



MINIBUS POLICY

1. RATIONALE AND AIM

The policy relates to Samuel Whitbread Academy (SWA) minibus transport. SWA has 6 minibuses, all of these are leased. Each leased minibuses has a Section 19 Permit on display and the Academy has 2 additional permits for use in hire buses.

The transport manager (a role fulfilled by the School Operations Manager) shall be responsible for ensuring that the Academy is compliant with all legal / permit obligations and that the fleet of minibuses remain in a legal and drivable state

2. POLICY

AUTHORISATION TO DRIVE THE MINIBUS

All drivers that wish to drive a minibuses heavier than 3,500kgs (or 4,250kgs where a vehicle is fitted with specialist disabled access equipment) must hold a D1 license and have passed MiDAS training or the Central Bedfordshire Drivers Assessment. Drivers wishing to drive a minibuses under 3.5 tons, must have a B license and have also passed MiDAS training or the Central Bedfordshire Drivers Assessment.

The driver is authorized to drive until any of the conditions below are met (all drivers have a duty of care to inform the transport manager if any condition below is met during the school year):

1. Accumulating more than 6 live points on their license or committing a driving offence
2. Have a collision resulting in significant damage to the minibuses or 3rd party vehicle as determined by the Transport Manager and Academy Principal, unless it was clearly the fault of a third party
3. Have a collision resulting in injury to passengers/third parties in the minibuses unless it was clearly the fault of a third party
4. Have serious complaints about their driving confirmed
5. Have a collision resulting in minor damage to the minibuses or 3rd party vehicle as determined by the Transport Manager and Academy Principal, unless it was clearly the fault of a third party. Light damage would likely be considered minor dents, scratches, scrapes or paint damage.
6. Acquire a medical condition that would affect their ability to drive
7. They reach 70 years of age & cannot provide a medical certificate to satisfy the insurance / DVLA licensing requirements
8. Not driven a minibuses for more than 2 academic years (this a local condition)
9. There is a change in DBS clearance or an offence is found during a license check
10. A DVLA check code is not provided when requested, usually in preparation for the start of the academic year or before completing an internal MiDAS course

Should any of the above conditions be 'triggered' the proposed corrective actions are suggested as follows (although the academy reserves the right to suggest/implement alternative actions subject to the context of the above):

1 – The driver will not be permitted to drive the Academy minibuses whilst the number of active points exceeds 6 and/or the offence is not considered spent and therefore shows as active on a DVLA licence check. When the number of live points no longer exceeds 6 and/or the offence is considered spent, the driver will need to pass a MiDAS course before they will be authorized to drive again. At the discretion of the Academy principal and the transport manager, and where the offence/points are low risk, the driver may be permitted to continue driving after successful completion of a full MiDAS course.

2 to 4 - A full MiDAS course would need to be taken and passed before the member of staff would be permitted to drive the minibuses again.

6. - We may, at our discretion, request a DLVA certified PCV medical before the member of staff drives the minibuses again. Additionally, we may request a MiDAS refresher or assessment drive with a MiDAS assessor is completed. In all cases, the DLVA/Health Service guidance will be followed and Trust Insurers informed as necessary.

7. We may, at our discretion, request a DLVA certified PCV medical before the member of staff drives the minibuses again. Additionally, we may request a MiDAS refresher or assessment drive with a MiDAS assessor is completed. In all cases, the DLVA/Health Service guidance will be followed and Trust Insurers informed as necessary.

5 & 8. At a minimum, drivers should undertake an assessment drive with a qualified MiDAS assessor with the same criteria being used but may, at our discretion, not be required to undertake the full MiDAS course.

9. HR advice will be sought; these issues will be handled on a case by case basis.

10. – The driver will be allowed to resume driving once a successful & clear check of their license has been completed.

A central record of copies of driving licenses are held for those members of staff who are authorized to drive the minibuses and this is kept up to date by the transport manager or designate.

In preparation for the start of each academic year, or before a driver undertakes a MiDAS course, drivers should provide the transport manager or designate with a 'DVLA check code'.

The purpose of the driving license check is to ensure that a driver has not accrued more than 6 'live' points, no offences have been committed, they are still appropriately licensed to drive the vehicles and restrictions on their license are noted.

Records of the license checks shall be kept on the central drivers list.

When a member of staff is driving a minibus on a long-distance journey, it is not acceptable to expect them to exercise general supervisory responsibilities during the journey. The governors, therefore, require that there is an adequate number of adults to drive and supervise the students.

In accordance with the requirements of Section 19 Permits, drivers should have aim to have a 15-minute rest break after every 2 hours of driving. Rest breaks should only be taken when safe to do so and in a safe place eg service station.

At the academy's discretion, with advanced notification to the EVC / transport manger and with the Principal's approval (usually in an emergency or to use the vehicle without students on board), a member of staff without MiDAS training or the Central Bedfordshire Drivers Assessment may drive the minibuses as long as the following criteria is met:

- The minibus has 9 – 16 passenger seats plus the driver with an Academy Section 19 Permit
- They are a direct employee of the trust
- They have held their driving licence for two years or longer
- They are aged between 21 and 70
- They are appropriately licensed to drive the vehicle
- If the driver only has a category B license, the Maximum Authorised Mass (MAM) is 3,500kgs if a conventional minibus or 4,250kgs if an accessible minibus with passengers lift or ramp

3. PROCEDURE

DRIVING THE MINIBUSES

All drivers must follow the Minibus Protocol – see appendix I.

If the minibus is unavailable, the insurance allows drivers to use any available BEST minibus with the Academy's permission.

Any BEST member of staff driving an SWA minibus shall be subject to the same licence check requirements as SWA employees and the transport manager (or designate) should seek assurance that the BEST driver is suitably trained (eg MiDAS)

ACCIDENTS / INCIDENTS

MINOR - The minibus is still legal, roadworthy and drivable

If an accident occurs, the minibus driver or additional member of staff should ensure that the students are safe and uninjured.

The driver should ensure that the details of other vehicles at the scene are taken and recorded in the minibus journey log book e.g. type of vehicle, number plate, insurance details. the name and address of other driver(s). Where possible photographs should be taken of the accident / incident to assist with any insurance claim. The driver should notify the transport manager of the accident as soon as practicable.

Upon returning to the Academy, the driver should submit a motor accident report form via Smartlog and pass along the report number to the transport manager or designate. If applicable, accident forms should be completed via Smartlog for all injured passengers and driver regardless of severity.

MAJOR - The minibus is not drivable or injuries sustained to staff or students

The driver must telephone the emergency services and ensure students are safe as a priority.

Then telephone the senior member of staff on call to advise them of the incident. The senior staff member will assess the situation and advise accordingly. The senior member of staff should contact the transport manager for further advice if necessary.

The staff and students must go to an area of safety away from traffic and staff must stay with the students at all times. There are sufficient hi-vis jackets available on each vehicle for the driver and passengers which must be worn in this situation.

The driver or additional staff member should keep the senior staff member up to date on events at all times.

Upon returning to the Academy, the driver should submit a motor accident report form via Smartlog and pass along the report number to the transport manager or designate. If applicable, accident forms should be completed via Smartlog for all injured passengers and driver regardless of severity.

BREAKDOWN

Details of the breakdown services (provided as part of the lease agreement) can be found in the log book of each minibus. If the driver cannot make contact with the breakdown company, they should seek further advice from the senior staff member on call or the transport manager.

If the minibus breaks down, the driver must call the break down services who will attempt to repair the vehicle and if unable to, will arrange for the minibus to be towed back to the academy.

The staff and students must go to an area of safety away from traffic and stay with the students at all times. There are sufficient hi vis jackets available on each vehicle for the driver and passengers which must be worn in this situation.

If the minibus cannot be repaired at the roadside then the driver must call the senior member of staff on call who will arrange transport to return the staff and students to the Academy.

MAINTENANCE & INSURANCE

The minibuses will be serviced at the regular recommended intervals and have a valid MOT certificate.

Insurance is arranged centrally by the Trust and a copy of the motor fleet certificate of insurance is provided to the Academy.

Each minibus will have a 10 week safety inspection carried out by an independent party to ensure that each minibus remains roadworthy and compliant with the Academy's Section 19 Permit obligations.

During term time, weekly checks of the minibuses will be carried out by the transport manager or designate, these are recorded in a central log. If minibuses are used outside of term time, the transport manager should ensure a weekly inspection has been completed and recorded before use.

The driver is responsible for ensuring they conduct a 'Pre-drive safety check' of the minibus to ensure it is in a safe and legal condition, there are prompts for areas to check in the log book. These checks along with the journey information should be recorded in the log book each time a minibus is used.

Defects or damage should be noted in the back of the log book and reported via email to the Transport manager (SWA-Transport@bestacademies.org.uk). The Transport manager should ensure that the issue is rectified or made safe before the minibus is used again, actions should be recorded in the back of the log book.

Records of maintenance jobs and booked repairs are kept on the SWA-Transport calendar. This is also, to include upcoming safety inspections, repairs, MOT and service in accordance with Permit requirements.

COMPLETING MiDAS with SWA (including delivery on behalf of BEST)

The Academy Operations Manager is trained to assess Standard and Accessible MiDAS courses on behalf of the Trust. Drivers wishing to undertake MiDAS should meet the following criteria.

- Be between 21 and 70 years old (if older than 70, insurance must be informed prior and a DVLA PCV medical completed)
- Have a clean license with no offences and no more than 3 points (if offences are present or there are between 3 and 6 points, the Academy principal should be notified and asked for their decision on proceeding). If serious offences or more than 6 points are on the drivers license, their MiDAS place should be cancelled.
- Have had their license for at least 2 years
- Are medically fit to drive a minibus (where there is doubt, a DVLA PCV medical may need to be completed)
- Are a driver acceptable to the relevant Academy principal
- Have the support of their line manager and, where different, relevant budget holder to undertake the course.

There is a risk assessment in place for the delivery of MiDAS, delegates or Academy Principals may obtain a copy of this upon request.

Drivers and the Assessor should work/drive in accordance with the MiDAS framework at all times.

4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The effectiveness of this policy will be regularly monitored by the Transport Manager.

5.IMPLEMENTATION & REVIEW

This policy will be circulated to all academy staff and published on the academy website for parent / carer information. The policy will be reviewed two yearly or as required.

6.AUTHOR & DATE

School Operations Manager (Amanda Salzen) - May 2014

Updated (AS) - June 2016

Updated (RC) - November 2018

Updated (RC) – November 2020

Updated (JH & ZR) – November 2022

Updated (BW & NJM) – June 2023

Updated (BW) – July 2025

Date ratified by Governors – July 2025

Next review date – July 2027

7.APPENDICES

APPENDIX I - MINIBUS PROTOCOL

- 1) Only an authorized driver can drive the mini minibus. - **SEE MINIBUS POLICY**
- 2) The driver must check vehicle before departure and complete a Pre-Drive Safety Check and record this in the vehicles log book.
- 3) Drivers are required to have a zero intake of alcohol / drugs that may affect their ability to drive. They must also ensure any restrictions or requirements on their licence are being adhered to.
- 4) The driver is fully responsible for vehicle.
- 5) Ensure reception, or if out of hours, the SLT member on call are given a register of students and staff on board and an itinerary for the journey.
- 6) Where possible, diesel should be purchased from a designated garage on account -Jet Shefford, **J R FORD & SONS, SHEFFORD** using the fuel card. The fuel card must be left in the bus.
- 7) The driver must ensure that all the doors are unlocked before journey starts.
- 8) The driver must have the academy emergency contact number and familiarise themselves with the contact numbers / procedures in the log book.
- 9) Students must follow the minibus code of conduct at all times.
- 10) When parking at school, please reverse into one of the minibus parking spaces.
- 11) On return, the driver must ensure all doors locked, windows closed, lights are off and the log has been properly completed.
- 12) The driver to ensure that all rubbish is removed from vehicle.
- 13) The driver must report any faults to the Transport Manager, this can be done by email to SWA-Transport@bestacademies.org.uk. Faults / damage or safety defects must also be recorded in the back of the log.
- 14) After the journey, the driver must the keys to Main Reception, or if using a spare key, the transport manager.