



**STOUR VALE
ACADEMY
TRUST**

MINIBUS POLICY

VERSION / DATE	VERSION 1.2 JANUARY 2026
NEXT VERSION DUE BY	MARCH 2029

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AIM

To ensure that Stour Vale Academy Trust ('the Trust'), comprising the member schools, settings and the central team, complies with current legislation and guidance concerning the maintenance and driving of minibuses.

To ensure that the safety of minibus users (both drivers and passengers) and other road users and pedestrians is prioritised at all times.

To ensure that the Trust is meeting its health and safety and safeguarding obligations towards all members of its community.

POLICY STATEMENTS

The Trust follows guidance set out within 'Driving school minibuses: advice for schools and local authorities' (DfE, DfT and ACPO, September 2013), 'Minibus Safety' (RoSPA) and 'Driving and riding safely for work' (HSE).

This policy and the procedures contained within it are intended to provide members of staff who may need to drive vehicles on behalf of the Trust with the knowledge and information necessary to comply with legislation regarding the qualifications, insurance, operating, servicing and inspections required to safely operate our minibuses and carry passengers.

The behaviour and competence of minibus drivers will be assessed to ensure the safe operation of the minibuses and to keep employees and others safe from harm.

This policy extends to the use of hired vehicles that are used by the Trust.

This policy adheres to the principles under data protection law. For further information please review the Trust's data protection policy published on the Trust's website.

A copy of this policy will be made available to all staff.

The policy will be reviewed every three years or when legislation changes.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Trust Board/Local Governing Body/Headteacher

The Trust Board is responsible for ensuring that minibuses operated on behalf of the Trust fully comply with all transport and health and safety legislation. The responsibility for monitoring and ensuring compliance with the above is delegated to member schools' local governing bodies and headteachers respectively.

The Trust Board will monitor the impact of the policy across Trust sites and review it in accordance with the review schedule above.

School Business Manager/Nominated Officer in School

The School Business Manager/Nominated Officer will:

- ensure that servicing of the minibuses is performed at the correct mileage and that the service book and any other records forming part of the safety

management system are available for inspection at any time. These records include:

- all documents relating to the vehicle;
- operating log, including booking the vehicle in and out;
- accident/incident records, including faults reported and rectified;
- list of authorised drivers and driver authorisation forms (see Appendix 5);
- training and re-training forms;
- medical check details;
- emergency equipment form;
- details of any vetting conducted;
- contact names and details (including out-of-hours details). The individuals concerned should consent to their personal details being recorded for this purpose and the data should be stored in accordance with data protection law;
- maintenance/safety checks;
- ensure that MOT and services are completed annually;
- ensure that safety inspections are completed by a competent person (garage or qualified mechanic) every 10 weeks for vehicles under six years old and every six weeks for vehicles six years and older;
- arrange for appropriate insurance cover and for the payment of annual road tax;
- ensure that a Section 19 permit is displayed on the nearside of the windscreen, visible from the outside of the vehicle;
- ensure that the minibus is used on a not-for-profit basis;
- ensure that pre-use checks are completed by the driver before and after a journey;
- ensure that the necessary equipment (see Appendix 1) is carried on board at all times;
- ensure that suitable risk assessments have been completed for trips and visits requiring use of the minibus;
- ensure that authorised minibus drivers have completed the necessary minibus driver assessment and training before driving a minibus on behalf of the Trust, and arrange for them to be re-assessed as required;
- having first sought consent (see Appendix 4), check the driving licences of staff volunteering to complete the minibus driver assessment and then, once they have been authorised to drive the vehicle, check their licences annually using the '[Check someone's driving licence information](#)' tool;
- ensure that the minibus driver authorisation (see Appendix 5) has been completed.

Minibus drivers

Minibus drivers will:

- comply fully with the requirements under Appendix 1 below.

APPENDIX 1 – PROCEDURES

These procedures relate to the use of minibuses owned or leased by member schools within Stour Vale Academy Trust. Newtown Primary School does not own or lease its own minibuses but may have use of those owned or leased by another member school.

SECTION 19 PERMITS

Trust minibuses may be operated, under a Section 19 permit, for non-commercial, not-for-profit purposes.

Schools borrowing another school's minibus must display a Section 19 permit issued in the name of the Trust.

The central team will apply for a new set of Trust permits every five years.

DRIVER ELIGIBILITY

All drivers must:

- be trained through a relevant training scheme every three years
(Example: [MiDAS Minibus driver assessments and training » UK Global Road Safety - UKGRS Online Driver Training \(midas-training.org.uk\)](https://www.midas-training.org.uk/))
- hold a full UK driving licence with category D1 or B entitlement

Drivers who hold a full D1 (or D) PCV entitlement can drive a minibus weighing over 3.5 tonnes. If driving the minibus is a duty specified in their job description (i.e. they are not driving 'on a voluntary basis'), they must hold a full D1 licence (or a full D licence).

A driver can also drive a minibus within the UK when they hold a car (category B) licence. These circumstances vary depending on when the driver passed their car driving test. These arrangements only apply when driving the minibus in the UK, not if driving abroad. If a driver passed their category B:

- a) (car) driving test **before 1 January 1997**, they can drive a minibus, that is not being used for hire or reward as these licences automatically include category D1 (101) (not for hire or reward) entitlement. This means school staff with such a licence can drive a minibus carrying up to 16 passengers with no maximum weight restriction on the vehicle.
- b) driving test **on or after 1 January 1997**, they may drive a minibus that is not being used for hire and reward if the following conditions are met:

they are over 21 and have held a category B licence for at least two years; the minibus is used by a non-commercial body for social purposes; they receive no payment other than the recovery of their out-of-pocket expenses (e.g. fuel and parking costs); and they provide the service on a voluntary basis.

The total weight of the minibus including passengers and fuel must not be more than 3.5 tonnes – plus up to 750 kg of equipment for disabled passengers, for example a wheelchair ramp – and they must not tow a trailer. Driving a minibus which is close to its maximum weight limit may increase its braking distances.

- have no more than six penalty points on their driving licence. The seriousness of any driving offence(s) will be assessed before a person is authorised to drive a minibus;
- inform the School Business Manager about any medical conditions that are declarable to the DVLA. A full risk assessment must be written to determine their suitability to drive a minibus and must be held securely on file;
- notify the School Business Manager of any changes to their driving licence;
- have a zero intake of alcohol or illegal substances;
- not drive a minibus if they are ill or affected by medicines they have taken;
- carry a suitable form of identification (e.g. driving licence);
- meet any specific requirements of the insurers.

VEHICLE READINESS AND MAINTENANCE

Servicing, MOT, Insurance and Taxation

Servicing and MOT testing will be carried out annually. Inspections will be carried out every 10 weeks by a competent person (garage or qualified mechanic) for vehicles under six years old and every six weeks for vehicles six years and older. These will be carried out in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

A Vehicle Check List (Appendix 2) will be completed before and after a journey.

Minibus booking and administration

The school minibus is only to be used for school activities.

All bookings should be made via the school that the minibus is being borrowed from.

A list of students and staff on the journey, and journey details (to include departure and return times) must 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 diary when collecting the minibus keys from the named school (failure to do so may render the journey unauthorised for insurance purposes), and collect the Minibus File, which should contain a copy of the Minibus Policy, motoring breakdown policy details, spare checklists, a notepad and pen, and school emergency contact details.

Drivers must return the keys to the vehicle and the Minibus File to the school office on their return. If the minibus is being returned out of school hours, the keys should be returned to the agreed location and the Minibus File handed in to the school office on the next working day.

Pre-use vehicle checks

Minibuses must be maintained to high levels. As well as MOT and servicing, drivers should satisfy themselves that the vehicle is safe to drive. If the serviceability of the vehicle is in doubt, it must not be used until it has been repaired. Drivers should report any concerns about the safety or condition of the vehicle to the School Business Manager.

Pre-use checks should be recorded on the Vehicle Check List found in the Minibus File.

Before starting a journey, the driver must give a brief talk to students regarding the wearing of seatbelts, journey time, the need to remain seated at all times, behaviour, noise levels and escape procedures.

Fuel

A member of the site team will regularly check the minibus to ensure that it contains adequate fuel (at least half a tank).

Equipment

It is expected that the following equipment will be carried on board the minibus:

- appropriately equipped and clearly marked First Aid box (see 'Minibus Safety' (RoSPA) for a list of items to be carried);
- at least one fire extinguisher (which complies with BS 5432 or equivalent and has a minimum test rating of 8A or 21B) that contains water or foam (if passengers in wheelchairs are being carried, the minibus should carry two fire extinguishers, one of which is kept in the passenger compartment). Fire extinguishers should be tested according to the manufacturer's instructions and drivers and passenger assistants trained in their use;
- 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 (not for motorway use);
- a hi-visibility vest for staff.

Tidiness

The minibus should be left tidy. Students should be discouraged from eating or drinking while on board (exceptions can be made in circumstances of long delay). Bin bags should be carried and made available for rubbish. Dirty/muddy kit (especially boots and shoes) should not be worn in the minibus. Clean footwear should be taken if students are likely to get muddy.

VEHICLE OPERATION

Capacity

Between 9-16 passengers not including the driver depending on the capacity of the individual vehicle.

Children under the age of three **should not** be transported in school minibuses.

Seat belts/luggage

Before setting off, the driver and/or passenger assistant must ensure that they and the students are wearing seat belts and that any luggage is evenly distributed and securely stowed. Students must be informed that seat belts are to be worn at all times when the vehicle is in motion.

Children aged three and above can travel in a school minibus in rear seats behind the driver without a car seat as long as a full adult seat belt is fitted.

Passenger illness

Drivers must know the procedure to follow in the event of passenger illness (see relevant risk assessment).

Passenger assistants

Normally, an assistant will accompany the driver when pupils are being carried at all times.

The role of a passenger assistant includes preventing the driver being distracted by students travelling on board; supervising the students and in particular preventing any behaviour that could create a hazard; and assisting in the event of a breakdown or other emergency.

Ideally, the passenger assistant should also be able to act as a second driver, in which case they should have received the same training and assessment as the main driver.

Wheelchairs

Where possible, it is preferable for students who use wheelchairs to transfer to a fixed seat, and for the wheelchair to be securely stored during the journey.

However, this is not appropriate for all wheelchair users. Students may remain in their wheelchairs during the journey, provided that the wheelchair is secured in a forward-facing or a rearward-facing position (never sideways), and it is securely and symmetrically fixed to the vehicle with tie down webbing restraints.

Wheelchairs must not obstruct a door or gangway. Some wheelchairs, such as those designed for sports use or which have not passed a crash test, are unsuitable for travelling in.

In addition:

- the wheelchair user must be secured with seat belts attached to the vehicle tracking;
- the wheelchair handbrake must be applied;

- the power on electric wheelchairs should be switched off and the batteries firmly attached to the wheelchair;
- tracking for the wheelchair and occupant restraint systems should be kept clean, and free from grit, etc., at all times.

Drivers and passenger assistants should be trained in the care (boarding and assistance) of students who travel in their wheelchairs.

Navigation

Drivers must plan all journeys. If using a SatNav, drivers should set the destination before starting the journey. Drivers must obey road signs, markings and signals, no matter what the SatNav says, and be aware of what is happening on the road around them.

If drivers require directions but are not using a SatNav, they should ask the passenger assistant to navigate. If necessary, drivers should stop somewhere safe to check directions. They must not try to read directions while driving.

Driving rules

Drivers are responsible for driving within the law and in accordance with the Highway Code. Drivers must inform the School Business Manager of any penalty points received or fines or other costs incurred while using the minibus.

National speed limits apply to minibuses.

Restricted road: 30mph

Single carriageway: 50mph

Dual carriageway: 60mph

Motorway: 70mph **(Trust minibuses are restricted to 62mph.)**

Minibuses must be fitted with speed limiters by law. The limiter restricts the maximum powered speed of the minibus to 62mph. Minibuses fitted with a limiter cannot use the outside lane of a motorway that has three or more lanes.

Vehicles must not be driven by anyone who has consumed any amount of alcohol or illegal substance prior to the journey.

Some medication may impair a driver's ability, and employees who are taking medicines of this kind should not drive the minibus. They must inform a member of the senior leadership team immediately if they are unfit to undertake a journey so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Smoking, including electronic cigarettes and vapes, is prohibited on minibuses at any time.

All accidents, whether or not they cause injury to persons or damage to property, must be reported to the school as soon as possible after they occur.

Keys must not be left in an unattended vehicle at any time.

Due consideration must be given to parking in secure areas as much as possible, particularly where overnight stays are required.

Vehicles must not be driven at any time if the load being carried exceeds the maximum allowable weight capacity.

All passengers who need to be met on their return must be safely met and drivers must know the procedure to follow if passengers are not met (see relevant risk assessment).

Safe and legal, agreed pick-up and drop-off places must be used.

Reversing of vehicles

Always check behind the vehicle before reversing and ensure that rear-view mirrors are clean and properly adjusted at all times.

Distraction during driving

The use of mobile telephones is strictly prohibited while operating the vehicle; this includes hands-free mode. (Making genuine emergency 999 calls while driving is legal.) Other similar activities that could cause distraction, such as drinking (soft drinks), eating or even changing a radio channel, should be avoided.

Tiredness and rest breaks

Driving when tired greatly increases the risk of an accident. The Highway Code recommends that a driver takes a minimum break of at least 15 minutes after every two hours of driving. However, after a full working day, drivers **must not** drive for a continuous period of more than two hours without taking a suitable break.

If an authorised relief driver is available to drive, a journey can be continued without a break.

Safety

While driving the minibus, drivers should ensure that all doors are unlocked to assist with emergency egress if required.

Drivers should ensure that internal lights are off while driving so that their vision is not impaired by the internal light.

Exits/gangways should be clear of obstructions (such as bags) at all times. Bags can be stowed on spare seats and under seats.

Unsafe situations: if you feel that driving cannot be in complete safety, do not continue. Members of staff are not required to put themselves at risk at any time while driving on behalf of the Trust.

Security: whenever the vehicle is left unattended, all windows should be closed and doors locked.

ACCIDENTS AND BREAKDOWN PROCEDURES

Breakdown procedures

Standard breakdown procedures should be followed where necessary:

- If on a public road, exit the vehicle on the safe side – nearest the path or verge.
- If on a motorway, follow the instructions of the emergency operator (using the roadside emergency telephone where possible).
- 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.
- Students should be kept together in one group, kept calm and under constant supervision.
- In the event of breakdown, contact the school where the minibus is borrowed from. School should also be contacted, when practical, in the event of breakdown.

Staff **must not** change a tyre or attempt repairs. This should be carried out by a breakdown team.

Accidents (minor – the minibus is still drivable and legal)

If an accident occurs, the driver or passenger assistant should ensure that the students are safe and uninjured.

The driver should ensure that the details of other vehicles at the scene are taken and recorded, e.g. type of vehicle, number plate, insurance details and name and address of other driver(s). Where possible photographs should be taken of the accident/incident to assist with any insurance claim.

Accidents (major – the minibus is not drivable or staff and/or students have sustained injuries)

The driver or passenger assistant must telephone the emergency services, followed by the senior member of staff on call to advise them of the incident.

The driver, passenger assistant and students must go to an area of safety away from traffic and staff must stay with the students at all times.

The driver and/or passenger assistant should keep the senior member of staff up to date on events at all times.

School contact number:

Newtown Primary School: 0121 557 8504

APPENDIX 2 – VEHICLE CHECK LIST

10 weekly inspection (or 6 weekly inspection depending on age of vehicle)

Check	Date Completed	Completed by	Pass / Fail	Remedial Actions	Review Date

MOT

Check	Date Completed	Completed by	Pass / Fail	Remedial Actions	Review Date

Exterior Check

Check	Date Completed	Completed by	Pass / Fail	Remedial Actions	Review Date
Oil level					
Coolant level					
Windscreen washer fluid level					
Brake fluid level					
Windscreen and windows clean and undamaged					
Lights, including brake lights and indicators, are clean and working					
Tyre pressures, including spares (and inner tyres and tyres on trailer if applicable)					

Check	Date Completed	Completed by	Pass / Fail	Remedial Actions	Review Date
Tyre tread, including spares (and inner tyres as above). At least 3mm across centre three-quarters is recommended. Any cuts and bulges?					
Doors open and close properly					

Interior Check

Check	Date Completed	Completed by	Pass / Fail	Remedial Actions	Review Date
Mirrors correctly adjusted, clean and unobstructed					
Position and function of all dashboard controls					
Position of driving seat so all pedals can be operated comfortably					
Pressure on brake pedal					
Lights and indicators are working					
Wipers and washers working properly					
Fuel level (and type of fuel)					
Seat belts are undamaged and working properly					

Check	Date Completed	Completed by	Pass / Fail	Remedial Actions	Review Date
Location and contents of first aid kit and fire extinguisher(s)					
Location of relevant paperwork (permit, MoT etc.)					

APPENDIX 3 – USEFUL REFERENCES

- [Driving school minibuses: advice for schools and local authorities](#) (DfE, DfT and ACPO, September 2013)
- [Minibus Safety](#) (RoSPA)
- [Driving and riding safely for work](#) (HSE)
- [The Highway Code](#) (DfT, October 2015)
- [MiDAS](#)
- [Check someone's driving licence information](#)
- [View or share your driving licence information](#)

APPENDIX 4 – CONSENT TO CHECK DRIVING LICENCE INFORMATION ONLINE

Before a member of staff completes training to drive a minibus, we seek consent to check their driving licence information online. This information is taken from the records held by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) and is used to assess the member of staff's suitability to complete minibus training (taking into consideration the number of penalty points and type(s) of driving offence). The same check will be carried out annually to confirm that there have been no changes to the member of staff's driving licence that mean that they are no longer suitable to drive a minibus.

In order to check this information online, we require a licence 'check code', which drivers can obtain from the DVLA via this link: <https://www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence>. The check code should be given to the School Business Manager within 21 days of issue.

Please complete the section below to give your consent for the above check to be carried out.

NAME:.....

☐ I give consent for [School name] to check my driving licence information online before I complete training to drive the school minibus and I have generated the code (information below).

Driving Licence Number <i>(please enter)</i>	
DVLA Licence Check Code <i>(please enter)</i>	
Date Check Code generated <i>(please enter)</i>	

☐ I give consent for [School name] to check my driving licence information online annually for as long as I continue to volunteer to drive the school minibus. I understand that I may withdraw this consent by notifying the School Business Manager if I decide no longer to volunteer to drive the school minibus.

SIGNED:.....

DATE:.....

OFFICE USE:

First check completed on:

Result: Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory *(delete as applicable)*

Further action required *(if applicable)*:

[Annual checks should be recorded on a separate sheet.]

APPENDIX 5 – MINIBUS DRIVER AUTHORISATION

DRIVER NAME:

Check or assessment completed	Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory	Date of completion	Completed by	Next check or assessment due
Minibus driver assessment				(every 3 years)
Medical (if applicable)				
Driving licence: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Correct category/entitlement for size of minibus				
Driving licence: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Penalty points/offences				(annually)

The above-named driver is authorised to drive the minibus.

SIGNED:(Headteacher)

DATE:.....