

Grace Academy Coventry

Minibus Policy & Procedural Documentation

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1 Introduction

Grace Academy promotes a strong commitment to safety during all activities carried out both on the Academy premises and during trips away. To this end the use of the Academy minibuses is governed by this policy, as outlined, along with supporting procedural appendages. Grace Academy will make available suitable training for drivers to ensure Staff and Students are as safe as reasonably practicable. This policy will be monitored and reviewed biennially, if not more frequently.

2 Bookings

Staff requiring a minibus should complete a Minibus Request Form (see Appendix B, also available on the Portal) and book with their relevant Facilities' Office. Bookings are administered on a local basis, per academy. The form must be fully completed and the booking will be recorded on the Portal.

Block bookings (i.e. of more than one day or repeatedly on certain days of the week) may be made and given appropriate priority, unless circumstances preclude this.

Bookings will normally be accepted on a first come, first served basis. In cases of dispute the decision will be made by the relevant Facilities Manager.

Key community and business partners may be permitted to use the minibus, subject to agreement with the Principal and Directors.

3 Permission to Drive

Only those persons authorised by the Academy may drive a minibus. Such authorisation is granted by the Principal, and a lists of drivers are maintained by the Site Manager.

To obtain due authorisation, staff must be appropriately licensed to drive a 16 (passenger) seat Academy minibus in the UK. To fulfil this, the following minimum requirements shall be met:

- Have held a full Category B (car) licence for two years minimum
- Hold a valid Category D1 (minibus) licence (if over 3.5T Max Authorised Mass)
- Hold a recognised minibus driving permit (e.g. MiDAS or similar Approved Driver Training Course certificate)
- Acceptance of the Minibus Policy by signing an agreement certificate (recorded on Appendix N)
- Annual H&S review of driver, recorded at Appendix K by the Facilities Manager (i.e. proof of valid driving licence including on-line verification with DVLA and file printouts).

At the earliest opportunity drivers must inform their relevant Facilities' Manager of:

- Changes to their driving licence (e.g. endorsements, bans and other legal penalties).
- Any change in health that may affect their ability to drive a minibus (i.e. this may also include certain types of medication)

A register of those authorised to drive shall be maintained by the site Facilities' Manager (as listed on Appendix C). All drivers will be required to sign, indicating that they have read and understood the Academy policy on driving a minibus (recorded on Appendix N).

Questions of ability, or competence, to drive an Academy minibus shall lie with the Principal and/or Directors who may, if the need arises:

- Caution a member of staff over an incident or accident
- Temporarily suspend the driver's permission to drive Academy vehicles
- Ban a member of staff from driving an Academy vehicle for an extended period of time

Whether such a caution, suspension or ban is imposed as a penalty for improper driving or as a safeguarding measure for protection will be fully explained to the driver.

4 Use of a minibus

4.1 Keys and Fuel Cards

Keys are to be kept in the Facilities' Office when the vehicle is parked. Keys should only be collected for the purposes of inspection, maintenance or immediately before a journey. They are to be returned as soon as possible and/or upon return at the earliest possibility. On no account are keys to be taken home, stored elsewhere or loaned out to other staff or visitors. The only exception is when a minibus is undergoing repair. The site Manager is required to check all relevant paperwork before issuing keys to a vehicle. Keys for minibuses categorised as VOR (Vehicle Off Road) are not to be issued, except as part of the repair process. Fuel Cards are to be appropriately secured, away from the vehicle, when parked.

4.2 Pre-trip Checks

Prior to any journey the driver is to check:

- *Fuel* – The tank contains sufficient diesel
- *Tyres* - No flats, nails, rips, scuffing or obvious damage. Tyre pressures will be checked periodically by the minibus supervisor but for extended trips the driver should check tyre pressures each day, including the spare
- *Windscreen Wipers and washers* – check fluid levels and all in working order
- *Oil/Water* - To the right levels (i.e. above minimum and below maximum)
- *Mirrors* - That all are set to the correct position for the driver
- *Lights* - All working
- *Seat Belts* - Security and condition of all seat belts, and that everyone wears one correctly
- *Exterior* - Anybody work marks are recorded from previous journeys or that new scratches/dents are reported. The report is to be made before a commencement of a journey to allow serious damage to be investigated and the previous driver asked to comment

Drivers should note that it is they, themselves, who are legally responsible for the vehicle on the highway. In the event of Police inspecting a vehicle any shortcomings are, by law, the responsibility of the driver.

4.3 Supervision

The provision of second drivers and/or supervision by adults in the minibus is to be as follows:

- *More than 200 miles* – A second driver should accompany the vehicle if students are being carried on round-trips of this magnitude
- *More than five students* – A second adult should accompany the vehicle to act in a supervisory category. With the express permission of the Principal, a sixth-former may fulfil this responsibility.

- *Passengers* - Minibus escorts should take a register of students before the outward journey, and before the return journey. Escorts should be seated in the back of the bus with the students. They are to ensure the driver is not distracted by poor behaviour and help ensure that seatbelts, etc, are fastened.

Clear instructions regarding behaviour must be given to the passengers; and boarding or disembarking from the bus at the roadside must be supervised. Any baggage in the bus must be stowed securely and the vehicle must not be overloaded by passengers or baggage.

Seating and capacity

The capacity of Academy minibuses is 16 passengers and a driver (i.e. a total of 17 seats). This number must never be exceeded, with no more than one person per seat and no-one standing. Where luggage could impede egress some seats may have to be used for storage, therefore reducing capacity accordingly.

Similarly, wheelchair use may reduce the default seating capacity of the vehicle.

Seat-belts

It is a legal requirement that seat-belts are fitted and properly deployed. Students under the age of 14 years are classified as minors, and it is the driver's responsibility to ensure that seat-belts are worn.

If the child is under 135cm in height a booster seat is required, with the seat-belt.

Disabled Passengers

While Grace Academy always wishes to give disabled students the same privileges as their able-bodied peers, there are limitations on transportation imposed by the capabilities of the vehicle. For example not all Grace Academy minibuses are fitted with either ramps or wheel-bracing points, so wheelchair users may need to transfer from their wheelchairs and embark on journeys by stepping into the vehicle themselves.

The decision as to how a disabled passenger travels is reached by completing an individual risk assessment. This must take account of the pick-up and drop-off environment, the type of assistance employed and the person's ability to safely transfer from one mode to another. Additional assessment needs to be given as to how to extricate a disabled passenger in the event of an incident en-route.

From the MiDAS guidance, the most important factor is an ambulant disabled passenger's ability to transfer themselves safely. Only disabled passengers who can bear their own weight and can transfer themselves safely, easily and painlessly to a vehicle seat fitted with a normal seat-belt, should be transported. On no account should a wheelchair-user be lifted or carried. If such a disabled passenger cannot transfer independently then a properly fitted wheelchair-accessible vehicle will be necessary. These assessments need to be made in advance of the journey date.

The Law

The Law requires the driver to ensure that the vehicle being driven on the public highway complies with the Road Traffic Act 1988, and with the Construction and Use Regulations. Extra care is necessary to ensure the safety of students in a minibus because of the increased load. Drivers must take account of the fact that they are driving vehicles containing young students and should adjust their speed, cornering and braking accordingly.

Hence, Grace Academy drivers must be experienced drivers holding a Category B and/or D1 licence supported by an Approved Driver Training Course certificate (e.g. MiDAS).

Minibus Permit

Grace Academy minibuses should be registered with the local authority as a Section 19 permitted vehicle to allow the driving of minibus passengers without a full PCV licence and without a tachograph logging device.

Driving Time

Driving time per person must not exceed 7 hours in any working day. A break of not less than 15 minutes must be taken after 2¼ hours and a break of not less than 45 minutes must be taken after 4½ hours driving. Drivers have a duty of care and should not continue to drive if feeling drowsy or needing sleep. Particular care should be taken if driving to/from an after-school event. Under the working times regulations employees are entitled to a minimum of 11 hours of rest each day.

Driving, Reversing & Parking

Grace Academy minibuses may be fitted with a speed restrictor; this must not be disabled. Notwithstanding this, the maximum speed shall be 62mph on motorways, 60mph on major roads and 50mph on other roads, although local speed limits may apply (whichever is the lower). Overtaking in the outside (i.e. third) lane is to be avoided.

A bus lane may be used so long as it is not signed as “Local” or “TFL”.

The Academy assumes no responsibility for speeding tickets issued to a member of staff while driving the minibus.

Because of the additional hazards involved, reversing is to be generally avoided if at all possible. If unavoidable, reversing is to be a very slow and minimal manoeuvre; and to use an escorting member of staff as a banksman. The banksman is to disembark the vehicle and give instructions from outside to the driver. (On no account is the banksman to be a student or other minor).

Staff will comply with all regulations appertaining to parking legally. The Academy assumes no responsibility for any parking tickets issued to Staff who have parked unlawfully.

Long journeys

On longer journeys (in excess of 100 miles or over several days) check the minibus regularly (oil, water, tyre pressures, brake and clutch fluid etc.)

Generally, journeys are limited to roads within the United Kingdom. Specifically, minibus journeys are only permitted in Great Britain and its British Isles, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands of Jersey, Guernsey and Alderney. On no account is the minibus to be taken elsewhere as this contravenes both the Section 19 Permit and motor insurance.

Miscellaneous

Mobile telephones are not to be used by the driver when seated in the minibus with the engine running. The law regarding the use of mobile telephones in a vehicle must be adhered to.

Under no circumstances may a driver have consumed any alcohol during the period affecting his/her driving of the Academy minibus. No passengers should be allowed to drink alcohol on the bus or to embark on a journey intoxicated.

No smoking, vaping or drug-taking is allowed on the Academy minibus.

At the end of the journey

- The vehicle is to be cleared of all rubbish
- The mileage and any faults must be recorded in the log book.
- Vehicle to be parked in its allotted parking space
- Drivers are to ensure that the minibus is locked and interior lights are off after all doors are closed. (N.B. if doors are slammed it can cause the lights to remain on, consequently flattening the battery).
- Keys to be returned as soon as possible after disembarkation to the site Facilities Manager

5 Charges

Academy minibuses are not available for hire or reward, and Grace Academy cannot charge fares (i.e. minibus drivers would require a full PSV licence to allow this).

Grace Academy minibuses are not available for general use outside of the Academy; and invoices are not to be raised.

However, purely for internal budgeting reasons, costs may be assumed to be as follows.

First 100 miles of trip: 75 pence-per-mile
Over 100 miles: 50 pence-per-mile

6 Accident or Breakdown

Academy minibuses should have suitable breakdown assistance in addition to any motor insurance cover. In the event of an accident the driver is to comply with accident and insurance procedures as printed in vehicle file and notify the Academy so that parents may be contacted.

Should an incident occur Staff should remove both themselves and the students to a safe position away from the vehicle and other road hazards. The minibus contains both a first aid kit and a fire extinguisher which all drivers should acquaint themselves with.

In the event of an incident in which the vehicle breaks down, call out the appropriate breakdown service by telephone. Give the name of the Academy, the minibus registration number and explain the problem. They will have all the vehicle details and advise you further. Contact the school or the nominated emergency contact person to inform them of the situation.

In the event of an accident resulting in damage to another vehicle, an animal or to property, you must stop and give your name, address and the registration particulars of the vehicle driven by you to anybody who has reasonable grounds for requiring the information. You should also show your Certificate of Insurance to the police or to anybody who has reasonable grounds to see it. You should not ever admit liability in the event of an

accident.

If you are unable to comply with these requirements at the time of the accident, you must report the accident to the police as soon as possible, and in any case, within 24 hours.

7. Maintenance

- The minibus is serviced annually
- The MOT is completed annually
- Safety checks are completed every 10 weeks
- Weekly checks are completed by the Site Team

All records are held by the Site Manager

8 Community Use

Grace Academy minibuses should be registered with a community (Section 19) permit; and it should be duly displayed in the windscreen's bottom nearside corner (i.e. like an old tax disc).

Minibus community use is permitted only on the following conditions:

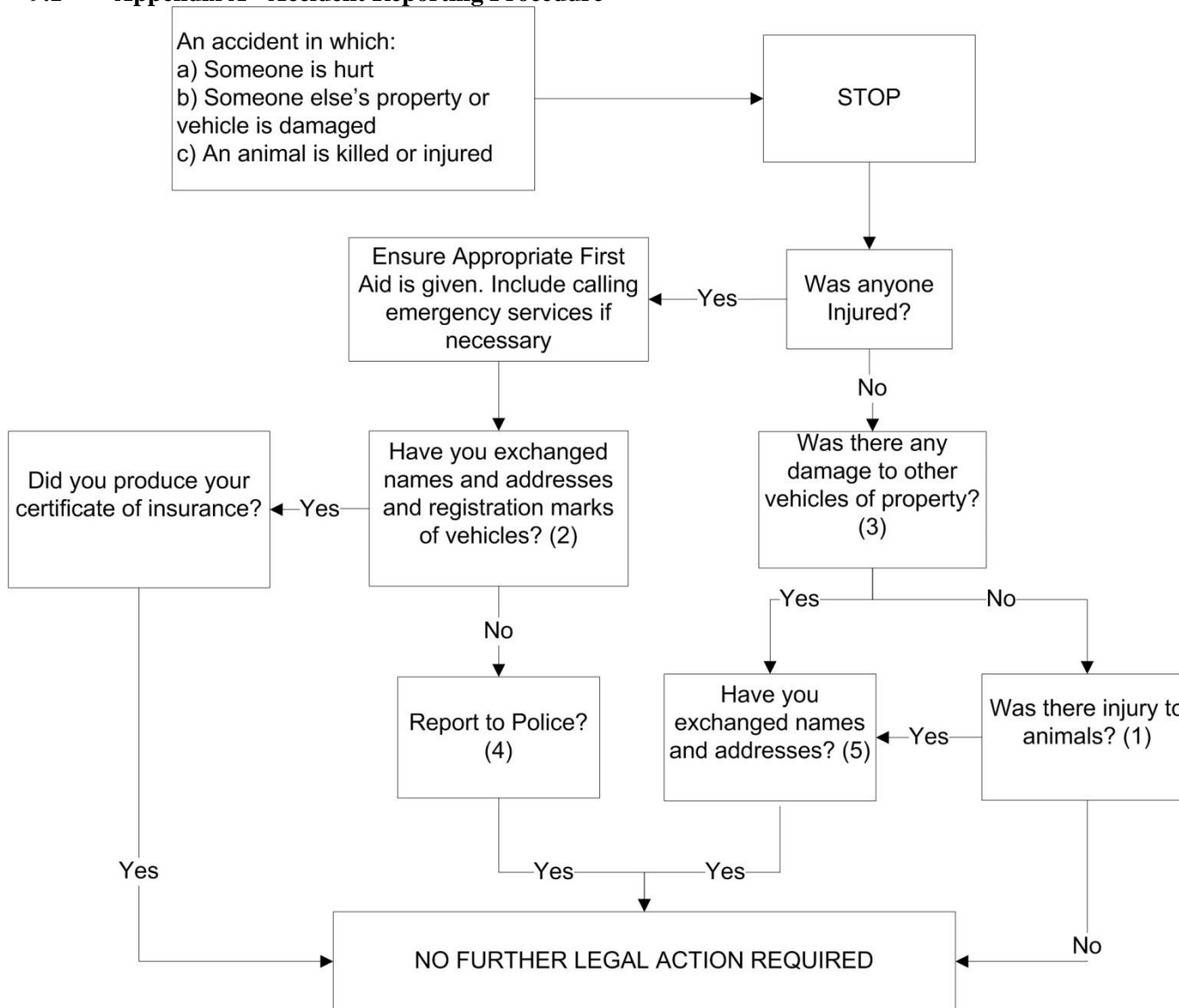
- Upon express permission of the Principal and Directors
- Any Academy booking will take priority
- The Academy reserves the right to cancel community bookings for whatever reason without notice

9 Appendices

Appendix A – Accident reporting procedure

Appendix B - Minibus Policy Agreement

9.1 Appendix A - Accident Reporting Procedure



Notes: The chart shows the minimum legal requirements.

1-Animals: horse, cattle, ass, mule, sheep, pig, goat, dog

2-With any person who has reasonable grounds to ask for them

3-Includes roadside “furniture” e.g. lamp posts and other fixtures.

4-Report as soon as possible and at least within 24 hours, and produce certificate of insurance either when reporting or within seven days.

5-With the owner of the vehicle, property or animal

9.2 Appendix B - Minibus Policy Agreement

I have read through the policy for driving Grace Academy minibuses; and I agree with these terms and conditions as stated.

Signed:	
Date:	
Name:	
Academy / Department:	
Contact Telephone:	

Office Use

Date Received:	
Received By:	