
- DO NOT allow passengers to operate the doors
- DO NOT leave students unaccompanied in the minibus
- If you have to stop for an emergency or breakdown whilst on a motorway, only stop on the hard shoulder and as far away from moving traffic as possible

At the End of the Journey

- Never allow passengers to disembark until the vehicle is at a complete standstill and safely parked
- Always park so that passenger step onto the footway and not onto the road
- Report any problems or incidents that occurred during the trip to the academy
- Return mobile phone and minibus pack to the Site Office

Appendix 5

Driver Guidance on Emergencies

1. Accident/Incident

If a breakdown/accident or incident occurs

Care of the Group

- Ensure the safety of the group from further danger
- Arrange search, rescue, medical care or hospitalisation as necessary
- Ensure welfare of all concerned

Next Steps

- Inform the contact person at the academy as soon as possible
- Inform the **Breakdown Service Provider** as soon as possible (a **Breakdown Recovery card** listing all numbers to be used in the event of a breakdown is in the minibus pack)
- **All academy minibuses are covered by Breakdown Recovery Service for roadside assistance and relay.**
- The person you will contact will need to know what has happened and the current situation.
- Try to give a telephone number/destination where you can be contacted.
- In case of a serious incident, notify the police.
- Do not interfere with any equipment etc, which could be relevant to the subsequent investigation.

A SERIOUS ACCIDENT OR INCIDENT is described as:

- An accident leading to a fatality, serious or multiple fractures, amputation or other serious Injury
- Serious illness
- Circumstances in which one or more party members might be at serious risk
- Any situation in which the presence or possible involvement of the press or media could have significant implications

WARNINGS AND ADVICE

- Without the approval of the establishment head or appointed authority, politely decline to comment to the media
- Avoid making any statement admitting liability
- Those involved in an accident need not communicate with anyone other than those in an official capacity
- Be compassionate with anyone involved
- Keep a written record of all relevant facts and preserve any vital evidence.

2. Breakdowns

If the minibus breaks down:

- Get the vehicle off the carriageway, if possible.
- Use hazard warning lights and other lights as necessary.
- Do not spend very long trying to find the problem.
- Call for assistance, without leaving the vehicle, if possible. Use the radio or mobile phone on the vehicle if you have one, or ask a passenger to do so on your behalf. If you have to leave

passengers in the vehicle in order to summon assistance, always instruct them to stay in or with the vehicle until you return.

3. Minibus Breakdown on the Motorway

- If practicable leave the motorway at the next exit and seek assistance.
- Otherwise pull safely off the carriageway onto the hard shoulder. Park as far to the near side of the hard shoulder as possible.
- Try to stop near an emergency phone, which is a mile apart, or use your mobile phone when stationary. Red and white posts positioned every 100 meters have an arrow indicating the direction of the nearest telephone. The emergency phones are free and connect you directly with the Motorway Police Control Room. They will arrange any help you need. The emergency phones are coded so your exact location is known.
- Switch on the vehicle's hazard warning lights and at night switch on all other lights except headlights including saloon lights.
- If possible get all the passengers out of the vehicle using near side exits. Then keep passengers well away from the carriageway, preferably on the embankment. In the case of passengers in wheelchairs, it may not be practicable or safe to do so.
- **NEVER CROSS THE CARRIAGEWAY**
- If your vehicle carries an emergency triangle, position it on the hard shoulder 150 meters behind the vehicle.

4. Fire

- Stop and switch off the engine
- Leave the gear lever in neutral in case the engine re-starts due to an electrical short circuit.
- **GET THE PASSENGERS OUT OF THE VEHICLE** and away from it. Always evacuate the vehicle if possible **BEFORE** tackling the fire.
- **CALL THE EMERGENCY SERVICES**
- Tackle the fire, **ONLY IF IT IS SAFE** to do so. If you suspect an engine fire, release the bonnet catch from the inside of the minibus if possible. **DO NOT OPEN THE BONNET.**
- Use the fire extinguisher through the aperture between bonnet and grill.
- When the emergency services arrive, inform them if all passengers are out of the vehicle, and if there are any hazardous containers on board, i.e. gas cylinders.

5. If a Passenger is Taken Ill

- Stop in a safe place.
- Administer first aid if you feel able to do so.
- Call for an ambulance if required, either by mobile phone or by stopping passing traffic, to get them to call for help. If near a hospital or Health Centre it may be appropriate to drive there directly.
- Contact the academy with details of the circumstances.
- Offer reassurance to the other passengers.

Appendix 6

Code of Practice for Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are for academy use and should only be used in emergency situations.

As from December 2003 it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone whilst driving

The Law in the Highway Code regarding mobile phones must be complied with by all staff: -

“You MUST exercise proper control of your vehicle at all times. Never use a hand held mobile phone or microphone when driving. Using hands free equipment is also likely to distract your attention from the road. It is far safer not to use any telephone system while you are driving - find a safe place to stop first”.

Guidelines

1. Only use the mobile phone when it is necessary to do so and do not use for longer than is strictly necessary and **never** whilst driving.
2. Where possible make calls using hands-free equipment in the vehicle. Make sure the vehicle is stationary while doing so.
3. When calling another mobile phone user, always ask whether it is safe to speak.
4. Ensure that the phone is removed from the vehicle when it is unoccupied.
5. Before switching a phone on, consider whether being in touch is so essential that you need to compromise your safety and that of others.
6. When driving, never initiate calls, even in traffic queues and at traffic lights.
7. Never look up numbers or attempt to take notes while driving.
8. Encourage colleagues to consider your safety first and to place non-urgent calls to an answering service or to take messages on your behalf rather than giving your number to a third party.

Hand-held Mobile Phones

- This type of phone should never be used to make or receive calls when driving a vehicle, unless it is stationary, i.e. parked correctly according to road traffic regulations.
- The phone should not be used at traffic light queues or in other situations where the traffic queue is likely to clear within a matter of minutes.
- At all other times, the phone should be turned off and a message answering facility employed or given to the supervising member of staff.
- When calls are made they should be of as short duration as possible and the phone should always have its aerial extended.
- Users should be encouraged only to make essential calls from the mobile unit, with the majority being made via the landline system.

Hands-free Mobile Phones

- For cases where a hands-free model has been issued, the advice is as for hand-held type.
- Essential calls should only be made from the vehicle whilst stationary, but the ability to take notes is made easier compared to the hand-held variety. At all other times the phone should

be switched off, as for the hand-held type, so that the message answering and recording system takes over.

- Encourage staff to keep calls as short as possible. Only essential calls should be made from the mobile unit with all others being undertaken when a landline phone is accessible.

General Recommendations

- Outgoing calls should only be made from a mobile phone when the vehicle is stationary.
- The person using the mobile phone must always be allowed to be in control of the call, even when speaking to a more senior member of staff, so that they can instantly terminate the call should it prove necessary for reasons of safety.

The Driver

Drivers are legally obliged to have proper control of their vehicle at all times. Examples of existing maximum penalties for unsafe driving offences are:

1. Failure to have proper control - Maximum Fine £2500.
2. Careless and inconsiderate driving - Maximum fine £2500, endorsement of three to nine penalty points and discretionary disqualification.
3. Dangerous driving - Maximum penalty of two years in prison, unlimited fine, minimum one year disqualification and extended re-test.