



**SOUTH EASTERN EDUCATION
AND LIBRARY BOARD**

Guidelines for Drivers of School Owned Minibuses

INDEX

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1 | Introduction | 2 |
| 2 | Authorisation to Drive | 2 |
| 3 | Licence Requirement | 2 |
| 4 | Approved Journeys | 3 |
| 5 | Bus Permits | 3 |
| 6 | Cross-border Driving | 3 |
| 7 | Working Time Directive/Tachograph Regulations | 3 |
| 8 | Board's Speed Restriction | 3 |
| 9 | Seatbelts | 4 |
| 10 | Smoking Policy | 4 |
| 11 | Purchase of Fuel | 4 |
| 12 | Alcohol, Drug, Tiredness & Ill Health | 4 |
| 13 | Safety Checks | 4 |
| 14 | Trailers | 5 |
| 15 | Use of Roof Racks | 5 |
| 16 | Unsuitable Roads | 5 |
| 17 | Accidents | 5 |
| 18 | Contact Telephone Numbers | 5 |
| 19 | Mobile Telephones | 5 |
| 20 | Keys | 5 |

GUIDLINES FOR DRIVERS OF SCHOOL OWNED MINIBUS

1 INTRODUCTION

Driving probably presents greater potential risk of serious and multiple casualties than any other aspect of the school environment. All drivers must approach the task responsibly.

2 AUTHORISATION TO DRIVE

Members of Staff who are on the School's list of approved drivers may drive the school minibus provided they hold a current valid driving licence.

This list should be kept in the School office.

With the approval of the Principal or Vice-Principal, school employees may drive the School minibus bus under the following conditions:

- ◆ They are over 21 years of age.
- ◆ They satisfy the licence conditions in 3 below.
- ◆ They are members of the staff with authority to drive the vehicle.
- ◆ They are experienced minibus drivers and have been independently assessed by an approved driving instructor.
- ◆ Their licence has been checked and photocopied by the person with responsibility for controlling the School minibus.
- ◆ The photocopy to be initialled and dated by the person checking the licence and filed in the School Office, then checked annually to ensure licence is still valid.
- ◆ The School management must approve all journeys.
- ◆ All approved drivers must be given a copy of this policy to read.

3 LICENCE REQUIREMENT

Drivers must hold a current driving licence that covers the driving of buses of up to sixteen passenger seats plus drivers - Category D1.

This category is not issued automatically if the member of staff took his/her driving test on or after the 1 January 1997. From that date a category D1 can only be obtained by sitting a DVTA driving test, also a separate test will have to be taken to tow a trailer were the gross weight is over 750kg. (Categories E)

If the seating capacity of a vehicle exceeds 16 passenger seats the driver must hold a Category 'D'

A sign indicating the maximum permissible passenger capacity should be displayed in the vehicle.

A new member of staff who holds a valid licence may **not** drive a minibus with passengers until they are competent and have passed a driving assessment by an outside body.

Before taking the driving assessment test the member of staff may drive accompanied only by another member of staff, who is experienced in driving this type of vehicle, in order to familiarise him/herself with the vehicle.

The school must inform their Insurance Company of all named drivers.

Drivers must report to the Principal any change of circumstances which might have a bearing on the insurance policy.

Drivers must report all driving offences immediately.

The Principal will consider whether each driver's record is acceptable.

A minibus must have a valid MOT test certificate, if it is over 12 months old.

4 APPROVED JOURNEYS

Any journey must be on legitimate School business approved by the School. The driver must fully complete the log sheet that is held in the bus. The Principal or someone acting on his behalf, preferably someone other than those who drive the vehicle should periodically review the log sheets.

5 BUS PERMITS

When a vehicle has been issued with a bus permit, this permit must be displayed clearly on the windscreen. Your Board's transport branch must also be notified of any vehicle changes.

6 CROSS-BORDER DRIVING

The driver must have a minimum of a category D1 licence or category 'D' that was obtained by DVTA driving test.

(A 'D1' or 'D' category with the code – 79 nhr – Not for hire or reward – is not valid in the Republic of Ireland).

The driver is issued with a letter of authorization to drive the bus and that the driver has had experience in driving this type of vehicle for at least 12 months.

The driver has in their possession the proper documentation in relation to vehicle insurance. The driver should also carry the MOT test certificate, if the bus is over 12 months old and the V5 (Tax Book).

Tachographs **are** required to be used in any bus crossing the border.

The Republic of Ireland does not recognise the Northern Ireland small bus permit scheme.

7. WORKING TIME DIRECTIVE / TACHOGRAPH REGULATIONS

It is strongly advised that all drivers and the School Principal adhere to the EU Working Time Directive and EU Tachograph Driver's Hours Regulations in relation to driving duties.

Further information can be obtained from www.doeni.gov.uk

8. BOARD'S SPEED RESTRICTION

When carrying passengers the speed must not exceed 50 mph, except on motorways where 60 mph is permitted.

When driving in the Republic of Ireland, please note that from January 2005 the speed limits are displayed in kph, therefore the maximum speeds will be 80 kph.

Drivers will be responsible for any infringement of traffic regulations and will be required to meet any legal expenses arising as a result of the infringement.

9. SEATBELTS

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that all passengers are wearing a properly fitted seatbelt at the start of each journey and to insist that belts are worn throughout the journey. No more than one person per seat may be carried.

10. SMOKING POLICY

It is the driver's responsibility to enforce a no smoking policy in the vehicle.

11. PURCHASE OF FUEL

Any fuel purchased must be logged on the Vehicle Log sheet and signed for by the driver on the supplier's recording sheet.

12. ALCOHOL, DRUG, TIREDNESS AND ILL HEALTH

Drivers must observe a "No Alcohol Policy". Similarly, no one may drive if taking any drugs that may affect their driving capabilities.

No one should drive when his/her ability is affected by tiredness or ill health.

Drivers must drive no more than two hours without a break, no more than four hours in total on the evening of a working day, no more than eight hours on any day. Journeys longer than six hours a second driver should be available.

On all driving duties, drivers must comply with the EU Working Time Directive and the EU Tachograph Driver's Hours Regulations.

13. SAFETY CHECKS

Daily checks before a journey is commenced:

Check Tyres: For general wear, bulges, wall damage and signs of under inflation; pay attention to rear inner wheels on a twin wheeled rear axle also check to ensure no large object is trapped between the tyre walls of the twin wheels.

Check wheel Nuts: For any visual signs of loose wheel nuts.

Check fluid levels:

- (i) Engine oil
- (ii) Level of coolant in radiator
- (iii) Windscreen washer bottle
- (iv) Brake and clutch fluid

Check: For oil or fluid leaks underneath the vehicle

Check Lighting: Head (Dip and Main Beam), side, indicator, stop and tail lights. Interior lighting as fitted to vehicle.

Check: Horn, wipers, heater and demister, rear emergency door buzzer and safety chain.

Check: First Aid kit

Check: Fire extinguisher is in place.

Check: For damage to seat upholstery and working condition of seat belts.

Check: That all doors are working.

The driver is legally responsible for the condition of the vehicle and must not drive if it is not roadworthy.

A defects reporting book with duplicate pages and serial numbered, to be held in the vehicle and to be completed by the driver when a defect is discovered. When completed the top copy from the defects book to be given to the person with responsibility for the minibus.

All defects must be reported.

14. TRAILERS

No one may tow a trailer unless he or she has experience of towing a trailer and has been briefed on trailers by a suitable qualified person. Luggage must be securely restrained. For trailer in excess of 750 kgs gross vehicle weight a driver must have a D1 category licence plus category E. (refer to item 3).

15. USE OF ROOF RACKS

Roof racks must not be overloaded as it affects the handling of the vehicle. All items must be securely fastened.

16. UNSUITABLE ROADS

Experience has shown that some narrow single-track roads are unsuitable for vehicles of this size. Routes should be planned accordingly.

17. ACCIDENTS

In the event of an accident involving injuries or damage to others the driver must contact the emergency services, the police and the School as soon as possible. Any damage to the vehicle must be reported on return to the School. An **accident information report form** must be completed.

A disposable camera should be carried in the bus.

18. CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

For all journeys a passenger-loading list, inclusive with immediate contact telephone numbers should be available on the minibus and a further copy held by a named person at School.

19. MOBILE TELEPHONES

A mobile phone should be carried by at least one member of staff in case of emergency.

As with all journeys, driver should refrain from using mobile phones whilst driving. If it is necessary to make or take a phone call pull over to the side of the road when and where it is safe to do so.

20. KEYS

Keys will be collected immediately before use and returned immediately after use to the School office. A record of dates/times/driver should be maintained in the office and completed each time the minibus keys are issued and returned. This ensures that the whereabouts of the vehicle and the driver's details are known at all times. As an additional control, this record can be crosschecked to the vehicle log sheet to verify that all journeys are being recorded.