

The School Minibus Pre-Drive Safety Check

Do this before every journey. Walk around the vehicle, including the trailer, if applicable, to check for visible defects, and then check the items listed below.

Exterior check (check OK or NOT OK)

- Oil level
- Coolant level
- Windscreen washer fluid level
- Brake fluid level
- Windscreen & windows clean and undamaged
- Lights including brake lights and indicators are clean and working.
- Tyre pressures, including spares (and inner tyres and tyres on trailer if applicable)
- Tyre tread, including spares (and inner tyres as above). At least 3 mm across centre $\frac{3}{4}$ is recommended. Any cuts and bulges?
- Doors open and close properly
- Trailer brake lights and indicators work, if applicable
- Roof rack or trailer is properly fitted, and all luggage securely held.

Interior check (check OK or NOT OK)

- Mirrors correctly adjusted, clean and unobstructed
- Position & function of all dashboard controls
- Position of driving seat so all pedals can be operated comfortably
- Pressure on brake pedal
- Lights & indicators are working
- Wipers & washers working properly
- Fuel level (and type of fuel)
- Seat belts are undamaged and working properly
- Location of wheel brace and jack
- Location and contents of first aid kit & fire extinguisher(s)
- Location of relevant paperwork (permit, MoT etc)
- Change for parking or telephone (mobile/phonecard)
- Luggage securely stowed; aisles & exits clear

Brake Checks

- Check brakes before loading passengers. With engine running, check handbrake is working properly & brake pedal is firm when pushed
- Conduct a moving brake test, off the road, if possible. Reach a speed of not more than 15 mph check mirrors and, if safe, apply brakes fairly firmly. Brakes should work efficiently; vehicle should not pull to one side; luggage should remain secure.

If faults that might affect the vehicle's or passengers' safety are found, the vehicle must not be used until they are all remedied.

Advice for Minibus Drivers

On journeys where an escort is present, the items below should be divided between the escort and the driver, with the driver concentrating on those tasks which directly relate to driving the vehicle.

Before setting off

- Allow sufficient time for the journey.
- Plan breaks. Avoid long spells of driving when children might get bored and restless.
- Conduct a pre-drive safety check before every journey.
- Never allow passengers to board until the vehicle is at a complete standstill, and safely parked by an adjacent pavement or other traffic-free area.
- Ensure children are supervised when boarding vehicle, especially if using rear door. Plan which passengers will sit in the front seats and by the doors.
- Do not exceed the carrying capacity of the minibus.
- Make sure everyone is sitting, one to a seat and are using seat belts.
- When school bus signs are used, make sure they are in position only while children are being transported, and that they do not obstruct your vision.
- Ensure ambulant disabled passengers are seated safely and comfortably and passengers travelling in wheelchairs are safely restrained. Securely store wheelchairs not in use.
- Carry a complete list of passengers with notes of special needs. Keep list with other relevant documents in place where can be readily found in event of an accident.
- Comply with manufacturers instructions when using passenger lifts and other specialist equipment.
- Check that no bags or clothing are caught in doors, that all luggage is secure and gangways and exits are clear.
- Check all mirrors every time before moving off in case latecomers are approaching the vehicle.

During the journey

- Do not allow boisterous play of any kind.
- Try to keep children occupied (if escort on board) give something to do beforehand.
- Enforce "No Smoking" and "No alcohol" rules.
- Do not allow passengers to operate doors.
- Approach each stop slowly and with care
- Use Hazard Warning Lights on school trips where children are boarding or leaving vehicle.
- If serious delay during journey, inform school so that information can be passed to parents. A mobile telephone is useful for this purpose (although it should not be used whilst driving the vehicle).
- Children must not be left unaccompanied on the minibus.

- If there is a risk of fire, evacuate vehicle and move occupants to a safe place.
- If you have to stop in an emergency or break down while on a motorway, only stop on the hard shoulder and as far away from the carriageway and passing traffic as possible.

Journey's end

- Supervise children when leaving vehicle, especially if using rear exit.
- Never allow passengers to leave until vehicle is at a complete standstill and safely parked.
- Always park so that passengers step onto the footway and not the road.
- Take care when reversing if children are nearby. If you have to reverse, get adult help in directing you.
- Do not leave children alone if no one has come to collect them.
- Report problems or incidents that occurred during the trip to the operator.

Advice for Parents and Guardians

Teaching road safety is one of the most important duties of a parent. It must include teaching children to behave properly when they use public transport. Minibuses are not places for play. Please read these guidelines before allowing your child to make a minibus journey.

Pick Up and Drop Off Points

- **Be punctual:** Make sure your child is ready at the proper time. It is your responsibility to ensure that your child gets to and from the minibus safely. Make sure your child knows what to do if the minibus is late or does not arrive.
- **Wait with your child:** Wait on the side of the road where the bus stops. Make sure you stand on the side of the road where the bus sets them down on the return journey. Avoid calling your child across the road to you. Children are excited when they have just come back from a minibus outing and traffic will be the last thing on their mind.
- **Safe Crossing Places:** Make sure that your child knows and understands what are safe crossing places, and how to use them. E.g.: zebra crossings, pelican crossings, central islands, subways, footbridges. Avoid more hazardous places like bends, corners, the brows of hills, between parked cars etc. Use the Green Cross Code. Make sure your child knows and understands how to use the Code. Young children should not be allowed to cross the road unaccompanied.
- **Meet your child:** Make sure that you, or another carer are at the pre-arranged meeting point when your child returns home, and have the telephone number of other parents, the school or other relevant contact person to pass on messages if required.
- **Safe route:** Make sure that both you and your child know the safest route home after leaving the minibus, and always use it.

On the Minibus

- Behaviour: Teach your child to act sensibly on or around minibuses. Make sure your child knows that boisterous and other poor behaviour is dangerous as it may distract the driver's attention and lead to an accident. Children need to listen to the driver's and escort's (if applicable) instructions and carry them out.
- Contact Details: Make sure that the person responsible for the minibus has up-to-date information about your child, including contact details for emergencies.
- Medical Details: If your child has any special requirements, make sure the person responsible for the minibus has all relevant medical information.
- Other Details: Advise the driver (and escort) if there is a particular difficulty with your child on the day of the trip, e.g. is upset. Consider whether your child should go on the journey in such circumstances.
- Damage: Any vandalism caused by your child whilst on a journey is your responsibility. Persistent offenders may not be accepted on future journeys. Damage to a minibus could endanger your own, or someone else's child.
- Concerns: Report any worries you may have to a responsible person, such as the Headteacher or group leader.

Advice for Children on Minibuses

Here are some helpful hints to keep you, and others, safe while on a minibus journey

- Arrive on time, and wait for the minibus away from the road.
- Don't push or rush towards the minibus when it arrives.
- Find a seat quickly and quietly without pushing. You may have already been allocated a seat.
- Stay seated when the minibus is moving and wear your seat belt.
- Avoid kneeling in your seat as this is dangerous.
- Make sure your bags do not block gangways and exits, or take up seats.
- Only speak to the driver when he or she is not driving, or in an emergency. Distracting the driver can be very dangerous.
- Never throw things or play about in the minibus; never ever throw things out of the minibus window as you could cause other drivers to have an accident.
- Wait until the minibus has stopped completely before getting up to leave.
- Take your belongings with you when you leave the minibus, except in an emergency when you should leave them behind.
- Take care if returning to the minibus after getting off as the driver may be pulling away.
- If you have to cross the road after getting off the minibus, wait for it to move away first. Use the Green Cross Code.
- Go to the toilet before you get on the minibus. If you need to use the toilet or you feel unwell during the journey, tell the escort, or the driver if the escort is not present.

The Green Cross Code

1. First find a safe place to cross, then stop. It is safer to cross at subways, footbridges, pedestrian islands, zebra and pelican crossings or where there is a police officer, school

crossing patrol or traffic warden. If you can't find one of these, choose a place where you can see clearly along the road in all directions.

2. Stand on the pavement near the kerb.
3. Look all around for traffic and listen. Traffic may be coming from any direction. Sometimes you can hear traffic before you can see it.
4. If traffic is coming, let it pass. Look all around again.
5. When there is no traffic near, walk straight across the road. Do not cross unless there is a safe gap and you are sure that you have plenty of time to get across. If in doubt, don't cross. Always walk across, don't run.
6. Keep looking and listening for traffic while you cross.

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