Nurture Education Trust

Minibus Policy

Date policy last reviewed: 28/09/2026

Signed by:

M.Anderson	Head of Centre	Date:	28/09/2026
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Statement of intent

Nurture Education Trust understands that minibuses are a useful form of transport, and are often required for outings such as educational visits or trips.

The school also understands that safety on the minibus, and of the minibus itself, is paramount when travelling. As a result, this policy has been created to provide guidance on the responsibilities and procedures associated with the use of minibuses.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory and non-statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Road Traffic Act 1988 (As amended)
- The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licenses) Regulations 1999 (As amended 2015)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- DfE and Department for Transport 'Driving school minibuses: advice for schools and local authorities'
- RoSPA 'Minibus Safety: A Code of Practice'
- GOV.UK 'Child car seats: the law'
- GOV.UK 'Seat belts: the law'
- NASUWT 'Use of Minibuses – Joint guidance issued by NASUWT, GMB, UNISON and Unite to Members in Great Britain'.

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Educational Visits and School Trips Policy
- Administering Medication Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Office Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring that a full MOT on the school minibus is carried out by the required date.
- Providing appropriate tax and licensing for the minibus.
- Ensuring that the minibus is appropriately insured, and roadside assistance is organised.

The Head of Centre is responsible for:

- Ensuring that a second driver is available when appropriate.
- Setting minimum criteria for the minibus driver and ensuring they conform to it.
- Undertaking generic and specific risk assessments.
- Handling any maintenance reports.

- Establishing an emergency procedure in the event of accidents or breakdowns.
- Ensuring that a checklist is available for inspection in the minibus, detailing the checks that should be made.
- Ensuring minibus drivers are aware and have a copy of the procedures to follow in the event of an emergency or breakdown.
- Reviewing this policy.

The driver is responsible for:

- Ensuring that they are eligible to drive as per the eligibility requirements outlined in this policy.
- Adhering to all relevant road rules and laws, including any driving hours regulations.
- Ensuring that all passengers are wearing a seatbelt.
- Ensuring that the minibus is roadworthy in accordance with the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations (England, Scotland, Wales) 1986.
- Undertaking checks and entering data into the vehicle log book.
- Ensuring that the minibus is used for the purposes outlined in the insurance policy.

Supervisors are responsible for:

- Taking headcounts when boarding and exiting the minibus to ensure everyone is accounted for.
- Keeping a record of the names and contact numbers for any pupils travelling in the minibus.
- Ensuring that passengers continue to wear their seatbelts throughout the journey.
- Ensuring that passengers model good levels of behaviour, and responding to any disruption appropriately.
- Ensuring that passengers do not consume food or drink on the minibus.
- Ensuring that there is at least one first aider on the minibus.

Passengers are responsible for:

- Following all instructions issued by the driver and supervisors.
- Wearing their seatbelt at all times during the journey.
- Conducting good levels of behaviour, and not distracting the driver.
- Conducting good levels of behaviour towards drivers in other vehicles.
- Keeping all exits clear for the duration of the journey.

3. Eligibility

No staff member will be required to drive a minibus unless there is an explicit requirement to do so within their contract of employment. Staff members will not be required or coerced into driving a minibus against their wishes.

A minibus is defined as a motor vehicle with between 9 and 16 passenger seats. It is described as a category D1 vehicle by the Driving Vehicle Licencing Authority (DVLA).

To be eligible to drive a minibus for hire or reward, drivers will hold a full D1 (or D) passenger carrying vehicle (PCV) entitlement. All drivers of the minibus will be between the ages of 21 and 70. Before any individual is permitted to drive the minibus, they are required to provide their driver's licence to the headteacher, who will record confirmation of this and make a photocopy for school records.

If the Head of Centre is not satisfied that the driver's licence is sufficient, they will inform the driver that they are not eligible to drive the minibus.

Drivers of the minibus are required to have at least two years' experience as a qualified driver. Drivers with more than three points on their license will not be eligible to drive the minibus. All drivers are required to successfully pass the school's driving competency course, MIDAS, to support their awareness and confidence in operating the minibus. Drivers will be subject to a re-assessment at least once every four years, or in response to any incidents. The school will cover the costs of any training and testing required.

Drivers will also be eligible to drive a minibus if they passed their category B (car) driving test **before** 1 January 1997, provided the minibus is not being used for hire or reward. In these circumstances, there will be a passenger limit of 16 and no maximum weight restriction on the vehicle. Drivers with a D1 + E entitlement may also tow a trailer weighing up to 750kg.

Drivers will also be eligible to drive a minibus if they passed their category B (car) driving test **on or after** 1 January 1997, provided the minibus is not being used for hire or reward, and the following conditions are met:

- The driver is over 21 years old and has held a category B (car) driving licence for at least two years
- The minibus is used by a non-commercial body for non-commercial purposes, e.g. school sports team travelling to a fixture
- The driver receives no payment other than the recovery of their out-of-pocket expenses, e.g. fuel and parking costs
- The driver provides the service on a voluntary basis
- The gross vehicle weight of the minibus does not exceed 3.5 tonnes (or 4.25 tonnes if including any specialist equipment to carry disabled passengers)

- The driver does not tow a trailer

Drivers holding a category B (car) licence, obtained on or after 1 January 1997, are eligible to drive any vehicle weighing a maximum of 3.5 tonnes, and with a trailer weighing a maximum of 750kg, e.g. 'Lightweight Minibuses'. Drivers may also apply for a minibus permit, also known as a section 19 permit scheme, via the LA if there is a need to charge passengers.

Drivers holding either a category B (car) licence or a category D1 (101) licence are entitled to drive a minibus operated for hire or reward if their organisation also holds a section 19 permit.

To be eligible for a minibus permit, the following criteria will be satisfied:

- The vehicle carries between 9 and 16 passengers
- The vehicle is being driven for a voluntary organisation that benefits the community
- The minibus service is only available for members of that organisation, and not the general public
- Any charges are requested to cover running costs and not for personal profit
- The driver is 21 or older

4. Risk assessment

The Head of Centre will conduct a risk assessment of the minibus; this will be reviewed annually and/or in response to any services, or following a breakdown/accident..

Additional risk assessments may also be completed for specific journeys, if necessary and will accompany individual risk assessments for students and uploaded to Evolve.

5. Procedures

The keys for the minibus are held in the main school office at the main Nurture Education Trust school site on Drayton Road.

The keys will be signed in and out of the school office by the driver of the minibus – they will be signed back in as soon as the minibus returns to the premises.

The driver of the minibus will ensure that:

- They are legally entitled, and properly insured, to drive the minibus.
- The minibus is well-maintained and legally allowed on the road.
- The minibus has a valid MOT certificate and insurance.
- The minibus has a valid permit disc, if operating under a section 19 permit scheme.

A designated member of staff will carry out and record a weekly maintenance check on the minibus using the 'Maintenance checklist'. The checklist will be updated following every service, with details of each of the checks.

The minibus will be cleaned on a weekly basis by a designated member of staff.

If the appointed person has any concerns regarding the safety or roadworthiness of the minibus, they will inform the Head of Centre, who will organise appropriate action.

If the driver has any serious concerns regarding the safety or roadworthiness of the minibus during the journey, e.g. a flat tyre, a call will be made to the school office, and the breakdown procedure will be followed.

If the driver notices any minor defects during the journey which do not compromise the safety of the driver or passengers, e.g. one broken windscreen wiper, these can be reported to the Head of Centre after the journey.

The minibus will not be used in any situations where a cause for concern has been identified by a qualified mechanic.

In addition to the weekly checks, and before beginning the journey, the driver will:

- Plan the journey so that it can be completed safely and comfortably in line with the passengers' needs.
- Conduct a visual inspection of the minibus and the pre-drive checklist.
- Ensure that they are fit and able to drive.
- Conduct a moving brake test.
- Ensure that all rubbish is removed and there is no damage to the inside or outside of the vehicle.
- Ensure that passengers are aware that they must not consume food or drink on the vehicle.
- Ensure that no passengers embark on the minibus with muddy shoes or damp, dirty clothing.
- Note the mileage on entering the vehicle and when leaving the vehicle.

The driver of the vehicle will plan all routes accordingly, ensuring that the route is suitable and safe for use by minibuses.

Mobile phones are not permitted for use by the driver whilst they are driving the minibus. If the driver must make a call, they will pull over to a safe stopping place to do so. A mobile phone will be carried by at least one member of staff in case of an emergency. The member of staff will have the numbers of all parents of pupils on the minibus, as well as emergency contacts for the school.

A nominated person at the school, who is not on the journey, will be aware of the destination of the minibus, its route and its expected time of arrival and return. Parents will also be informed of the above

information and will be provided with means of contacting a member of staff on the minibus through calling the main school number: 01603 622288.

Smoking, drinking alcohol and taking drugs is strictly prohibited by pupils, staff members and the driver at all times whilst on the vehicle.

The driver will ensure that the legal speed limits for minibuses are followed at all times during the journey.

Pupils will be required to maintain good levels of behaviour at all times whilst on the minibus, in line with the school's Behaviour Policy, and will avoid any behaviour that may distract the driver.

Any disruption on the minibus will be dealt with appropriately by supervisors, in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and Educational Visits and School Trips Policy.

The driver will take frequent breaks if they are travelling for long distances and will not drive continuously for more than two hours without a break away from the vehicle of a minimum of 30 minutes.

Drivers who are to travel for 50 miles or more each way will be allowed adequate time off from any other work to ensure that they are properly rested before commencing the journey.

6. Health and safety

If a driver is taking any prescribed drugs or medicine that may affect their ability to drive, they are not permitted to drive the minibus, in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy.

In light of the above, if the driver feels unwell before or during the journey and that this may affect their ability to drive, they are not permitted to drive the bus. Another member of staff who holds a relevant license will be available to drive the minibus in such cases. If there is no suitable alternative driver, the trip will be postponed.

A second driver with a valid license will be available to take over driving the minibus during driving breaks, or if the driver is ill.

A first aid kit will always be available on the minibus and will be fully stocked, and at least one member of staff on the minibus will be a qualified first aider. This will align with the First Aid Policy. Additional medication may be taken for pupils with medical conditions, though only staff trained to administer medication will do so, in accordance with the school's Administering Medication Policy.

Seatbelts and seats will be fitted and worn in accordance with relevant seat belt laws.

The driver will instruct all pupils to wear their seatbelts throughout the journey; supervisors will ensure that they continue to do this whilst on the minibus. All members of staff aboard the vehicle will wear their seatbelts at all times.

Pupils over the age of 14 are personally responsible for wearing their seatbelt and must ensure they do this throughout the journey.

Passengers will ensure that all emergency exits are clear at all times.

The school will ensure that another adult who is eligible to drive a minibus is available to supervise passengers, provide cover in emergencies and to minimise the risk of driver fatigue.

7. Breakdowns

In the event of a breakdown, the driver will move the vehicle off the road and switch on the hazard warning lights. Passengers will be moved out of the nearside of the vehicle, and as far away from it and other traffic as possible. If it is safer for passengers to remain in the vehicle, e.g. if there is not a safe place outside, the driver and supervisors will assess the situation and decide whether to stay on the minibus.

The driver or a supervisor will contact the relevant breakdown cover company immediately. The driver or a supervisor will contact the school office after arranging a breakdown call out. Contact details for the relevant breakdown cover and insurance provider will always be kept in the glove compartment of the minibus.

If the breakdown occurs on a motorway, the driver or a supervisor will if appropriate provide the police with the breakdown service, the vehicle's location, and if any pupils on board have SEND.

All passengers will be kept together in one group and pupils will be constantly supervised.

If necessary, the driver will seek help, leaving the pupils with the supervisors. If the driver is the only adult present, pupils will not be left alone.

The driver, supervisors and pupils will all wait in the safe place until it is safe to return on the minibus. If passengers are unable to return on the minibus, appropriate transport will be arranged by staff in the school office to collect pupils, supervisors and the driver.

8. Accidents

An emergency procedure will be established by the Head of Centre prior to beginning the journey, and a copy will be kept inside the glove compartment in the minibus. The emergency procedure will be communicated to the driver and all supervisors on the journey, to ensure they are fully aware of the process to be followed.

In the event of an accident, emergency services will be contacted immediately and supervisors will remain with pupils at all times. The driver or a supervisor will contact the school office as soon as possible after calling the emergency services.

All passengers will remain at the scene of the accident in a safe place until the emergency services and any additional transport has arrived.

If injuries are sustained, the names of those involved will be reported to the school office and an accident log will be completed upon return to the premises. If no injuries are sustained and the vehicle is not damaged, the driver will ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and safe before continuing the journey. An accident log will be completed upon return to the school.

9. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Head of Centre; the next scheduled review date for this policy is: **28/09/2029**.

This policy will also be reviewed in response to any incidents or accidents that occur.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

All drivers and supervisors are required to familiarise themselves with the procedures in this policy when planning a journey.

Maintenance checklist

Check	Checked? (Y/N)	Details of defect	Reported (date)
Tyre pressure			
Tyre condition and tread depth			
Lights – operation/cleanliness			
Engine oil level			
Coolant level			
Brakes, including fluid level			
Battery			
Windscreen wipers/jets/reservoir			
Seat belts/buckles/fixings			
Operation of steering/gears/clutch			
Fire extinguisher			
Jack/handle/wheel brace			
First aid kit			
Operation of horn			
Doors, latches, locks			
Condition of wheel rims and trims			
Road fund licence/transport permit			
Condition of mirrors			

Operation of dash controls			
Excessive exhaust smoke			
Condition of body work/number plates			
Silhouette signs			
Rear scope			
Cleanliness of exterior			
Cleanliness of interior			

All checks have been made, and all defects have been reported to:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____