



inspiring the journey for
independence together

Minibus Policy

Non-Statutory

Reviewed Every 3 Years

Signed:  (Chair of the Trust)

Date: 28/9/23

Date of next review: September 2026

Statement of intent

The Rivermead Inclusive Trust and its associated schools understand that minibuses are a useful form of transport, and are often required for outings such as educational visits or trips.

The Trust also understands that safety on the minibus, and of the minibus itself, is paramount when travelling. As a result, this policy has been created to provide guidance on the responsibilities and procedures associated with the use of minibuses

1. Legal framework

1.1 This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Road Traffic Act 1988 (As amended)
- The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licenses) Regulations 1999 (As amended 2015)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

1.2 This policy also has due regard to statutory and non-statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE and Department for Transport (2013) 'Driving school minibuses: advice for schools and local authorities'
- RoSPA (2015) 'Minibus safety A Code of Practice'
- GOV.UK (2016) 'Child car seats: the law'
- GOV.UK (2014) 'Seat belts: the law'

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 The Trust Facilities Manager (Warren Lovey) is responsible for:

- Ensuring that a full MOT on the school minibuses is carried out by the required date.
- Providing appropriate tax and licensing for the minibuses.
- Ensuring that the minibuses are appropriately insured, and roadside assistance is organised.
- Ensuring the minibuses are regularly serviced in line with the service schedule of each mini bus and or the relevant lease agreement.

2.2 The driver is responsible for:

- Ensuring that they are eligible to drive as per the eligibility requirements outlined in this policy.
- Adhering to all relevant road rules and laws, including any driving hours regulations.
- Ensuring that all passengers are wearing a seatbelt.
- Keeping a record of the names and contact numbers for any pupils travelling in the minibus.
- Conducting additional safety checks on the minibus before travelling.
- Any speeding fines or fines incurred through the style of driving.

2.3 Additional Adults (Supervisors) are responsible for:

- Ensuring that passengers continue to wear their seatbelts throughout the journey.
- Ensuring that passengers model good levels of behaviour, and responding to any disruption appropriately.
- Ensuring that passengers do not consume food or drink on the minibus. (unless part of a pupil specific risk assessment)
- Ensuring that there is at least one first aider on the minibus.

2.4 Passengers are responsible for:

- Following all instructions issued by the driver and supervisors.
- Wearing their seatbelt at all times during the journey.
- Conducting good levels of behaviour, and not distracting the driver.
- Conducting good levels of behaviour towards drivers in other vehicles.
- Keeping all exits clear for the duration of the journey.
- Maintaining the exterior and interior of the vehicle, and ensuring no damage is caused.

3. Eligibility

- 3.1 A minibus is defined as a motor vehicle with between 9 and 16 passenger seats. It is described as a category D1 vehicle by the Driving Vehicle Licencing Authority (DVLA).

- 3.2 To be eligible to drive a minibus for hire or reward, drivers will hold a full D1 (or D) passenger carrying vehicle (PCV) entitlement. All drivers of the minibus will be between 21 and 70.
- 3.3 Before any individual is permitted to drive the minibus, they are required to provide their driver's licence and the relevant documentation to the School office, who will record confirmation of this and make a photocopy for school records. Records of who is authorised to drive any Trust minibus are shared with the facilities manager.
- 3.4 **All documentation must be presented to the school office on a yearly basis to ensure that no point have been added to the license and authorisation to drive the mini bus remains.**
- 3.5 If the facilities manager is not satisfied that the driver's licence is sufficient, they will inform the driver that they are not eligible to drive the minibus.
- 3.6 Drivers of the minibus are required to have at least two years' experience as a qualified driver.
- 3.7 Drivers with more than three points on their license will not be eligible to drive the minibus.
- 3.8 All drivers are required to successfully pass a MIDAS driving competency course, before they are eligible to drive the minibus.
- 3.9 Drivers will be subject to a re-assessment at least once every three years, or in response to any incidents.
- 3.10 Drivers will also be eligible to drive a minibus if they passed their category B (car) driving test **before** 1 January 1997, provided the minibus is not being used for hire or reward.
- 3.11 In these circumstances, there will be a passenger limit of 16 and no maximum weight restriction on the vehicle.
- 3.12 Drivers with a D1 + E entitlement may also tow a trailer weighing up to 750kg.
- 3.13 Drivers will also be eligible to drive a minibus if they passed their category B (car) driving test **on or after** 1 January 1997, provided the minibus is not being used for hire or reward, and the following conditions are met:
- The driver is over 21 years old and has held a category B (car) driving licence for at least two years.
 - The minibus is used by a non-commercial body for non-commercial purposes, e.g. school sports team travelling to a fixture
 - The driver receives no payment other than the recovery of their out of pocket expenses, e.g. fuel and parking costs.
 - The driver provides the service on a voluntary basis.
 - The gross vehicle weight of the minibus does not exceed 3.5 tonnes (or 4.25 tonnes if including any specialist equipment to carry disabled passengers).
 - The driver does not tow a trailer.

- 3.14 Drivers holding a category B (car) licence, obtained on or after 1 January 1997, are eligible to drive any vehicle weighing a maximum of 3.5 tonnes, with a maximum of eight passengers, and with a trailer weighing a maximum of 750kg, e.g. 'Lightweight Minibuses'.
- 3.15 Drivers may also apply for a minibus permit, also known as a section 19 permit scheme, via the LA if there is a need to charge passengers.
- 3.16 Drivers holding either a category B (car) licence or a category D1 (101) licence are entitled to drive a minibus operated for hire or reward if they also hold a section 19 permit.
- 3.17 To be eligible for a minibus permit, the following criteria will be satisfied:
- The vehicle carries between 9 and 16 passengers.
 - The vehicle is being driven for a voluntary organisation that benefits the community.
 - The minibus service is only available for members of that organisation, and not the general public.
 - Any charges are requested to cover running costs and not for personal profit.
 - The driver is 21 or older.

4. Risk assessment

- 4.1 The facilities manager will conduct a risk assessment of the minibus; this will be reviewed termly and in response to any services, or following a breakdown/accident.
- 4.2 The headteacher will also conduct a generic risk assessment of the minibus service, including supervising drivers, parental consent, journey planning, accident procedures, etc.
- 4.3 Additional risk assessments may also be completed for specific journeys, if necessary.

5. Procedures

- 5.1 The keys for the minibus are held in a sealed key box within each school or at the RIT main building.
- 5.2 The keys will be signed in and out of the school office by the driver of the minibus – they will be signed back in as soon as the minibus returns to the premises.
- 5.3 The driver of the minibus will ensure that:
- They are legally entitled, and properly insured, to drive the minibus.

- The minibus is well-maintained and legally allowed on the road.
 - The minibus has a valid MOT certificate and insurance.
 - The minibus has a valid permit disc, if operating under a section 19 permit scheme.
- 5.4 A designated member of site staff will carry out and record a weekly maintenance check on the minibus using the [Maintenance Checklist](#).
- 5.5 The Maintenance Checklist will be updated following every service, with details of each of the checks.
- 5.6 If the appointed person has any concerns regarding the safety or roadworthiness of the minibus, they will inform the headteacher, who will organise appropriate action.
- 5.7 If the driver has any serious concerns regarding the safety or roadworthiness of the minibus during the journey, e.g. a flat tyre, a call will be made to the facilities manager, and the breakdown procedure will be followed.
- 5.8 If the driver notices any minor defects during the journey which do not compromise the safety of the driver or passengers, e.g. one broken windscreen wiper, these can be reported to the facilities manager after the journey.
- 5.9 The minibus will not be used in any situations where a cause for concern has been identified by a qualified mechanic.
- 5.10 In addition to the weekly checks, and before beginning the journey, the driver will:
- Plan the journey so that it can be completed safely and comfortably with the passengers' needs.
 - Conduct a visual inspection of the minibus and the Pre-drive Checklist.
 - Ensure that they are fit and able to drive.
 - Conduct a moving brake test.
 - Ensure that the minibus is suitable for the passengers being carried.
 - Ensure that all rubbish is removed and there is no damage to the inside or outside of the vehicle.
 - Ensure that passengers are aware that they must not consume food or drink on the vehicle.
 - Ensure that no passengers embark on the minibus with muddy shoes or damp, dirty clothing.
 - Log the journey in the vehicle journey log after each journey including the destination and mileage.
- 5.11 The driver of the vehicle will plan all routes accordingly, ensuring that the route is suitable and safe for use by minibuses.
- 5.12 Mobile phones are not permitted for use by the driver whilst they are driving the minibus. If the driver must make a call, they will pull over to a safe stopping place to do so.

- 5.13 A mobile phone will be carried by at least one member of staff in case of an emergency. The member of staff will have the numbers of all parents/carers of pupils on the minibus, as well as emergency contacts for the school.
- 5.14 A nominated person at the school, and who is not on the journey, will be aware of the destination of the minibus, its route and its expected time of arrival and return.
- 5.15 Parents/carers will also be informed of the above information, and will be provided with the mobile phone number for the member of staff on the minibus.
- 5.16 Smoking, drinking alcohol and taking drugs is strictly prohibited by pupils, staff members and the driver at all times whilst on the vehicle.
- 5.17 The driver will ensure that the legal speed limits for minibuses are followed at all times during the journey.
- 5.18 Pupils will be required to maintain good levels of behaviour at all times whilst on the minibus, and will avoid any behaviour that may distract the driver.
- 5.19 The driver has the right to judge whether a passenger is safe to be on board. For those children who are clearly in a distressed or heightened state before leaving the premises; the call will be made by the driver as to whether they would be safe passengers.
- 5.20 Any disruption on the minibus will be dealt with appropriately by supervisors, in accordance with the school's Educational Trips and Visits Policy.

6. Health and safety

- 6.1 If a driver is taking any prescribed drugs or medicine that may affect their ability to drive, they are not permitted to drive the minibus.
- 6.2 In light of the above, if the driver feels unwell before or during the journey and that this may affect their ability to drive, they are not permitted to drive the bus. Another member of staff who holds a relevant license will be available to drive the minibus in such cases.
- 6.3 Drivers will not drive for longer than two hours without taking a break for at least 15 minutes.
- 6.4 A first aid kit will always be available on the minibus and will be fully stocked, and at least one member of staff on the minibus will be a qualified first aider.
- 6.5 Additional medicine may be taken for pupils with medical conditions, though only staff trained to administer medicine will do so, in accordance with the school's Administering Medicine Policy.
- 6.6 Seatbelts and seats will be fitted and worn in accordance with relevant seat belt laws.
- 6.7 Additional seat belts will be fitted for pupils with SEND, for those that require additional postural support.
- 6.8 The driver will instruct all pupils to wear their seatbelts throughout the journey; supervisors will ensure that they continue to do this whilst on the minibus.

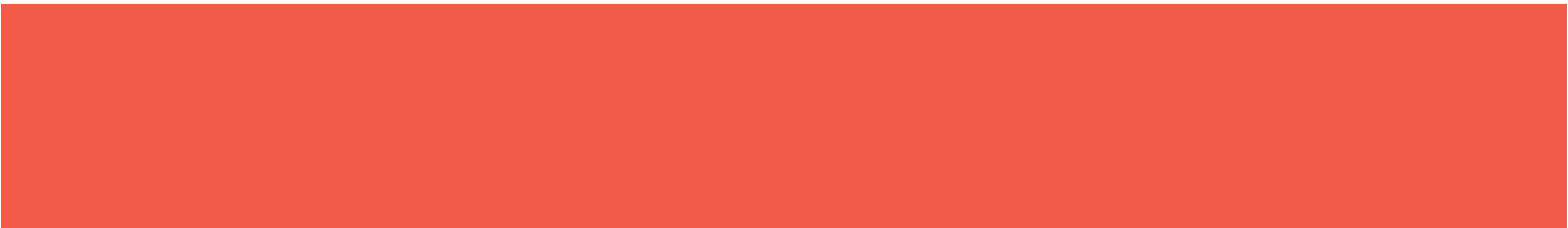
- 6.9 All members of staff aboard the vehicle will wear their seatbelts at all times.
- 6.10 For pupils over the age of 14, they are personally responsible for wearing their seatbelt and must ensure they do this throughout the journey.
- 6.11 Passengers will ensure that all emergency exits are clear at all times.
- 6.12 Hi Vis vests will be available on the mini bus for all passengers and the driver in case of an emergency evacuation of the vehicle.

7. Breakdowns

- 7.1 In the event of a breakdown, the driver will move the vehicle off the road and switch on the hazard warning lights.
- 7.2 Passengers will be moved out of the nearside of the vehicle, and as far away from it and other traffic as possible.
- 7.3 If it may be safer for passengers to remain in the vehicle, e.g. if there is not a safe place outside, the driver and supervisors will assess the situation and decide whether to stay on the minibus.
- 7.4 The driver or a supervisor will contact the relevant breakdown cover company immediately.
- 7.5 The driver or a supervisor will contact the facilities manager and school office after arranging a breakdown call out.
- 7.6 Contact details for the relevant breakdown cover and insurance provider will always be kept in the glove compartment of the minibus.
- 7.7 If the breakdown occurs on a motorway, the driver or a supervisor will use the roadside emergency telephone, and will provide the police with the breakdown service, the vehicle's location, and if any pupils on board have SEND.
- 7.8 All passengers will be kept together in one group and pupils will be constantly supervised.
- 7.9 If necessary, the driver will seek help, leaving the pupils with the supervisors. If the driver is the only adult present, pupils will not be left alone.
- 7.10 The driver, supervisors and pupils will all wait in the safe place until it is safe to return on the minibus.
- 7.11 If passengers are unable to return on the minibus, appropriate transport will be arranged by staff in the school office to collect pupils, supervisors and the driver.

8. Accidents

- 8.1 An emergency procedure will be established by the headteacher prior to beginning the journey, and a copy will be kept inside the glove compartment in the minibus.
- 8.2 The emergency procedure will be communicated to the driver and all supervisors on the journey, to ensure they are fully aware of the process to be followed.

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- 8.3 In the event of an accident, emergency services will be contacted immediately and supervisors will remain with pupils at all times.
 - 8.4 The driver or a supervisor will contact the school office and facilities manager as soon as possible after calling the emergency services.
 - 8.5 All passengers will remain at the scene of the accident in a safe place until the emergency services and any additional transport has arrived.
 - 8.6 If injuries are sustained, the names of those involved will be reported to the school office and an Accident Log will be completed upon return to the premises.
 - 8.7 If no injuries are sustained and the vehicle is not damaged, the driver will ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and safe before continuing the journey. An Accident Log will be completed upon return to the school.

9. Monitoring and review

- 9.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years by the relevant Trust board; the next scheduled review date for this policy is March 2024.
- 9.2 This policy will also be reviewed in response to any incidents or accidents that occur.
- 9.3 Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.
- 9.4 All drivers and supervisors are required to familiarise themselves with the procedures in this policy when planning a journey.

Maintenance Checklist

Check	Checked? (Y/N)	Details of defect	Reported (date)
Tyre pressure			
Tyre condition and tread depth			
Lights – operation/cleanliness			
Engine oil level			
Coolant level			
Brakes, including fluid level			
Battery			
Windscreen wipers/jets/reservoir			
Seat belts/buckles/fixings			
Operation of steering/gears/clutch			
Fire extinguisher			
Jack/handle/wheel brace			
First aid kit			
Operation of horn			
Doors, latches, locks			
Condition of wheel rims and trims			
Road fund licence/transport			
Condition of mirrors			
Operation of dash controls			
Excessive exhaust smoke			
Condition of body work/number			
Silhouette signs			
Rear scope			
Cleanliness of exterior			
Cleanliness of interior			

All checks have been made, and all defects have been reported to the facilities manager (Warren Lovey).

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Operating Minibuses During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic and or any airborne pandemic.

Statement of intent

We understand that we face a time of great uncertainty and, as a school, we are doing all we can to provide clarity and safety for the school community. This appendix includes provisions which the school will have due regard for during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The information in this section is under constant review and is updated to reflect changes to government guidance as it is released. This policy will be implemented alongside the Coronavirus (COVID-19): Risk Assessment for Full Opening in September and other relevant policies.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2020) 'Guidance for full opening: schools'
- DfE (2020) 'Safe working in education, childcare, and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE)'
- DfT (2020) 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer travel guidance for passengers'

2. Infection control measures

- 2.1. Social distancing will be adhered to onboard the minibus, with the driver and the passengers all sitting two metres apart from one another where possible.
- 2.2. Passengers will sit within their school bubble onboard the minibus where possible.
- 2.3. If sitting within a bubble is not possible, e.g. home to school transport with multiple year groups on the same vehicle, the minibus will operate under a 'first in, last out' policy. In these circumstances, the pupils who board first will sit at the rear of the minibus, and the minibus will fill forwards from there.
- 2.4. Seating arrangements will ensure passengers all face forward if possible.
- 2.5. The driver and the passengers will clean their hands before boarding the minibus and again on disembarking, using soap and running water for at least 20 seconds or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.

- 2.6. The school will encourage the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach onboard the minibus. Individuals onboard will be encouraged to carry tissues, which will be disposed of in a covered bin.
- 2.7. The driver will be responsible for enhanced cleaning of the minibus, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergent and bleach.
- 2.8. The driver will be responsible for increasing the ventilation on the minibus before the passengers board, e.g. opening the windows and the ceiling vent if possible.
- 2.9. The school recognises that transporting pupils with SEND may require close contact. In these circumstances, social distancing between the pupil and support staff is not required, although increased hand cleaning is advised where possible.
- 2.10. The school will ensure all drivers, passengers, parents and relevant stakeholders are informed of these measures.

3. Face coverings

- 3.1. The school will advise pupils aged 11 and over to wear a face covering while onboard the minibus, unless they are exempt.
- 3.2. The driver and staff onboard the minibus must wear a face covering whilst in the vehicle, unless they are exempt.
- 3.3. Those who are exempt from wearing face coverings, e.g. individuals with SEND, are not required to wear face coverings onboard the minibus.
- 3.4. Staff who support pupils who require being able to lip-read or see a face in order to communicate are not required to wear a face covering.
- 3.5. The school will ensure individuals wearing face coverings on board the minibus follow the school's process for removing them when they disembark:
 - The school will ensure pupils wash their hands immediately upon arrival at the school site, using soap and running water for at least 20 seconds or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
 - The school will ensure pupils wash them again once they have removed their face covering, using soap and running water for at least 20 seconds or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
 - The school will ensure pupils dispose of disposable face coverings in a covered bin.
 - The school will ensure pupils keep reusable face coverings in a plastic bag.

4. Symptomatic individuals

- 4.1. Individuals who are displaying coronavirus symptoms must not board the minibus.
- 4.2. Pupils who start displaying coronavirus symptoms whilst at on the minibus should be collected by a parent or a household member wherever possible.
- 4.3. If this is not possible and the school is responsible for transporting the pupil home, the pupil will be transported home individually. The school will also ensure one of the following measures in enacted:
 - The minibus will have a bulkhead or partition which separates the driver and passenger.
 - The driver and passenger will maintain a distance of at least two metres from one another.
 - The driver will wear PPE and the pupil will wear a face covering, provided neither are exempt, e.g. the pupil is under 11 years old.

5. Monitoring and review

- 5.1. The headteacher is responsible for continually monitoring PHE, DfE and DfT updates, and for updating this appendix in line with any changes to government guidance.
- 5.2. Any changes to this appendix will be communicated to all staff, parents and relevant stakeholders.