

# MINIBUS POLICY

THE SITTINGBOURNE SCHOOL



**Approved by:** Lynn Lawrence

**Review date:** March 2026

**Next review due by:** March 2028

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## 1. RATIONALE AND AIM

The policy relates to The Sittingbourne School (TSS) minibus transport. TSS has one minibus, which is leased. It also has access to other leased vehicles when needed. The minibus has a Section 19 Permit on display, and the School has 2 additional permits for use in hire buses.

The Transport Manager (a role fulfilled by the Site Manager) shall be responsible for ensuring that the School is compliant with all legal / permit obligations and that the fleet of minibuses remains in a legal and drivable state.

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## 2. POLICY

### AUTHORISATION TO DRIVE THE MINIBUS

- **Heavier Vehicles:** All drivers wishing to drive a minibus heavier than 3,500kg (or 4,250kg where a vehicle is fitted with specialist disabled access equipment) must hold a D1 license and have passed MiDAS training or the **Kent County Council** Drivers Assessment.
- **Lighter Vehicles:** Drivers wishing to drive a minibus under 3.5 tons must have a B license, be over 21, have held a license for 2+ years that meets specific weight/license criteria.

**Conditions for Driver Authorization Removal** A driver is authorised to drive until any of the following conditions are met (drivers must inform the Transport Manager if any of these occur):

1. Accumulating more than 6 live points on their license or committing a driving offence.
2. Having a collision resulting in significant damage to the minibus or 3rd party vehicle, unless clearly the fault of a third party.
3. Having a collision resulting in injury to passengers or third parties.
4. Having serious confirmed complaints about their driving.
5. Having a collision resulting in minor damage (dents, scratches, scrapes).
6. Acquiring a medical condition affecting driving ability.
7. Reaching 70 years of age without a medical certificate to satisfy insurance/DVLA requirements.

8. Not driving a minibus for more than 2 academic years.
9. A change in DBS clearance or an offence found during a license check.
10. Failure to provide a DVLA check code when requested.

### **Corrective Actions**

- **Points/Offences:** Drivers with over 6 points or active offences cannot drive until points are reduced or the offence is spent. A MiDAS course must be passed before resuming.
- **Collisions/Complaints:** A full MiDAS course must be retaken and passed.
- **Medical/Age:** The School may request a DVLA certified PCV medical and/or a MiDAS refresher/assessment drive.
- **Minor Damage/Inactivity:** At a minimum, drivers should undertake an assessment drive with a qualified MiDAS assessor.
- **DVLA Code:** Driving may resume once a successful and clear license check is completed.

### **DRIVING REQUIREMENTS & SAFETY**

- **License Checks:** The Transport Manager maintains a central record of driving licenses. Drivers must provide a "DVLA check code" annually or before MiDAS training.
- **Supervision:** On long-distance journeys, drivers should not have general supervisory responsibilities; an adequate number of additional adults must be present to supervise students.
- **Rest Breaks:** Drivers should aim for a 15-minute rest break after every 2 hours of driving, taken in a safe place.

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## **3. PROCEDURE**

### **ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS**

- **Minor (Drivable):** Ensure students are safe, record details of other vehicles (plate, insurance, driver name), take photos if possible, and notify the transport manager. Submit a report via Smartlog upon return.

- **Major (Not Drivable/Injuries):** Call emergency services immediately. Contact the senior staff member on call. Move staff and students to a safe area away from traffic; all must wear hi-vis jackets provided in the vehicle.

## **BREAKDOWN**

- Contact the breakdown service (details in the minibus log book).
- Move students to a safe area away from traffic and ensure they wear hi-vis jackets.
- If the vehicle cannot be repaired at the roadside, contact the senior staff member on call to arrange return transport.

## **MAINTENANCE**

- **Inspections:** Minibuses receive regular servicing, MOTs, and a regular safety inspection by an independent party.
  - **Weekly Checks:** The Transport Manager performs weekly checks during term time.
  - **Driver Responsibility:** Drivers must conduct a "Pre-drive safety check" and record it in the log book before every use.
  - **Fault Reporting:** Defects must be reported via email to the Transport Manager and recorded in the back of the log book.
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## **4. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Transport Manager. It will be reviewed every two years or as required.

**Next Review Date:** Spring 2028

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## **APPENDIX I - MINIBUS PROTOCOL**

1. Only authorized drivers can drive the minibus.
2. Complete a Pre-Drive Safety Check in the log book before departure.
3. Zero intake of alcohol or drugs.
4. Provide a register of students/staff and an itinerary to reception or the SLT member on call.
5. Use the designated fuel card for diesel and leave it in the bus.
6. Ensure all doors are unlocked before starting the journey.
7. Students must follow the code of conduct at all times.
8. Reverse into minibus parking spaces when returning to school.
9. On return: lock all doors, close windows, turn off lights, and remove all rubbish.
10. Return keys to Main Reception.

## APPENDIX II - Minibus Pre-Drive Safety Checklist

### Minibus Pre-Drive Safety Checklist

**School:** The Sittingbourne School

**Driver:** \_\_\_\_\_ | **Vehicle Reg:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1. External & Mechanical Checks

- **Tyres:** Check for adequate tread depth and correct pressure.
- **Lights/Indicators:** Ensure all headlights, brake lights, and indicators are functional.
- **Fluids:** Check oil, coolant, and windscreen washer levels.
- **Damage:** Inspect for any new minor dents, scratches, or scrapes.
- **Cleanliness:** Ensure all windows and mirrors are clean for clear visibility.

#### 2. Safety & Legal Compliance

- **Permit:** Verify that the Section 19 Permit is clearly on display.
- **Equipment:** Confirm the presence of hi-vis jackets for the driver and all passengers.
- **First Aid/Fire:** Ensure the first aid kit and fire extinguisher are on board and accessible.
- **Exit Safety:** Check that all doors are unlocked and emergency exits are unobstructed.

#### 3. Administrative Requirements

- **Log Book:** Ensure the journey details and start mileage are recorded.
- **Fuel:** Confirm the fuel card is present in the bus.
- **Register:** Provide a copy of the passenger register and itinerary to Reception (or SLT on call if out of hours).
- **Emergency Contact:** Confirm you have the Academy emergency contact numbers.

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### Post-Journey Procedures

Upon returning to the school, please ensure the following steps are completed to remain compliant with the policy:

- **Parking:** Reverse into a designated minibus parking space.
- **Vehicle State:** Close all windows, turn off lights, and lock all doors.
- **Cleanliness:** Remove all rubbish from the vehicle.
- **Reporting:** Note any new defects or damage in the back of the log book and email the Transport Manager at the designated school email address.
- **Keys:** Return keys to Main Reception or the Transport Manager immediately.

## APPENDIX III - **Student Minibus Code of Conduct**

To ensure safety and maintain the condition of the fleet at **The Sittingbourne School**, here is a draft "Minibus Code of Conduct" for students. This follows the requirement that students must follow a code of conduct at all times while using school transport.

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# **Student Minibus Code of Conduct**

## **The Sittingbourne School**

To ensure a safe and pleasant journey for everyone, all students are required to follow these rules. Failure to comply may result in the loss of transport privileges.

### **Boarding and Seating**

- **Seatbelts:** You must wear your seatbelt at all times. It must remain fastened until the driver tells you it is safe to unbuckle.
- **Remaining Seated:** Students must stay in their seats while the vehicle is in motion.
- **Bags and Aisles:** Keep the center aisle and emergency exits clear of bags and equipment at all times.

### **During the Journey**

- **Noise Levels:** Keep noise to a respectful level. Avoid sudden loud noises or shouting, as this can distract the driver.
- **Safety:** Do not lean out of windows, throw objects inside or outside the bus, or tamper with any vehicle controls or emergency exits.
- **Respect:** Follow all instructions given by the driver or the supervising staff member immediately and without argument.

### **Cleanliness and Care**

- **Litter:** You are responsible for your own rubbish. All litter must be taken with you when you leave the vehicle.

- **Food and Drink:** No eating or drinking is permitted on the minibus unless explicitly authorized by the staff member in charge.
  - **Vandalism:** Any damage caused to the vehicle by a student will be reported to the Academy Principal and may result in a bill for repairs.
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**Emergency Note:** In the event of a breakdown or accident, students must follow the driver to a designated area of safety and wear the hi-vis jackets provided.

## APPENDIX IV - **Minibus Driver Registration & Declaration**

This form is designed to help the Transport Manager at **The Sittingbourne School** collect the necessary information and ensure all drivers meet the legal and local requirements set out in the policy.

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# **Minibus Driver Registration & Declaration**

## **The Sittingbourne School**

All staff wishing to drive a school minibus must complete this form and return it to the Transport Manager (School Operations Manager). Authorization is subject to a successful license check and proof of qualification.

### **1. Driver Details**

- **Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Driving License Number:** \_\_\_\_\_
- **Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Must be between 21 and 70)
- **Length of Time License Held:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Minimum 2 years required)

### **2. Qualifications (Please attach copies)**

- **License Categories:** Do you hold a **D1** or **B** license?
- **Training:** Have you passed **MIDAS** training or the **Kent County Council** Drivers Assessment?
- **Date of Last Assessment:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **3. DVLA Share Code**

To comply with policy, the school must verify your license for "live" points and driving offences.

- **DVLA Check Code:** \_\_\_\_\_ (To generate a code, visit [www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence](http://www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence). Codes are case-sensitive and valid for 21 days).

#### 4. Driver Declaration

By signing below, I agree to the following conditions in accordance with The Sittingbourne School Minibus Policy:

- I have no more than 6 "live" points on my license.
- I will immediately inform the Transport Manager if I accumulate more than 6 points, commit a driving offence, or acquire a medical condition that affects my ability to drive.
- I understand that I am fully responsible for the vehicle during my journey, including conducting a "Pre-Drive Safety Check".
- I adhere to a zero-tolerance policy regarding alcohol and drugs while operating the vehicle.
- I will notify the Transport Manager of any collisions, damage, or faults as soon as practicable.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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#### For Office Use Only

\* **DBS Clearance Verified:** [ ] Yes [ ] No \* **DVLA Check Result:** Points: \_\_\_\_\_

/ Offences: \_\_\_\_\_ \* **Principal Authorization (if required):**

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