



MINIBUS POLICY

Ratified: June 2025

Next review: October 2027

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Introduction..... | 2 |
| 2. Responsibilities..... | 3 |
| 3. Risk assessment | 3 |
| 4. Authorisation to drive minibuses..... | 4 |
| 5. Checks before use | 4 |
| 6. Licensing requirements for drivers of minibuses | 4 |
| 7. Minibus Permits..... | 5 |
| 8. MOT, Servicing, Maintenance and Safety Inspections..... | 5 |
| 9. Vehicle Standards | 5 |
| 10. Breakdown Procedures..... | 5 |
| 11. Using a Minibus | 5 |
| 12. Third Party Use | 7 |
| 13. Reporting Incidents | 8 |
| Appendix A – The School Minibus Pre-Drive Safety Checklist | 9 |
| Appendix B – Journey Log | 12 |

1. Introduction

A minibus is a motor vehicle constructed or adapted to carry more than 8, but not more than 16 seated passengers in addition to the driver.

This policy and guidance applies to all employees who drive a minibus whilst at work. It equally applies to those who drive minibuses only occasionally or for short distances. It covers additional requirements which relate specifically to minibus use over and above the requirements for general driving. It is therefore to be read and applied in conjunction with the main *Driving for Work Compliance Code*. (Appendix A).

The school expects employees to adhere to this policy in line with its obligations under equality legislation. The Headteacher must ensure that all reasonable adjustments or supportive measures are considered to allow equality of access and opportunity regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, faith or religion, gender identity, pregnancy or marital status.

Please note:

- Wherever reference is made in this policy to employees this also means volunteers, charity or agency staff who drive a minibus on school business.
- Cornwall Council provides insurance for minibus driving on the basis of its use being not for hire or reward or for private use.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 Headteacher's responsibilities

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring:

- Risk assessments are in place for all minibus driving activities undertaken by their employees.
- Current employees who drive minibuses understand their individual responsibility to keep to the policy, and that any new employees are made aware of their responsibilities as part of their induction.
- 6-monthly checks of employees driving licences are undertaken to ensure they are valid.
- That the appropriate licence allowing them to drive minibuses is held.
- Ensure checks are carried out by the 'driver' on minibuses prior to use and that appropriate action taken for any problems identified – see the Minibus Checklist.
- Ensure MOT, safety inspection and servicing conditions are adhered to.
- Ensure journey logs are completed.
- Ensure school minibuses hold current Section 19 permits.

2.2 Employee's responsibilities

- Adhere to the requirements set out in this document.
- Carry out minibuses checks prior to use and taking appropriate action for any problems identified – see the Minibus Checklist.
- Complete the minibus journey log.
- Ensure a Section Permit 19 is displayed.

3. Risk assessment

A risk assessment for minibus use must be completed on an annual basis for all minibuses used. A copy of the current risk assessment can be found in the minibus folder stored in the school office, as well as in the minibus handbooks that are stored in each minibus (inside driver's door).

4. Authorisation to drive minibuses

The authorisation of drivers to operate the minibus is the responsibility of the Headteacher. When considering the suitability of persons for driving minibuses, they must comply with the Licensing Requirements for drivers of minibuses, as well as ensuring:

- The driver is able to certify they do not suffer from any physical defects, disabilities or illness that might impair their driving.
- All drivers of minibuses have passed the Cornwall Council Driver Development Training (Phoenix). Minibus drivers must renew their training every three years. A record of training certificates is held by the school office.

5. Checks before use

A pre-journey checklist must be completed each time, before a minibus is used. This is irrespective of whether the vehicle is owned, hired or borrowed. The driver should carry out the pre-journey checks, and it is also recommended that the person in charge of the vehicle should carry out additional checks at least once a fortnight.

A Pre-Journey Minibus Checklist (Appendix B) form is available. This concentrates on the vehicle itself.

An extended Minibus Journey Checklist to assist with all the aspects of forthcoming journeys is also available from the Driver Handbook located in each minibus.

6. Licensing requirements for drivers of minibuses

The following requirements apply to drive a minibus with up to 16 passenger seats using their current car driving licence. The driver:

- is 21 or older;
- has had their driving licence for at least 2 years;
- meets the 'Group 2' medical standards if over 70 – (driver should check with their GP if unsure);
- holds an in-date Phoenix Driver Training certificate **and**
- the journey is not for hire or reward;
- the Gross Vehicle Weight (or Maximum Authorised Mass) of the minibus is not more than 3.5 tonnes - or 4.25 tonnes including specialist equipment for disabled passengers, for example a wheelchair ramp. Both of the Bosvigo School minibuses comply with these requirements and can be driven by a driver holding a B category on their license;
- the driver is not towing a trailer.

If the driver passed their driving test before January 1997 then a minibus category would have been added to their licence automatically, if passed after January 1997 it will not appear on your licence but is still valid if the above criteria apply. Further information can be found on the [DVLA website](#)

You need to be competent to drive for Cornwall Council, all drivers of minibuses must pass the Cornwall Council Driver Development Training and renew their assessment/development training every 3 years.

7. Minibus Permits

Bosvigo School holds Section 19 permits for both of its minibuses. Section 19 permits are either 'standard permits' for vehicles which are adapted to carry no more than 16 passengers (excluding the driver) or 'large bus permits' for vehicles which are adapted to carry 17 or more passengers. These permits may be granted to organisations that operate vehicles without a view to profit to transport their members, or people whom the organisation exists to help. Section 19 permit vehicles can't be used to carry members of the general public.

8. MOT, Servicing, Maintenance and Safety Inspections

Minibuses require an MOT inspection one year after initial registration, and annually thereafter. Minibuses with up to 12 passenger seats (excluding the driver) require a Class IV MOT, the same as a car. Minibuses with more than 12 passenger seats (excluding the driver) require a Class V MOT.

The manufacturer's recommended servicing and maintenance schedules must always be adhered to. The service documentation supplied with the vehicle will detail when (on a mileage and/or time basis) the vehicle should be serviced.

In addition, safety inspections (over and above the pre-journey checks) should be carried out to at least the Public service Vehicle (PSV) standard. These checks should be carried out by a competent person – normally a garage. The frequency of the safety checks will vary depending on annual mileage, but as a rough guide:

| | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Up to 12,500 miles | every 10 weeks |
| 12,500 – 20,000 | every 9 weeks |
| 20,000 – 40,000 | every 8 weeks |

Bosvigo School's minibuses are subject to a thorough safety inspection at 10-week intervals. These safety checks are completed by Fleet Complete Ltd.

9. Vehicle Standards

Minibuses must be maintained in a roadworthy condition as described in the main [Driving for Work Compliance Code](#).

10. Breakdown Procedures

The school has breakdown cover provided by ERS (via Quotax) for both minibuses. Further details of the policy, including what to do in the event of a breakdown, can be found in the driver handbook which is kept in the driver's door compartment of each minibus.

11. Using a Minibus

11.1 Minibus /driver hours and Rest – UK driving only

A minibus is a vehicle with between 9 and 16 passenger seats in addition to the driver's seat.

The Headteacher must keep the completed records of journey logs for a period of at least two years.

With the exception of short journeys (within 30 miles of Bosvigo School), journeys should always be planned with the availability of two drivers. Drivers should follow the following guidelines for all journeys.

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Daily Driving | No more than 9 hours per day |
| Daily Work (excluding breaks) | <p>Length of working day A driver should work no more than 16 hours between the times of starting and finishing work (including work other than driving and off-duty periods during the working day).</p> <p>Daily rest periods A continuous rest of 10 hours must be taken between two consecutive working days.</p> |
| Breaks | <p>A person cannot drive for more than two hours without a break of 15 minutes.</p> <p>After 4 ½ hours driving, a driver must have a further 30 minutes break. (A break can be taken by a driver who is a passenger in a moving vehicle providing they are not performing any other duties and is able to obtain rest and refreshment).</p> <p>After 6 hours work a person must have a minimum of a 30-minute rest. If a rest has been taken due to driving time this may be counted.</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| Weekly driving | Maximum of 56 hours in a week |
| Driving in a two-week period | Maximum of 90 hours in two weeks |
| Working Week (Total / Working Time) And Night Work | <p>Limited to 48 hours average over a 17-week period. A maximum of 60 hours can be performed in a single week providing the average 48-hours is not exceeded.</p> <p>If night work is performed, working time must not exceed 10 hours in any 24-hour period. Nighttime is the period between 01.00 and 05.00 for passenger vehicles.</p> |
| Weekly rest | Weekly rest must be 45 continuous hours for drivers. This can be reduced to 24 hours for one week as long as the person has a break of 66 continuous hours in the second week. |

Tiredness, fatigue and stress (be it from work, domestic or social circumstances) can affect safe driving. Drivers should take account of this and **not** drive if they believe they are unfit to do so.

11.2 Speed Limits

| | |
|---|--------|
| Single carriageway roads where no lower limit applies | 50 mph |
| Dual carriageways | 60 mph |
| Motorways | 70 mph |
| Motorways when towing a trailer | 60 mph |

11.3 Bus / motorway lanes

Minibuses are able to use designated bus lanes unless the word 'local' is included on the blue signage or the road markings. Minibuses fitted with a speed limiter, are not allowed in the right-hand lane of a motorway with three or more lanes.

11.4 Parking

If a minibus is parked on the road at night, side and rear lights must be left on. They must also be parked on the nearside of the road unless in a designated parking area.

11.5 Passengers in Wheelchairs

National guidelines produced by the Department for Transport are contained in the code of Practice VSE87/1 "The Safety of Passengers in Wheelchairs on Buses". If you are likely to carry passengers in wheelchairs you will need to obtain a copy of this Code of Practice and abide by the guidance. A copy can be found by following this link: <https://unece.org/DAM/trans/doc/2003/wp29grsg/wheelchair.pdf>

12. Third Party Use

12.1. Eligible Organisations

- The Bosvigo School minibuses may be hired out to other schools or reputable community organisations, subject to availability and at the Headteacher's discretion.

12.2. Application Process

- Interested parties must direct requests to hire the school minibuses through the school office, either by phone (01872 274034) or email (secretary@bosvigo.cornwall.sch.uk). This request should detail the name of the organisation or individual who would be hiring, the purpose for hire, the journey to be undertaken and the proposed dates of hire.
- Proof of appropriate insurance and driver qualifications (e.g. driving license, Phoenix minibus driver training) must be provided before taking hire of the minibuses.

12.3. Hire Charges

- The standard hire charge is £30 per day plus fuel charges at 50 pence per mile. Alternative agreements may be made where a regular hire is in place.
- Invoices will be generated following the return of the hired vehicle, with payment required within 28 days of the issuing of the invoice.

12.4. Terms and Conditions

- The hiring organisation is responsible for ensuring all drivers are authorised and trained.
- All drivers must complete the journey log, recording the mileage at the beginning and end of the journey. This log can be found in the driver's door compartment, along with the minibus handbook.
- The minibus must be returned in a clean and tidy condition.
- Any damage or incidents must be reported immediately.
- The school reserves the right to refuse hire or withdraw permission at any time.

12.5. Insurance and Legal Compliance

- The hiring organisation must ensure that appropriate insurance is in place for the period of hire. Local authority organisations may be covered by the Bosvigo School's insurance policy. Where this is not the case, the hirer will be informed at the earliest opportunity.
- The minibus must not be used for private hire or reward (i.e., profit-making purposes).

13. Reporting Incidents

Bosvigo School's minibuses are insured through the Cornwall Council fleet insurance policy. A copy of this policy can be found in the Driver Handbooks kept in the minibuses, as well as the minibus folder kept in the school office.

In the event of an accident, the driver should complete and sign the Insurance Claim Form located in the Driver Handbook and email this to the headteacher (head@bosvigo.cornwall.sch.uk) at the earliest opportunity. The headteacher will then forward this on to Cornwall Council's insurance team.

If the minibus is subject to a speeding penalty charge, the driver will be responsible for the consequences of their actions, including the payment of any penalty charge.

Parking penalty notices issued to the minibuses will be the responsibility of Bosvigo School unless these have occurred whilst being used by a third party, in which case the third party will be charged.

Appendix A – The School Minibus Pre-Drive Safety Checklist

Exterior check (Tick for OK)

- Oil level
- Coolant level
- Windscreen washer fluid level
- Brake fluid level
- Windscreen & 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)
- Tyre tread, including spares (and inner tyres as above). At least 3 mm across centre $\frac{3}{4}$ is recommended. Any cuts and bulges?
- Doors open and close properly
- Trailer brake lights and indicators work, if applicable
- Roof rack is properly fitted, and all luggage securely held.

Interior check (Tick for OK)

- Mirrors correctly adjusted, clean and unobstructed
- Position & function of all dashboard controls
- Position of driving seat so all pedals can be operated comfortably
- Pressure on brake pedal
- Lights & indicators are working
- Wipers & washers working properly
- Fuel level (and type of fuel)
- Seat belts are undamaged and working properly
- Location of wheel brace and jack
- Location and contents of first aid kit & fire extinguisher(s)
- Location of relevant paperwork (permit, MoT etc)
- Change for parking or telephone (mobile/phonecard)
- Luggage securely stowed; aisles & exits clear

Brake Checks

- Check brakes before loading passengers. With engine running, check handbrake is working properly & brake pedal is firm when pushed
- Conduct a moving brake test, off the road, if possible. Reach a speed of not more than 15 mph check mirrors and, if safe, apply brakes fairly firmly. Brakes should work efficiently; vehicle should not pull to one side; luggage should remain secure.

If faults that might affect the vehicle's or passengers' safety are found, the vehicle must not be used until they are all remedied.

Advice for Minibus Drivers

On journeys where an escort is present, the items below should be divided between the escort and the driver, with the driver concentrating on those tasks which directly relate to driving the vehicle.

Before setting off

- Allow sufficient time for the journey.
- Plan breaks. Avoid long spells of driving when children might get bored and restless.
- Conduct a pre-drive safety check before every journey.
- 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.
- Ensure children are supervised when boarding vehicle, especially if using rear door. Plan which passengers will sit in the front seats and by the doors.
- Do not exceed the carrying capacity of the minibus.
- Make sure everyone is sitting, one to a seat and are using seat belts.
- When school bus signs are used, make sure they are in position only while children are being transported, and that they do not obstruct your vision.
- Ensure ambulant disabled passengers are seated safely and comfortably and passengers travelling in wheelchairs are safely restrained. Securely store wheelchairs not in use.
- Carry a complete list of passengers with notes of special needs. Keep list with other relevant documents in place where can be readily found in event of an accident.
- Comply with manufacturers instructions when using passenger lifts and other specialist equipment.
- Check that no bags or clothing are caught in doors, that all luggage is secure and gangways and exits are clear.
- Check all mirrors every time before moving off in case latecomers are approaching the vehicle.

During the journey

- Do not allow boisterous play of any kind.
- Try to keep children occupied (if escort on board) give something to do beforehand.
- Enforce "No Smoking" and "No alcohol" rules.
- Do not allow passengers to operate doors.
- Approach each stop slowly and with care
- Use Hazard Warning Lights on school trips where children are boarding or leaving vehicle.
- If serious delay during journey, inform school so that information can be passed to parents. A mobile telephone is useful for this purpose (although it should not be used whilst driving the vehicle).
- Children must not be left unaccompanied on the minibus.

- If there is a risk of fire, evacuate vehicle and move occupants to a safe place.
- If you have to stop in an emergency or break down while on a motorway, only stop on the hard shoulder and as far away from the carriageway and passing traffic as possible.

Journey's end

- Supervise children when leaving vehicle, especially if using rear exit.
- Never allow passengers to leave until vehicle is at a complete standstill and safely parked.
- Always park so that passengers step onto the footway and not the road.
- Take care when reversing if children are nearby. If you have to reverse, get adult help in directing you.
- Do not leave children alone if no one has come to collect them.
- Report problems or incidents that occurred during the trip to the operator.

