



Minibus Policy

Document Information	
Policy Owner	Chief Operating Officer
Approved by TCT	March 2026
Next Review	March 2027
Applies to	All TCT employees

1. Purpose

The Collegiate Trust exists to improve the life chances of young people by delivering an Exceptional Education for All. Every decision we make and every process we follow is driven by that purpose. Our minibuses are a direct expression of that commitment — they extend the curriculum, open doors to experiences that would otherwise be out of reach and ensure that no pupil is limited by where they live or what their family can afford.

This policy exists to keep pupils and staff safe, to ensure we meet our legal obligations, and to give everyone who drives or organises a minibus trip a clear, practical framework to follow. It applies to all nine minibuses operated by the Trust on contract hire.

The safety of every passenger is the foundation of this policy. We trust our staff to exercise professional judgement — and this document gives them the information and support to do that well.

2. Section 19 Permits

A Section 19 Permit is a legal requirement for any not-for-profit organisation — including academies — that operates a minibus and makes any charge for passenger transport. This includes indirect charges such as trip fees or contributions. Permits are established under the Transport Act 1985 and replace the need for a full Public Service Vehicle (PSV) Operator's Licence. Operating a minibus without a valid permit displayed in the vehicle is a criminal offence.

Key facts

- Permits are issued per vehicle and are valid for 5 years.
- Each school must hold its own permit for each minibus it operates. Permits cannot be shared between schools or transferred to another organisation.
- If a minibus is loaned to another school or organisation — even within the Trust — that organisation must hold its own permit.
- If an academy changes its name, its permits must be replaced.
- The permit disc must always be displayed in the front windscreen when the vehicle is being driven.
- Permits cover transport of pupils, students, staff, and those accompanying them only. Members of the public cannot be carried.

Applying for and Renewing Permits

The Site/Facilities Manager at each school, in liaison with the principal, is responsible for applying for permits for each vehicle, ensuring permits are renewed before expiry, and notifying the DVSA of any changes including a change of academy name. Applications are made online through the DVSA or a designated body such as the local authority.

10-Week Safety Inspections

As a condition of holding a Section 19 Permit, each minibus must be independently inspected at least every 10 weeks. This is a legal requirement — not optional good practice. These inspections are separate from MOTs and routine servicing. The Trust's lease contract covers routine servicing; the Site/Facilities Manager is responsible for arranging independent safety inspections separately and retaining the records. Schools may use any suitably qualified independent provider.

3. Responsibilities

School Responsibilities

The Estates Teams at each school are responsible for ensuring the minibuses comply with all legal transport and health and safety requirements. Specifically, the Estates Teams will:

- Keep a copy of all minibus drivers' details (Appendix 3) on file and review them annually.
- Hold a current insurance certificate and MOT certificate on file, accessible to all relevant staff.

- Ensure a BS fire extinguisher, first aid box, emergency triangle, and hi-vis jackets are always carried in the vehicle.
- Carry out a monthly vehicle check using Appendix 1 and record the outcome on Every.
- Ensure any charges for use of the minibus cover running costs only and are not for profit.

Driver Eligibility

To be eligible to drive the minibus, a driver must:

- Be a member of TCT staff, or an associated person on the school's list of approved drivers, deemed fit and capable by the Site/Facilities Manager and Principal.
- Be over 21 years old.
- Have held a full UK driving licence for at least 2 years.
- Have no more than 3 points on their licence at any one time.
- Not be taking any medication which may affect their fitness to drive.
- Have read and agreed to abide by this policy and the relevant risk assessment.
- Drive on a voluntary basis.

Driver Responsibilities

The driver is responsible for the safety of all passengers and the condition of the vehicle at all times during a journey. This means the driver will:

- Follow the Highway Code and never exceed the posted speed limit or disregard traffic signs. Any penalty notices issued will be the personal responsibility of the driver.
- Complete the Driver Pre-Check and Log (Appendix 2) before every journey and return the completed form to the Estates Teams.
- Ensure all passengers are always wearing a seatbelt.
- Ensure the minibus interior is left in a clean and satisfactory condition before returning the keys to the Estates Teams. No eating or drinking is permitted in the vehicle at any time. Football boots must not be worn in the vehicle.
- Ensure only Trust pupils are transported. Carrying any other persons will void the insurance.
- Ensure the minibus is left secure after every journey — parked safely, with windows and doors closed and locked.
- Not drive for longer than 2 hours without a minimum 30-minute break.
- Ensure any accompanying adults are aware of their responsibility to manage pupil behaviour during the journey.
- Always be in possession of a fully charged mobile phone with a working camera during the journey.

4. Managing the Fleet

The Site/Facilities Manager, in liaison with the principal (or their nominated deputy), is responsible for the day-to-day management of the minibuses. The Site/Facilities Manager will:

- Give approved staff access to the online booking system via IT support.
- Verify that all drivers have signed permission from the Principal (Appendix 3) before they drive the minibus for the first time.
- Ensure all drivers complete the Driver Pre-Check and Log (Appendix 2) before every departure and return the form to the Estates Teams.
- Ensure all drivers return keys immediately upon return from a journey.
- Store keys and fuel cards securely. Keys will only be released to the person who has the vehicle booked on the booking system.
- Keep insurance cover, services, tax, and MOT up to date.

- Provide familiarisation training for all new drivers before their first journey.

Use of the minibus by others

The minibuses must not be loaned or hired to anyone not employed by The Collegiate Trust, and must never be used for personal use by any member of staff. This policy is stored on the Trust Intranet and shared with all users of the minibus.

5. Transporting Children

Planning the Journey

The member of staff leading a visit should treat the journey as part of their overall risk assessment. A short local trip is a very different undertaking from a long motorway journey, and supervision arrangements should reflect that.

Supervision — Primary-Aged Children

There should normally be a minimum of two adults on any minibus journey carrying primary-aged children. A third adult should be considered where any of the following apply:

- The journey is long or complex.
- The group includes younger children (KS1 or mixed KS1/KS2).
- Children with SEND or medical needs are travelling.
- The vehicle is full or near-full.
- Any children may find the journey itself difficult to manage.

Supervision — Secondary-Aged Pupils

For secondary groups, staff should use professional judgement based on the group and the journey. Good practice is a driver plus one additional supervising adult. Factors that may indicate additional supervision is needed include a long or complex journey, a full vehicle, children with additional needs, or any other specific circumstances that increase risk.

The Driver as a Factor

The driver's presence should be considered — but not over-relied on — when assessing supervision. A driver's primary responsibility is safe driving; they should not be expected to manage behaviour. An experienced member of staff driving a settled, familiar group on a short journey is a different context from an external or unfamiliar driver. Staff should factor this into their planning.

Using a Follow Vehicle

For full or near-full minibus trips — particularly for primary groups or longer journeys — having a staff member follow in a car is a valuable way to manage risk. It provides immediate support in the event of a breakdown or an incident on the vehicle. Trip leaders should consider whether this is appropriate as part of their planning.

Journey Time

There is no legal maximum journey time for school trips, but the following thresholds are a useful guide for planning purposes: **45 minutes for primary** and **75 minutes for secondary** are the points beyond which additional planning is warranted — including comfort breaks, consideration of driver fatigue, and whether a second qualified driver is needed. No driver should travel continuously for more than **2 hours without a break** of at least 30 minutes. Staff who have taught a full day before driving should be considered a fatigue risk; return journeys should be planned with this in mind.

Examples of Good Decision-Making

Example 1 — short primary trip. A Year 4 class travels 20 minutes to a local museum. 14 children, settled group, one teacher driving and one TA supervising. Straightforward and proportionate.

Example 2 — longer primary trip with additional needs. 15 Year 2 children travel 50 minutes to a farm, including two pupils with SEND. Three adults are arranged: the driver plus two supervisors, one of whom knows the SEND pupils well. A colleague follows in a car. The decision reflects the age of the children, the journey length, and the specific needs of the group.

Example 3 — secondary day trip. 15 Year 9 pupils travel 75 minutes to a sports fixture. The PE teacher drives; a second member of staff supervises. A comfort stop is planned on the return journey. The driver has not taught that morning. Appropriate for the group and journey.

Example 4 — a decision that needs revisiting. A teacher plans to drive 16 Year 3 children 90 minutes each way, alone, after school. This is not appropriate: the journey is long, the children are young, there is no supervisor, and the driver will be fatigued. The trip needs to be replanned — a second adult arranged, the timing reconsidered, or an alternative transport option explored.

6. Driver Instructions

The following instructions apply to the driver and, where applicable, the accompanying adult:

- A maximum of 16 children may be transported at one time. The vehicle has 17 seats including the driver: 14 in the rear and 2 in the front beside the driver.
- Only children over 1.35m in height may travel in the front seat.
- Children must not be left on the minibus unaccompanied by an adult.
- Allow sufficient time for the journey.
- Do not allow children to operate the doors.
- Use hazard warning lights when children are boarding or leaving the vehicle.
- Never allow passengers to board until the vehicle is at a complete standstill, with the handbrake on and the vehicle safely parked adjacent to a pavement or other traffic-free area.

7. Breakdown Procedures

In the event of a breakdown, the driver — and accompanying adult where applicable — should follow the steps below. The safety of passengers is always more important than the vehicle.

If not on a motorway, keep passengers on board unless they are at risk.

If on a motorway:

- Evacuate the vehicle unless the dangers of doing so are greater than remaining inside.
- Once away from the vehicle, keep passengers at the far side of the crash barriers, or 10 metres ahead of the vehicle away from oncoming traffic where there is no crash barrier.
- All staff and students must wear hi-vis vests, stored on the minibus.
- Call Highways England on 0300 123 5000. Inform them of your location and that you have children on board.
- Call 999 if there is any risk to life or immediate danger.
- Inform your school so arrangements can be made to attend to the vehicle.
- Inform the school the children attend so that parents and carers can be notified.

Breakdown cover

Contact the RAC on **0800 197 7828**. A maintenance contact sheet with full details is stored in each vehicle.

Note for Site/Facilities Managers: breakdown cover transfers from the RAC to the AA when the first three years of the lease contract expire in 2029. The maintenance contact sheet in each vehicle must be updated at that point.

8. In the Event of an Accident

- The driver, or accompanying adult where applicable, must inform their school as soon as possible.
- School contact details and the driver's name should be exchanged with any third party as soon as possible. No liability should be admitted.
- Where it is safe and necessary, pupils should be removed from the minibus and taken to a supervised area away from the accident site.
- If the accident occurs on a motorway, call 999 immediately and follow the guidance in section 7.

9. Further Guidance

GOV.UK guidance on driving school minibuses: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/driving-school-minibuses-advice-for-schools-and-local-authorities>

APPENDIX 1: MONTHLY MINIBUS CHECKS

Undertaken by the Estates Teams and stored on Every Compliance.

Date:				
Visual check of tyre inflation and condition				
Bodywork damage, including windows				
Oil and fluid levels				
Top-up washer bottle				
Registration plates				
Fire extinguisher				
First aid kit				
Hi-vis jackets				
Lights, front and back				
Reversing lights				
Indicators/mirrors				
Interior lights				
Washer/wipers				
Exhaust				
Spare wheel				
Doors secure				
Ramp and wheelchair restraints				
Emergency hammer				
Seats and seatbelts				
Jack and tools				
Safety triangle				
Interior in good condition				
Diesel levels				
Horn				
Brake lights/brakes				
Electric windows				
Heating				
Checked by:				

APPENDIX 2: DRIVER PRE-CHECK AND LOG

Date:				
Name:				
Minibus Registration:				
Reason for Trip/Destination:				
<i>The following are in good condition and working – please tick</i>				
Tyres				
Brakes				
Seatbelts				
Front and rear lights				
Windscreen washers and wipers				
Indicators and mirrors				
Dash cam				
<i>The following are available and in good condition – please tick</i>				
Fire extinguisher				
Emergency hammer				
Safety triangle				
Hi-Vis jackets (enough for all adults and students)				
First aid kit				
<i>Notes</i>				
Sufficient fuel				
Starting mileage				
End mileage				
RAC Breakdown Cover: 0800 197 7828				

If unroadworthy, do not use the minibus and report to the Facilities team straight away.

Please 'X' to show any damage i.e. dents, scratches etc.



APPENDIX 3: MINIBUS DRIVER PERMISSION FORM

To be completed and authorised before driving in the school minibus for the first time. To be renewed by all drivers annually, led by the Site/Facilities Manager.

Name of Driver	
Date of Birth	
Employed By	

Date of Familiarisation Drive			
Who led Familiarisation Drive?			
Driving Licence Check View or share your driving licence information - GOV.UK	Copy Attached to this document? Yes No	Seen By	
Number of Current Driving Offence Points		Current Date	

Question	Answer	Further Information
Have you ever been disqualified from driving?		
Have you ever had a motor insurance policy declined, cancelled, or been refused renewal, or had any special conditions imposed?		
Have you currently, or have any history of, any conditions or disability which may affect your ability to drive safely, now or in the future?		

I declare that the details given are correct, and that within my knowledge, there is no other material fact that I should disclose. I agree to exercise all due care for the safety of my passengers and security of the vehicle whilst it is in my charge. I also undertake to inform of any collision or accident that occurs whilst I am responsible for the vehicle.

I undertake to advise of any subsequent illness, condition, or event that might affect my suitability as a driver, including any subsequent refusal of motor insurance, or any driving convictions.

I have read and understood the Trust's Minibus Policy and risk assessment

Signature of Driver		Date	
Signature of Principal		Date	