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Minibus Policy

The Aims of this Policy:

- To ensure that Silverhill School & Day Nursery complies with current legislation and guidance concerning the maintenance and driving of the school minibuses.
- To ensure that the safety of minibus users (both drivers and passengers), other road users and pedestrians is paramount at all times.
- To ensure that Silverhill School & Day Nursery is meeting its health and safety and safeguarding obligations towards all members of the school community.

Policy Statements

- The school follows guidance contained within Driving School Minibuses – Advice for Schools and Local Authorities (September 2013) which was published jointly by the Department for Education, Department for Transport and Association of Chief Police Officers.
- This policy and the procedures contained within it have been written to provide any members of staff who may need to drive vehicles on behalf of the school with the necessary knowledge and information in the light of growing legislation regarding the qualifications, insurance, operating, servicing and inspection requirements to safely operate our minibus and carry passengers.
- The behaviour and competence of the minibus drivers will be fully assessed to ensure the safe operation of the minibus and to keep employees and others free of harm.
- This policy and the procedures contained within it will be reviewed regularly as part of the school's Health and Safety review.

Roles and Responsibilities

Principals

- The Principals of Silverhill School & Day Nursery are responsible for ensuring that the school minibus operated on behalf of the school fully complies in every respect, with all legal transport and health and safety requirements. This responsibility is delegated to the Headmistress to ensure its appropriate implementation.
- To monitor the implementation of this policy through the Health and Safety review for it on a regular basis.

The Bursar

- The Bursar will ensure that the school has appropriate safety procedures for the minibus and will regularly review the risk-assessment to ensure the health and safety of the minibus users.
- Ensure that servicing of the minibus is performed at the correct mileage and that the service book kept is ready for inspection at any time.
- Ensure that mini-checks (fuel, water, oil and battery levels, tyre pressures and lights) are conducted by a trained member of the caretaking team on a monthly basis.
- The Bursar will arrange for appropriate insurance cover and for the payment of annual road tax.

Minibus Drivers

- Follow and comply fully with the requirements outlined in 'Procedures and Practices' section below.
- Ensure that pre-use checks of the vehicle are conducted and complete the Vehicle Check List (see Appendix One).
- Report any concerns about the safety and / or condition of the minibus to the Health and Safety Coordinator immediately.
- Familiarise themselves with the relevant ROSPA guidance.
- Understand the personal legal implications if procedures are not adhered to. For example, "It is the driver's licence that will suffer if the vehicle is found to be defective. It is also the driver's responsibility to ensure the safety (including the use of seat belts) and welfare of all passengers". ROSPA February 2008
- Comply fully with all road traffic laws, respecting speed limits and ensuring use of seatbelts at all times. For longer journeys, frequent rest breaks are to be taken.
- Inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team immediately if unfit to undertake a journey in order that alternative arrangements can be made.
- Never use a mobile phone (hand held or hands free) as the driver of the vehicle unless it is parked in a safe place with the engine switched off. Making genuine emergency 999 or 112 calls whilst driving is legal.

Procedures and Practices

Driver Eligibility - Persons Entitled To Drive the Minibus

- Drivers must be aged 25 or over and must have passed their test prior to January 1997.
- Drivers must be medically fit, legally qualified and have a clean licence to drive a minibus and are required to complete and sign a driver declaration form to that effect before driving the minibus.
- Staff with a medical condition that needs to be declared to the insurers/DVLA should advise the Bursar accordingly.
- The driver declaration form will be kept on file in the office and will be updated periodically.
- It is the licence holder's responsibility to notify the Bursar of any changes to the driver's licence.
- Only those named on the approved drivers list (a copy of which is held by the office) will be eligible to drive the school minibuses.

Vehicle Readiness and Maintenance

Servicing, MOT, Insurance and Taxation

- Servicing and MOT testing will be carried out at the appropriate intervals and in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations, by approved professionals.
- Trained members of the Caretaking team will conduct weekly mini-checks on fuel, water, oil and battery levels, tyre pressures and lights as required. A signed record will be maintained to demonstrate that these checks have been undertaken.

Minibus Bookings and Administration

- All bookings should be made through the office.
- A list of students and staff on the journey and journey details (to include departure and return times) is to 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 office when collecting the minibus keys (failure to do so may render the journey unauthorised for insurance purposes).
- The minibus is furnished with the procedures to follow in the event of an accident
- Drivers must return the vehicle's keys to the office on returning to school. If the minibus is being returned out of school hours, the keys should be handed in on the next working day.

Pre-Use Vehicle Checks

- The school minibus must be maintained to high levels. As well as MOT, servicing and half termly checks, drivers should satisfy themselves that the vehicle is safe to drive. If the serviceability of the vehicle is in doubt, it is not to be used until it has been repaired.
- Pre-use checks are to be recorded on the Vehicle Check List found in the Minibus File which must be signed for on collection and return of keys from the Finance Office. Completed Vehicle Check Lists are to be given to the office on return of the minibus who will take any action necessary. These lists will be retained by the School.
- Pre-use checks must include lights (headlights, hazards, brakes, reversing, side and indicators), horn, mirrors, doors (open, close and lock correctly), steering, seatbelts and windscreen wipers (including windscreen wiper wash). A walk around the vehicle should occur to check for damage / defects and to assess tyre condition.
- If the driver has concerns about the condition of the vehicle it must not be used and these concerns must be reported to the Bursar or office staff.
- Mileage records should be used to help monitor fuel consumption.
- Prior to the start of each journey, the driver is to go through a brief talk with students regarding the wearing of seatbelts, journey time, being seated at all times, behaviour, noise levels and escape procedures. The journey is not to commence unless the requirements of the driver are complied with.

Fuel

- A member of the Caretaking team will regularly check the school minibus to ensure that the vehicle has adequate fuel (ideally half a tank). It may, however, be necessary for the minibus driver to refuel whilst on a journey. If this is the case, it is permitted to refuel with diesel and claim any expenses back from the Bursar.

- The diesel level should not go below a quarter, this helps prevent primer damage and fuel tank sediment entering the engine.

Equipment

It is recommended that the following equipment is carried on board the Minibus. If items are used during a journey, please inform the First Aid team at school who will replenish supplies:

- Fully stocked First Aid kit and sick bucket including bags and blue roll.
- Fire Extinguisher - At least one fire extinguisher (which complies with BS 5432 or equivalent and has a minimum test rating of 8A or 21B) that contains foam.
- 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.
- Hi-Visibility Vest

Tidiness

- The Minibus should be left tidy. Eating and drinking on it should be discouraged (exceptions can be made in circumstances of long delay).
- Bin bags are to be carried and made available for rubbish.
- Dirty/muddy kit (especially boots and shoes) must not be worn in the minibus.

Vehicle Operation

Capacity

- No more than 14 children passengers, 2 adult passengers and a driver may be carried in the school minibus.

Seat Belts/Luggage

- Before setting off, the driver and/or driver's assistant must ensure that passengers are wearing seat belts and any luggage is securely stowed. Students are to be informed that seatbelts are to be worn at all times when the vehicle is in motion and should not be undone until told to do so.

Driving Rules

- Drivers are responsible for driving within the law and in accordance with the Highway Code
- The School will not refund fines or other costs incurred by drivers as a result of any road traffic or parking offence. Drivers must inform the Bursar of any penalty points received whilst using the school minibus; failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.
- National speed limits apply to the school minibus.
- It is school policy that under normal road conditions, a minibus should not be driven in the third lane of a motorway.
- Vehicles are not to be driven by anyone who has consumed any amount of alcohol or illegal substance.
- Some medication may impair a driver's ability and employees who are taking medicines of this nature are not to drive vehicles.

- All accidents, whether or not they cause injury to persons or damage to property, are to 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.
- Smoking is prohibited on the minibus at any time.

Driver's Assistant

- With the exception of short journeys, a second member of staff or an adult volunteer will normally be on every journey as the driver's assistant.
- For short journeys of less than thirty minutes duration an assistant should not be needed unless circumstances require one – the minibus risk assessment will determine if a driver's assistant is needed.
- This person should be positioned near the back of the minibus to observe behaviour and maintain good order. They can also make and receive phone calls so the driver does not have to. They should also help with reversing and need to be visible at all times to the reversing driver. They should assist in a breakdown or accident and can act as a relief driver if they are authorised to do so.

Reversing of vehicles

- Reversing vehicles can be particularly hazardous. The best way of avoiding a reversing accident is to avoid reversing a vehicle wherever possible.
- Always check behind your vehicle before reversing – if necessary, ask someone to watch the area into which you will be reversing.
- If you use a guide, ensure they can be seen at all times whilst manoeuvring – if two members of staff are present, one must at all times be the guide when reversing.
- Ensure rear view mirrors are clean and properly adjusted at all times.

Distraction during driving

- The use of mobile phones is strictly prohibited whilst operating the vehicle. There are other similar activities, which can be unsafe and thus may attract the attention of the police, such as drinking (soft drinks), eating, smoking, or even changing a radio channel. To this end, any action whilst driving, which could cause distraction must be avoided.

Tiredness

- 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.
- Drivers should use common sense to ascertain their suitability to drive at a given time (consider tiredness, recent alcohol or medicine consumption, illness etc).

Safety

- Whilst driving the minibus, drivers should ensure that all doors are unlocked to assist with emergency egress if the need arises.
- Drivers should ensure that internal lights are off whilst 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 go on spare seats and under seats.
- If a trailer is used, the back doors of the minibus need to be able to open fully to help students escape safely if necessary.
- Dealing with 'road rage':
 - If threatened by another driver, do not retaliate by flashing lights, sounding the horn or making offensive gestures; this only attracts a response and will often make a situation worse
 - If forced to stop, stay in the vehicle with windows closed and doors locked and be prepared to drive off
 - If necessary, use your mobile phone to contact the police for assistance
 - Note the registration number of the vehicle, and the make and colour, plus a description of the driver and occupants and give the police these details.
- 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 whilst driving on behalf of the school.

Security

- Whenever the vehicle is left unattended, all windows are to be closed and doors locked.

Accident and Breakdown Procedures

Breakdown Procedures

Standard breakdown procedures are to be followed where necessary:

- If on a public road, get out of the vehicle on the safe side – nearest the path or verge.
- If on a motorway, follow the instructions of the emergency operator, which may include staying in the vehicle, or getting out of the vehicle and not getting back into the vehicle again.
- 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.
- School should also be contacted, when practical, in the event of a breakdown.
- Staff should not change a tyre or attempt repairs. This should be carried out by a breakdown team.
- Follow the instructions on the information kept in the minibus on what to do in the event of a breakdown.

Accident

In the event of an accident:

- Deal with any injured persons.
- Ensure the safety of everyone involved.

- If necessary, call the emergency services.
- In all cases, stop at the scene and take the names, addresses and telephone numbers and insurance details of people involved, including independent witnesses. If safe to do so, take photos of the accident scene from various angles if possible. Breakdown procedures should be carried out if necessary.
- In the event of a serious incident, emergency contact numbers are available in the Minibus File (carried on all journeys).

General

Any member of staff who has queries relating to the driving of the school minibus or the condition of the vehicle should bring them to the attention of the Bursar or the office.

This policy was adopted by	Silverhill School & Day Nursery
Date	January 2019
Review Date	January 2020
Name of signatory	Jenifer Capper
Role of signatory	Headmistress