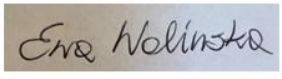
Minibus Policy

Approved by: **B.Suddhi**		**Date:**	September 2026
Last reviewed on:	September 2026		
Next review due by:	September 2027		

Signed by:

	Headteacher	Date:	September 2026
	Chair of governors	Date:	September 2026

Contents

1. Statement of Intent
2. Legal Framework
3. Roles and Responsibilities
4. Driver Eligibility and Authorisation
5. Risk Assessment and Journey Planning
6. Vehicle Management and Maintenance
7. Procedures Before and During Journeys
8. Passenger Safety and Supervision
9. Health and Fitness to Drive
10. Breakdowns and Emergencies
11. Accidents and Incidents
12. Insurance, Fuel and Financial Arrangements
13. Records and Documentation
14. Monitoring and Review

Appendix 1 – Minibus Pre-Use and Maintenance Checklist

Statement of Intent

Pear Tree Infant and Nursery School recognises that the school minibus provides a valuable means of transport for educational visits, sporting activities, community activities and other authorised school business.

The school is committed to ensuring that the minibus is operated safely, legally and responsibly.

The safety of pupils, staff and other road users is the school's primary consideration whenever the minibus is used.

This policy sets out the arrangements for:

- authorising and assessing minibus drivers;
- maintaining the vehicle in a safe and roadworthy condition;
- planning journeys;
- ensuring appropriate supervision;
- protecting pupils and staff;
- responding to breakdowns and accidents; and
- maintaining appropriate records.

The minibus will only be used where the school is satisfied that the vehicle, driver, journey and supervision arrangements are appropriate and safe.

1. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to relevant legislation and guidance, including:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Road Traffic Act 1988
- Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986
- Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations 1999
- Road Safety Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- relevant vehicle insurance requirements
- relevant DVLA/DVSA requirements
- Department for Education and Department for Transport guidance on driving school minibuses
- current Highway Code requirements
- relevant child restraint and seat-belt requirements
- Section 19 permit requirements, where applicable.

The school will ensure that the minibus is operated in accordance with the driver's licence entitlement and the legal conditions applying to the vehicle and its use.

DfE/DfT guidance confirms that a minibus is generally a vehicle with between 9 and 16 passenger seats. Drivers holding full D1 or D entitlement may drive minibuses subject to the conditions of their licence. Certain category B licence holders may also drive a minibus without a full D1 entitlement where the statutory conditions are met.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's:

- Educational Visits Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Administering Medicines Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Risk Assessment arrangements
- Emergency Procedures
- Staff Code of Conduct.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Governing Board

The Governing Board will:

- ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for the safe use of school vehicles;
- monitor the effectiveness of the school's health and safety arrangements; and
- review this policy as required.

2.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- have overall responsibility for the safe operation of the school minibus;
- authorise appropriate staff to drive the minibus;
- ensure appropriate risk assessments are in place;
- ensure that significant incidents are investigated;
- ensure that appropriate insurance arrangements are maintained; and
- ensure that drivers and supervisors understand their responsibilities.

2.3 School Business Manager

The School Business Manager will:

- maintain appropriate vehicle documentation;
- monitor MOT, servicing and insurance dates;
- maintain records of authorised drivers;
- ensure that the vehicle is appropriately taxed/licensed where required;
- coordinate routine maintenance and servicing;
- maintain breakdown and recovery arrangements;
- manage fuel arrangements;
- maintain relevant inspection and defect records; and
- ensure that appropriate financial records are retained.

2.4 Drivers

Drivers are responsible for:

- only driving where they have been authorised by the school;
- ensuring they hold the appropriate licence entitlement;
- complying with all applicable road traffic laws;
- completing the required pre-use checks;
- ensuring that the vehicle is not driven if it is unsafe or unroadworthy;
- ensuring passengers are seated safely and seat belts are used;
- following the planned route unless circumstances require a reasonable change;
- driving appropriately for the road, weather and traffic conditions;
- not using a hand-held mobile phone while driving;
- reporting defects, incidents and concerns;
- ensuring that they are fit to drive; and
- following this policy and all relevant school procedures.

2.5 Teaching and Support Staff

Those supervising will:

- supervise pupils appropriately;
- ensure pupils follow the driver's safety instructions;
- monitor seat-belt use;
- manage behaviour without distracting the driver;
- ensure emergency exits remain accessible;
- ensure pupils are appropriately supervised during stops and emergencies;
- carry relevant pupil information and emergency contacts; and
- assist the driver in an emergency where appropriate.

The driver remains responsible for the safe operation of the vehicle and must not be distracted by managing passenger behaviour.

2.6 Passengers

Passengers must:

- follow the driver's and supervising adults' instructions;
- wear their seat belt where fitted;
- remain seated while the vehicle is moving;
- behave appropriately;
- avoid distracting the driver;
- keep aisles and emergency exits clear;
- treat the vehicle respectfully; and
- follow emergency instructions.

3. Driver Eligibility and Authorisation

No member of staff may drive the school minibus unless they have been authorised by the Headteacher, and have passed the Derby City Council minibus test.

Before authorisation, the school will check:

- the driver's current driving licence;
- relevant licence categories and restrictions;
- any relevant endorsements or penalty points;
- required experience;
- completion of the school's minibus driver assessment/training;
- any relevant medical requirements;
- insurance requirements; and
- the driver's competence to operate the particular vehicle.

The school will retain appropriate evidence that these checks have been completed.

3.1 Licence Entitlement

A member of staff may drive the school minibus where their driving licence legally permits them to do so and all conditions attached to that entitlement are satisfied.
A driver with a full D1 or D entitlement may drive a minibus subject to the conditions of their licence.

Certain drivers who passed their category B driving test before 1 January 1997 may have D1(101) entitlement allowing them to drive a minibus not being used for hire or reward.

Drivers who passed their category B test on or after 1 January 1997 may, in certain circumstances, drive a minibus under the relevant category B exemption. This is subject to conditions including:

- being at least 21 years old;
- having held a category B licence for at least two years;
- the vehicle being used by a non-commercial body for social purposes;
- receiving no payment other than genuine out-of-pocket expenses;
- driving on a voluntary basis;

- the vehicle's relevant weight limit being met; and
- not towing a trailer.

The school will check the specific legal position for the vehicle and proposed use before authorising a driver.

Current DfE/DfT guidance confirms these arrangements and should be consulted where there is any uncertainty.

3.2 Section 19 Permits

Where the minibus is being operated under a Section 19 permit, the school will ensure that:

- the permit is valid;
- the vehicle displays the required permit disc;
- the vehicle and service meet the requirements of the scheme;
- drivers meet the applicable requirements; and
- the school follows any conditions attached to the permit.
-

Section 19 permits allow qualifying non-profit-making organisations to provide transport for their members where the relevant conditions are met.

If the school is uncertain whether a particular use constitutes hire or reward or whether a Section 19 permit is required, advice will be obtained before the journey takes place.

3.3 Driver Competence

All school-authorised drivers will complete Derby City Council’s minibus driver assessment.

The assessment will consider, as appropriate:

- vehicle familiarisation;
- safe manoeuvring;
- reversing;
- use of mirrors;
- passenger safety;
- emergency procedures;
- vehicle checks;
- journey planning;
- awareness of vehicle dimensions and weight;
- appropriate speed and road positioning;
- handling different road conditions; and
- the driver's ability to respond safely to foreseeable situations.

Drivers will normally be reassessed at least every four years, or sooner following:

- an accident;
- a significant driving incident;
- a serious complaint or concern;
- a change in the vehicle;

- a significant change in the driver's circumstances; or
- where the Headteacher considers reassessment appropriate.

The school may require additional training or assessment where necessary.

4. Risk Assessment and Journey Planning

The school will undertake appropriate risk assessments for the operation of the minibus.

Risk assessments will consider:

- the vehicle;
- the driver;
- passengers and their individual needs;
- supervision;
- the proposed route;
- weather and road conditions;
- traffic conditions;
- journey length;
- planned stops;
- emergency arrangements;
- breakdown arrangements;
- first aid;
- medicines;
- SEND and mobility requirements;
- safeguarding;
- accessibility;
- vehicle loading and luggage;
- fatigue;
- arrival and departure arrangements; and
- any particular hazards associated with the destination.

A separate or additional risk assessment will be completed where the circumstances of a particular journey create additional risks.

4.1 Journey Planning

Before a journey, the driver and visit leader will ensure that:

- the route is suitable for a minibus;
- the journey time is realistic;
- suitable stopping points are identified where required;
- appropriate supervision is in place;
- the weather forecast and relevant travel conditions have been considered;
- the vehicle has sufficient fuel;
- emergency contacts are available;
- relevant pupil medical information is available;
- the school knows the intended destination and expected return time; and
- alternative arrangements can be made if the journey cannot safely continue.

Routes should avoid unsuitable roads, low bridges, narrow routes or other hazards where an alternative route is reasonably available.

The driver must use their professional judgement and may change or abandon a planned route if conditions make continuing unsafe.

5. Vehicle Management and Maintenance

The minibus must be maintained in a safe and roadworthy condition.

The School Business Manager will maintain records of:

- MOT;
- servicing;
- insurance;
- taxation/licensing where applicable;
- breakdown/recovery cover;
- repairs;
- defects;
- maintenance checks;
- safety equipment; and
- relevant permits.

The vehicle will receive servicing and maintenance in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements and any additional requirements identified by the school, insurer or competent maintenance provider.

5.1 Pre-Use Checks

Before each journey, the driver will carry out an appropriate visual and operational check. This should include, as appropriate:

- tyres and visible tyre condition;
- lights and indicators;
- mirrors;
- windows and windscreen;
- wipers and washers;
- brakes;
- steering;
- fluid levels;
- fuel;
- doors and emergency exits;
- seat belts;
- seats and passenger restraints;
- horn;
- warning lights;
- vehicle bodywork;
- emergency equipment;
- first aid kit;

- fire extinguisher; and
- general cleanliness and condition.

The driver should also undertake a suitable brake test before travelling.

A defect that may affect the safety or roadworthiness of the vehicle must be reported immediately.

The minibus must not be used where a defect makes it unsafe or unlawful to do so.

5.2 Maintenance Checklist

A formal maintenance inspection will be undertaken at appropriate intervals by a designated competent person.

The school will retain records of defects and actions taken.

The existing weekly maintenance checklist will be retained as **Appendix 1**, but it will be used as a maintenance/inspection record rather than as a substitute for the driver's pre-use safety check.

5.3 Vehicle Capacity

The minibus must never carry more passengers than the number permitted by:
- the vehicle manufacturer's specification;
- the vehicle registration/documentation;
- the relevant licence or permit;
- the available properly fitted passenger seats and restraints; or
- any other applicable legal requirement.
-

The school's current minibus is configured for the number of passengers specified in its vehicle documentation. The configuration must not be altered without appropriate approval.

6. Procedures Before and During Journeys

6.1 Keys

Minibus keys will be stored securely in the school office.

Drivers will sign the keys out before use and return them promptly after the vehicle has returned to school.

6.2 Before Departure

The driver will ensure that:
- they are authorised to drive;
- they are fit to drive;
- the vehicle is roadworthy;

- required checks have been completed;
- there is sufficient fuel;
- the route has been planned;
- passenger numbers are confirmed;
- appropriate supervision is available;
- emergency contacts are available;
- relevant medicines and medical information are available where required;
- luggage is safely secured; and
- all passengers are seated appropriately.

6.3 During the Journey

The driver will:

- comply with the Highway Code and speed limits;
- drive according to road, traffic and weather conditions;
- avoid unnecessary distractions;
- not use a hand-held mobile phone;
- only use navigation equipment in a safe and lawful manner;
- stop in a safe location before dealing with any issue that requires attention;
- take appropriate breaks on longer journeys; and
- stop the journey if continuing would be unsafe.

6.4 Mobile Phones

The driver must not use a hand-held mobile phone while driving.

A designated member of staff may carry an emergency mobile phone for contact with the school.

The driver must pull over safely and stop the vehicle before making or taking a call where this is necessary.

6.5 Communication

A nominated person at school should know:

- the destination;
- planned route where appropriate;
- departure time;
- expected arrival time;
- expected return time;
- contact details for the responsible member of staff; and
- any relevant emergency information
- .

Parents/carers will receive appropriate information through the school's normal educational visit arrangements.

7. Passenger Safety and Supervision

All passengers must remain seated while the vehicle is moving unless there is a genuine emergency.

Seat belts must be worn where fitted.

For organised trips involving children, the school will ensure that the vehicle has appropriate seating and seat-belt provision for the passengers being carried.

Current Government guidance confirms specific seat-belt and child-restraint requirements for minibuses, including requirements relating to children and organised trips.

7.1 Child Restraints

The school will follow the legal requirements applying to child restraints in minibuses.

The current Government guidance confirms that minibus operators do not generally have to provide child car seats, but children aged three or over must use a suitable child seat if one is available, or an adult seat belt where a suitable child restraint is not available or appropriate.

Children must travel in rear seats where the relevant conditions apply.

Where the school provides child restraints, they must:

- be appropriate for the child;
- be compatible with the vehicle;
- be correctly fitted;
- be maintained in good condition; and
- be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

The school will consider individual pupils' needs when planning transport, including SEND, postural support and mobility requirements.

Any specialist restraint or postural support equipment must be appropriately assessed and compatible with the vehicle before use.

7.2 Seating Arrangements

Seating arrangements will be determined according to:

- the vehicle's approved configuration;
- passenger safety;
- age and needs of pupils;
- supervision requirements;
- SEND requirements;
- emergency access; and
- any relevant risk assessment.

An adult supervisor should be positioned where they can effectively supervise passengers and assist in an emergency.

The driver must not be distracted by supervising pupils.

7.3 Behaviour

Pupils must:

- remain seated;
- use seat belts appropriately;
- keep hands, feet and belongings inside the vehicle;
- avoid shouting or distracting the driver;
- follow instructions promptly;
- not move around the vehicle while it is moving; and
- behave respectfully towards other road users.

Food and drink should not normally be consumed while the vehicle is moving, unless required for a medical reason or where specifically agreed for a particular journey.

8. Health and Fitness to Drive

Drivers must be fit to drive and must not drive if they are impaired by:

- illness;
- fatigue;
- alcohol;
- illegal drugs;
- medication;
- lack of sleep; or
- any other factor that could affect safe driving.
-

Where prescribed or over-the-counter medication may affect driving, the driver must seek appropriate advice before driving.

A driver who feels that they are becoming unfit to drive during a journey must stop at the first safe opportunity and inform the responsible member of staff.

The school will make alternative arrangements where necessary.

8.1 Fatigue and Breaks

Journey planning will take account of driver fatigue.

For longer journeys, appropriate rest breaks will be planned.

The school will not expect a driver to continue driving when they are too tired to do so safely. Where a journey is sufficiently long or demanding, a second authorised driver may be required.

The school will assess the need for a second driver based on journey length, timing, traffic, road conditions and the driver's working day rather than applying an arbitrary rule to every journey.

9. Breakdowns and Emergencies

In the event of a breakdown, the driver should:

1. stop in the safest available location;
2. switch on hazard warning lights where appropriate;
3. switch off the engine where appropriate;
4. contact the breakdown provider;
5. contact the school as soon as reasonably practicable;
6. follow the breakdown provider's instructions; and
7. keep passengers appropriately supervised.

The safety of passengers and staff takes priority over recovering the vehicle.

Passengers should not leave the vehicle unless doing so is safer than remaining inside. Where passengers need to leave the vehicle, they should move to a safe location away from moving traffic, where practicable.

On motorways or other high-speed roads, the driver and supervising adults must follow the relevant emergency procedures and instructions from the police, National Highways or breakdown provider.

Passengers must remain supervised at all times.

Pupils must never be left unsupervised.

If the vehicle cannot continue its journey, the school will arrange appropriate alternative transport.

10. Accidents and Incidents

In the event of an accident:

1. the vehicle will be stopped safely;
2. emergency services will be contacted where necessary;
3. first aid will be provided within the limits of staff training;
4. pupils will be kept together and supervised;
5. the school will be contacted as soon as reasonably practicable;
6. parents/carers will be informed through the appropriate school arrangements;
7. relevant details will be recorded; and
8. the vehicle will not continue if it is unsafe or unroadworthy.
9.

The driver must not admit liability or make statements on behalf of the school or its insurer. The school will notify its insurer and any other relevant organisation where required.

Any accident involving injury, significant damage or another reportable circumstance will be investigated.

Where applicable, the school will consider whether an incident is reportable under RIDDOR.

Following an accident or significant incident, the school will review:

- the vehicle;
- the driver;
- the journey;
- the risk assessment;
- supervision;
- maintenance records; and
- any other relevant circumstances.

The driver may be required to complete a further competency assessment before driving the minibus again.

11. Insurance, Fuel and Financial Arrangements

The school will ensure that appropriate insurance arrangements are in place for the minibus and its intended use. This is managed by Derby City Council.

The School Business Manager will retain appropriate evidence of insurance and ensure that any relevant conditions are understood and complied with.

Drivers must not use the vehicle for purposes outside those authorised by the school.

11.1 Fuel

The school uses its designated **FuelGenie** fuel account/card for the minibus.

The fuel card must only, and can only be used for the school minibus.

Drivers must retain receipts in accordance with the school's financial procedures and provide them to the School Business Manager.

The minibus registration should be clearly associated with the designated fuel card.

12. Records and Documentation

The school will maintain appropriate records including:

- authorised driver list;
- driving licence checks;
- driver competency assessments;
- training records;
- insurance;
- MOT;
- servicing;
- maintenance and defect records;

- vehicle checks;
- relevant permits;
- breakdowns;
- accidents and incidents;
- risk assessments; and
- other records required by the school, insurer or relevant legislation.

Records will be retained securely in accordance with the school's Records Management and Retention arrangements.

13. Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher and School Business Manager will monitor the safe use of the minibus.

This will include consideration of:

- accidents and incidents;
- vehicle defects;
- breakdowns;
- driver competency;
- maintenance records;
- insurance requirements;
- staff feedback;
- pupil safety;
- risk assessments; and
- changes to legislation or official guidance.

This policy will be reviewed **annually**, or sooner where:

- legislation changes;
- Government guidance changes;
- the school acquires a different vehicle;
- there is a significant accident or incident;
- there is a change to how the minibus is used; or
- a significant safety concern is identified.

Next scheduled review: September 2027.

All authorised drivers and supervisors must familiarise themselves with this policy and any relevant risk assessments before undertaking a journey.

Appendix 1 – Minibus Pre-Use and Maintenance Checklist
Vehicle registration: _____
Date: _____
Mileage: _____
Driver: _____

Check	OK / N/A	Defect / Action Required	Reported / Date
Fuel level			
Tyres – condition			
Tyres – pressure			
Tyre tread			
Wheels / wheel nuts			
Lights and indicators			
Brake lights			
Hazard warning lights			
Windscreen and windows			
Windscreen wipers and washers			
Mirrors			
Engine oil			
Coolant			
Brake fluid			
Battery / warning lights			
Brakes			
Steering			
Horn			
Doors and locks			
Emergency exits			
Seat belts and buckles			
Passenger seats / fixings			
Fire extinguisher			
First aid kit			
Warning triangle / emergency equipment			
Jack / wheel brace / vehicle equipment			
Number plates			
Bodywork			
Exhaust / unusual smoke			
Interior condition			
Exterior condition			
Fuel card present			

Check	OK / N/A	Defect Required / Action Reported / Date
Breakdown information present		
Insurance / vehicle documentation		

Driver Declaration

I confirm that I have completed the required pre-use checks and have reported any defect that may affect the safety or roadworthiness of the vehicle.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Defects reported to: _____

Action taken: _____