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## **INTRODUCTION**

The subject of school transport is wide ranging and is considered here in terms of the following categories:

- home to school transport;
- access to and from school;
- transport on school premises;
- school trips/visits;
- other transport.

## **HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT**

### **LEA Home to School Transport**

The duty of LEAs to provide home to school transport in certain circumstances dates from the Education Act 1944. This has been consolidated in the Education Act 1996 which states that LEAs shall make arrangements, as they consider necessary for facilitating attendance at schools/colleges (s509(1)). Where transport is deemed necessary, this must be provided free of charge (s509(2)).

In deciding whether transport is necessary, case law has held that this should be read in conjunction with the circumstances for defence of non-attendance at school. Consequently, a parent has a defence for a child not attending school if the child lives beyond 2 miles (3.22km) and is less than 8 years or 3 miles (4.83km) and is 8 years or over if no suitable transport has been provided. This defence only applies to pupils of compulsory school age.

The walking distance is applied from home to the nearest appropriate school, measured by the shortest available walking route. In considering whether transport is necessary, LEAs must also take into account:

- the nature of the route (s509(4));
- the personal circumstances of the child (s509(4));
- the parental wishes for a denominational education (s509(4)).

LEAs must also consider whether transport is necessary for pupils post-16. Again, if it is, such transport must be provided free of charge. However, the distance criteria need not apply. Any transport entitlement arrangements must be no less favourable for students attending colleges than for those attending schools (s509(1)(5)). Similarly, transport arrangements should be no less favourable for those attending grant-maintained schools than for maintained schools.

Transport may be specified in a child's statement of special educational needs in Part VI (non-educational provision necessary to meet the non-educational needs of the child is specified in Part V). Transport and supervision must be provided in accordance with the arrangements agreed by the LEA in these cases.

Consideration should also be given to the character of the area and the likelihood of unsafe conditions eg: increased risk of violence or fast moving traffic and how likely additional services will be used.

### **Powers to provide other transport**

LEAs may pay all or some of the reasonable travelling expenses in other circumstances (Education Act 1996, s509 (2)). Authorities may also charge for the use of spare places on school transport provided for entitled pupils (Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1953) and such fares must be "reasonable". In addition, local authorities (rather than LEAs) have powers to establish a concessionaire fare scheme for children under the age of 17, or for those aged 17-19 in full-time education (Transport Act 1985, s93).

LEAs typically provide home-to-school transport using local bus services, rail services or contracted vehicles - minibuses, coaches, buses or taxis/private hire vehicles. In addition, some LEAs pay parental mileage allowances where this is more cost-effective.

The quality of home to school transport has become a major issue in recent years, particularly in relation to both personal and road safety. Overall, LEAs have a duty of care, the standard of which has been derived from case law. The standard that applies to home-to-school transport should be that of a reasonable parent and that the transport should enable the child to travel in safety and reasonable comfort.

### **Standards**

The standards required of school transport vehicles and drivers depend upon the vehicle. Public service vehicle, s19 permit, taxi and private hire car licensing standards are applicable to home-to-school transport depending on the vehicle used. LEAs may set standards over and above these minima as conditions of contract.

In addition there are some specific requirements for vehicles used for home-to-school transport over and above those vehicles used only by members of the public:

- school bus signs must be displayed to the front and rear, in accordance with the regulations, on all contracted buses - this applies to minibuses, coaches and buses, but not to taxis and private hire cars;
- a seat belt must be provided for each child on a contracted minibus or coach.

There is no specific legislation but there are good practice guidelines/advice on the safety of passengers in wheelchairs and the carriage of children in special seats. The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions' document VSE 87/1 sets out the guidance on the carriage of passengers in wheelchairs. The guidance requires an independent occupant restraint and wheelchair restraint. The Medical Devices Agency's document (formerly Directorate) MDD 92/07 provides the guidance on the securement of children in special seats.

There is currently no national guidance on the maximum journey times, other than the general duty to provide transport as a reasonable parent, and to ensure safety and reasonable comfort. Previously, Ministerial guidance set a maximum of 1 hour 15 minutes for secondary school pupils, and 45 minutes for primary age pupils. Many authorities still adhere to these wherever possible.

Under the Education Act 1996, the phrase "and otherwise" has been established through case law to include the provision of supervision on home-to-school transport. Consequently, LEAs have a duty to consider whether supervision is necessary. If, for example, bullying incidents have been cited on the school bus, it may be appropriate to provide an escort, even temporarily until the problem reduces. There are no specific criteria as to when supervision is necessary, but a reasonable parent approach should be adopted. Most LEAs deem supervision to be necessary for the majority of special education transport contracts.

Escorts may be employed directly by the LEA or by operators. Recent surveys of LEAs indicate a general move towards the use of contractor-employed escorts rather than LEA-employed staff. There are advantages and disadvantages of both approaches in terms of the level of flexibility/control and costs. There are no specific standards established for school transport escorts. However, under the terms of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and more recent regulations implementing European Directives on health and safety, employers have a duty to undertake a risk assessment for their employees, to provide sufficient training and to address lifting and handling issues. All of these apply to home to school transport. Increasingly LEAs are providing training for home-to-school transport escorts to address these and other issues.

There is Circular guidance setting out the circumstances and procedures that should be followed with regard to the background checks for escorts and drivers involved in home-to-school transport. The guidance permits the LEA to undertake a check, which is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore includes spent convictions. This should be undertaken for all escorts and drivers who meet the criteria of substantial, unsupervised access to vulnerable children as set out in the Circular.

### **School Role**

Schools have a vital role in the provision of LEA home-to-school transport, in terms of:

- maintaining and forwarding up-to-date information on pupils/changes of addresses, etc to the LEA;
- reporting any incidences of late running/breaches of conditions of contract;
- liaising with operators and the LEA regarding breaches of discipline and vandalism on school transport;
- reviewing arrangements for pick-up/drop-off at school;
- ensuring pupils are aware of their responsibilities regarding behaviour, carrying their pass, being on time, not distracting the driver, etc. Many LEAs have codes of practice for school transport and it assists both operators and the LEA if the school supports the enforcement and awareness of these codes.

### **Walking or Cycling to School**

The majority of children continue to walk and cycle to and from school. Many authorities now have "safer routes to school" projects and school transport plans are becoming more common.

Schools should work with local authority road safety officers, police, and travelwise/travel awareness staff in local authorities to identify safer routes to school for walking and cycling.

The school should develop a policy on cycling to and from school in liaison with the police and road safety officer as appropriate. Helmet-wearing should be encouraged, as should suitable bike maintenance.

## **ACCESS TO AND FROM SCHOOL**

Many schools suffer from severe vehicle congestion problems in the area close to and surrounding their premises. Parents who drop off and pick up their children cause much of this congestion by car.

Recommended actions are:

- to liaise with local police regarding enforcement or introduction of road markings/speed limits, etc;
- to notify parents of the dangers/problems associated with congestion at school entrances;
- to liaise with operators regarding pick-up/drop-off of pupils transported by bus/taxi.

It is important to maintain a record of all traffic incidents involving vehicles/bicycles or pedestrians, which occur in the vicinity of school. This may be required in order to help the police with their enquiries. Incidents can only be included if they are reported to the school. Information circulated to parents should encourage this practice to be carried out. A standard incident report form should be drawn up, with appropriate advice from local police and road safety officers.

## **TRANSPORT ON SCHOOL PREMISES**

### **Staff/Students' Cars**

A major cause of congestion within school premises at the start and end of the school day is that of staff/student cars and, during the day, visitors' cars. The recent trend in planning policy has been to reduce the availability of parking. Parking for students should be discouraged. School transport plans should identify the scope for car-sharing within school, perhaps establishing a database of suitable sharing, and alternative modes.

Where parking is essential, adequate traffic signs should be in place. Speeds should be minimised and signed appropriately. A maximum speed limit of 5mph within school grounds is recommended. These should be accompanied where necessary with a sign to warn of the presence of children. Allocated parking may be appropriate.

### **Visitors**

Limited parking should be made available and clearly marked for visitors if possible. Wherever practicable this should be away from the area used by pedestrians/cyclists.

Wherever possible, delivery vehicles should be encouraged to arrive and depart from the premises during lesson times. Planning of the site should minimise conflict between vehicles and children, eg: ensuring that dustbins are located where dustcarts do not have to cross-areas where children are playing.

### **Cyclists**

Wherever possible, cyclists should be segregated from vehicular traffic. Cyclists should dismount and walk in areas, which pedestrians are likely to use. Suitable storage facilities for both bikes and helmets should be provided and appropriately located to ensure security.

## **Walking**

Wherever possible, entrances used by pedestrians should be segregated from vehicles.

## **SCHOOL TRIPS AND VISITS**

### **Hiring Vehicles**

Schools should produce a policy on the hiring of vehicles. This should be a clear, simple and straightforward document, which is issued to all staff with responsibility for hiring vehicles. The contents should include:

- a list of approved companies from which vehicles may be hired (see below);
- the method by which quotations should be obtained, and the number of companies which should be approached (all quotations should be confirmed in writing);
- the system for payment.

When school staff are seeking bids from operators, they should be clear on the journey(s) they require to be undertaken, the days/times/destination, the number and age of children to be carried.

A register of the vehicles which are hired should be kept (see *Vehicle Hire Record* later in this section). This enables companies' performances and prices to be monitored. The list of approved companies should be reviewed at regular intervals, using this information.

A document should be drawn up for staff hiring vehicles, which deals with:

- the school's standard procedures and conditions of hire, eg: replacement of vehicles in the event of breakdown;
- vehicle requirements, eg: maximum age of vehicle, type of vehicle;
- operator-specific information, eg: operator's licence, number type of vehicle available;
- self-drive hire, eg: insurance details;
- criteria for monitoring performance;
- maintenance of an approved list of suitable companies and criteria for inclusion on the list, eg: location, driver training over and above PCV requirements, maximum vehicle age, etc;
- emergency contact numbers.

**Note:** Buses do not require seat-belts and permit standing passengers whereas coaches and minibuses used to transport children of age 3-16 will have lap belts fitted but not necessarily 3 point belts. The school must tell the operator when the vehicle is being hired to transport children aged 3-16 (see *Seatbelts* below for more information).

## **SCHOOL'S OWN VEHICLES**

### **Licensing**

If the vehicle is used for hire or reward, where a payment is made either directly or indirectly, then the vehicle is classed as a public service vehicle (PSV) within the terms of the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981, as amended. As such, an operator's licence is required, and the driver should have a PCV (passenger carrying vehicle) licence.

Certain non-profit making organisations, including many schools, are permitted to operate a PSV under a permit issued under s19 of the Transport Act 1985. Services operated under permit are exempt from certain requirements for PSVs, eg: the operator is not required to have an operator's licence ('O' licence).

Services operated under permit must be provided for the group of people that the organisation serves. Any charges made should cover the running costs only. Schools, or other bodies concerned with education, can usually obtain a permit for minibuses (carrying 9-16 passengers) from their local authority. For larger vehicles, or in cases of difficulty, application should be made to the area traffic commissioner.

### **Nominated person**

A competent person or persons at the school should be appointed with ultimate responsibility for the vehicle. This person must be offered the position and agree to accept the responsibility. This should not be an onerous task if it is carried out properly. The person should be responsible for arranging periodic maintenance and testing of the vehicle, booking the use of vehicles, monitoring fuel consumption, maintaining a system for daily checks, reporting and rectifying defects, security and keys. A simple vehicle administration system should also be introduced which ensures that each vehicle's insurance and tax are kept up-to-date and that the vehicle insurance is adequate for the intended use of the vehicle. Where appropriate, a vehicle replacement programme should be planned.

A list of approved drivers should be kept (this may include parents). All drivers should be asked to provide information such as proof of driving licence, and their age and length of time a full licence has been held which may affect the insurance. Drivers should be made aware of the need to notify the nominated person of any relevant convictions. It is recommended that drivers of school vehicles undertake some vehicle familiarisation and practice on the vehicle before carrying children. Several organisations provide such training including the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, the Institute of Advanced Motorists and some local authorities.

### **Driver responsibilities**

The user of the vehicle is responsible for its condition on the road. Under ss40A, 42 and 87 of the Road Traffic Act 1988, as amended, a person is guilty of an offence if he or she uses, or causes or permits another to use a vehicle in a dangerous condition which does not comply with construction regulations; or if he or she does not hold a valid licence for the class of vehicle.

Drivers of the school vehicle must be aware of their responsibilities, as any driver, for checking brakes, lights, fluid levels, tyres, seatbelts, etc and undertaking a visual check before travelling. Drivers should be aware of the procedure for reporting any faults, defects, or accidents to the nominated person responsible for the vehicle. The driver should also be aware of the operation of all safety equipment on the vehicle.

Drivers should ensure that they plan their journey, that they have appropriate supervision, and that they do not drive whilst tired. Although not subject to professional drivers' hours, school staff should be aware of the risks of driving whilst tired and journeys should be planned and staff allocated to minimise this.

Drivers should ensure that luggage is safely stowed and that access to exits is kept clear. Doors should be securely closed but not locked. Drivers should be aware of what to do in the event of a breakdown or emergency. It may be advisable for drivers to carry a mobile telephone (but not to use it whilst driving!) and contact numbers. It is recommended that the school consider membership of one of the major breakdown organisations including full rescue cover.

### **Replacing vehicles**

Before considering the purchase of a vehicle, factors such as annual mileage, maintenance, road fund licence, depreciation, etc should be taken into account. The costs of hiring and leasing vehicles should also be taken into account. If it is decided to purchase a vehicle, or to replace an existing one, safety should be a high priority. Factors, which should be considered, include:

- safety features, eg: high-backed seats with three point belts and retractors are recommended
- the requirement for any specialised equipment such as a passenger lift, or ramp, or tracking; the layout of tracking and flexibility of seating will also need to be considered if passengers in wheelchairs are to be carried;
- type of fuel to be used;
- type and frequency of use of vehicle;
- the distances/mileage;
- the availability of and cost of servicing, spare parts and repairs;
- the capacity required;
- the storage of luggage (heavy luggage should not be carried in the passenger compartment and roof storage can make a vehicle unstable);
- the availability of suitable parking/storage;
- the requirements in terms of licensing, insurance and driver licensing.

If a vehicle is to be purchased from new, a factory-built minibus from a major manufacturer should be a first choice. If choosing a vehicle that has been converted from a van or minibus or is second-hand, it is recommended that an independent check such as from the RAC or AA be undertaken.

## **OTHER TRANSPORT**

### **Use of Staff Vehicles**

Consideration should be given to the compilation of a register of private vehicles which are "approved" for use on out-of-school visits. The criteria for using such vehicles should be established, eg: the age of vehicles, and the number of seats available. Only seating positions with three point belts should be considered as suitable.

Each person whose vehicle is used should fill in a record, which confirms that the vehicle is taxed and insured for such use. Most insurers will add cover for occasional use, eg: an emergency trip to hospital, or to take a child home. The insurer must be advised if any payment over and above the running costs are to be made.

### **SEAT-BELTS**

The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) (Amendment) (No 2) Regulations 1996 require minibuses and coaches carrying 3 or more children to be fitted with seat-belts. The regulations have been in force since 10 February 1997 for all minibuses and for coaches registered since 1 October 1988. For coaches registered before 1 October 1988 the relevant date was 10 February 1998. The minimum seat-belt requirement is for a lap belt to be fitted on each seat used by a child aged between 3-16 years. The "3 for 2" concession which allowed 3 children under 14 to share a double seat is no longer permitted where seat-belts are fitted. Note that seat-belts are not required on buses.

If a school requires three point belts when hiring vehicles, this should be specified as the legal requirement is only for a lap belt. In addition, it is recommended that retractor /inertia reel belts rather than static belts are fitted/specified when purchasing a vehicle. This reduces the damage to belts from being trodden on and avoids the risk of a seat-belt not being adjusted correctly.

Although the regulations have changed introducing seat-belts on all minibuses and coaches, the regulations made no change to the wearing requirement.

The driver is responsible for ensuring that seat-belts are worn where the child is less than 14 years of age and the vehicle is less than 2540 kg (this will apply to most minibuses). Older children on these vehicles are responsible for their own wearing. Not wearing a seatbelt in these vehicles is an offence for which a fine can be imposed.

On all vehicles it is recommended that driver/staff instruct children to wear seat-belts for their own safety and the safety of other pupils. Ideally there should also be some guidance on how a belt should be worn.

### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

The general risk assessment form provided in section 3(11) can also be used for risk assessing transport issues.

## **VEHICLE INSPECTION**

### **Introduction**

The objective of the following form is to help identify defects in school vehicles, such as minibuses, buses and coaches, which occur between maintenance and repair services at a garage (or other engineering workshop). Once defects have been identified, corrective action can be taken. In other words, the form is designed to be used by non-engineering personnel to help them to check for vehicle defects.

It is essential that vehicles be checked at least weekly and before long journeys.

### **Key Points**

The form can be adapted to suit the needs of an individual school.

A member of staff should be made responsible for monitoring and inspecting vehicles on a weekly basis. An inspection must be carried out prior to a lengthy or high-speed journey with particular attention given to tyre condition and tyre pressures. A further inspection should be carried out after the journey and before the vehicle is used again. Particular attention should be paid to any reported defects or incidents, such as hitting a kerb or unusual noises that may indicate the need for a closer inspection or a check by a competent garage.

No specific training beyond individual knowledge of the vehicle concerned is necessary. For example, it is important that the member of staff knows what to look for when checking tyres, ie: correct tyre pressure (a pressure gauge should be used), any bulges or tears in the tyre wall or foreign bodies (eg: nails) stuck in the tread of the tyre and the depth of the tread itself (ie: 1.6mm for vehicles not exceeding 3.5 tonnes and 1mm for vehicles over 3.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight). It is recommended that tyres be replaced before reaching the permitted minimum tread depth.

The best way to proceed is for the competent person who carries out the inspection to methodically check each item as follows.

The tax disc should be in the correct position in the lower corner of the windscreen on the nearside and should be valid.

Any doors and opening windows should be checked to see that they work. All glass should be checked for cracks or chips. If the windscreen has a crack which connects two sides or which is in front of the driver, the vehicle should not be used until the windscreen has been repaired or replaced. Expert advice (eg: from a motor glass agent) should be sought if there is any doubt as to whether any crack or chip in any window presents a risk.

All body panels and the boot lid (where the vehicle has one) should be checked for loose or protruding parts. These should receive attention.

All vehicles should carry a spare tyre and a wheel jack and brace.

All vehicle lights should be checked to see that they are working correctly. The law takes the view that if something is fitted to a vehicle it must be working. Cracked or broken lenses should be replaced, as should defective bulbs.

The oil level should be checked. If the vehicle has been running, then the engine should be switched off and the inspection should be delayed for a few minutes to give the oil from around the engine time to return to the sump. The dipstick should be checked to ensure that oil is present between the minimum and maximum marks. If the engine oil needs topping up and this is done with a proprietary brand from a can, the amount poured in should not overfill the maximum mark. If it does, undue oil pressure could damage the engine. While the engine is switched off, the engine casing should be examined to make sure that the oil has not contaminated it. If it has, the leak should be located. While the engine is running, observations should be taken to ensure no oil is dripping onto the ground or, more importantly, onto the exhaust manifold as this might result in an engine fire. Fuel leaks should also be checked for.

The various water levels should be checked. The radiator or header tank should only be checked when the engine is cool. Otherwise, there is a risk of being scalded by water and steam when the cap is removed. Washer levels for each washer fitted (ie: both front and rear windscreen) should be topped up. Battery levels in distilled water batteries should be checked to ensure that the battery plates are covered. Only distilled water should be used to top up batteries - tap water should never be used.

The interior panel lights should be checked for correct operation and the interior seats should be checked for rips, tears or other wear and tear.

A first-aid kit and at least one fire extinguisher should be kept on the vehicle. Each should be checked for its presence and to make sure that any seals are intact. For further details on fire precautions see section 3.2. For further details on first-aid, see section 3.6.

Once a defect has been identified, the immediate and follow-up action required should be detailed on the form. The competent person should then decide who is to carry out this work. Who this is will depend on the action required. A member of the school staff should be able to change a light bulb, while an oil leak would require a visit to a garage.

Once a defect has been identified, the vehicle should not be used again until the defect has been rectified.

Although there is no legislation relating to this inspection and, therefore, no time limit for the retention of this form, it is suggested that the completed form be retained for 15 months.

**RECORD OF VEHICLE INSPECTION**

| INSPECTION CARRIED OUT BY |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Signature:                |  |
| Name in BLOCK capitals:   |  |
| Position:                 |  |

|                             |
|-----------------------------|
| Vehicle registration number |
| Date of issue:              |
| Date of inspection:         |

| Item                 | Satisfactory |    | Defect | Action Required |           | Follow-Up Action |                | Comments |
|----------------------|--------------|----|--------|-----------------|-----------|------------------|----------------|----------|
|                      | Yes          | No |        | Immediate       | Follow-Up | Carried Out By   | Date Completed |          |
| Tax disc             |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Windscreen           |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Driver's side window |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Access/entrance door |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Nearside windows     |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Rear windows         |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Offside windows      |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Boot lid             |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Body panels          |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Offside front tyre   |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Nearside front tyre  |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Spare tyre           |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Indicators           |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Brake lights         |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Sidelights           |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Headlights           |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |

**RECORD OF VEHICLE INSPECTION  
(continued)**

| Item                          | Satisfactory |    | Defect | Action Required |           | Follow-Up Action |                | Comments |
|-------------------------------|--------------|----|--------|-----------------|-----------|------------------|----------------|----------|
|                               | Yes          | No |        | Immediate       | Follow-Up | Carried Out By   | Date Completed |          |
| Front and rear fog/spotlights |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Oil level                     |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Oil leaks                     |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Water level                   |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Washer levels                 |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Windscreen levels             |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Battery level(s)              |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Interior seats                |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Driver panel lights           |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| First-aid kit                 |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| Fire extinguisher             |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
| <b>Other vehicle specific</b> |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
|                               |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
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|                               |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |
|                               |              |    |        |                 |           |                  |                |          |

## **VEHICLE MAINTENANCE**

### **Introduction**

The objective of the following form is to provide a written record of the tax, insurance and service history of each vehicle, together with the cost of maintenance and repairs. The form is a single multi-purpose document designed both to facilitate the collation of information and to reduce unnecessary paperwork.

### **Key Points**

The competent person responsible for school vehicles should complete the form on a monthly basis.

Each vehicle should be listed with the current expiry date for its tax disc and insurance. If the form indicates that a service or a MOT test is due, this should be arranged and the details should be recorded, as they are known.

If the tax or insurance expiry date or the due date for a MOT test alters during the month, the entry for the vehicle should be deleted and a new entry should be made which includes the new details.

Other information, which could be collected in order to give an even fuller picture of costs, includes the purchase of fuel, oil and items used for repairs, such as tyres and batteries.

There is no legal requirement for this form to be retained, but it is suggested that it be kept for 15 months, which is the requirement for commercial operators.



## **SCHOOL VEHICLE DRIVERS**

### **Introduction**

The objective of the form that follows is to help the competent person with responsibility for school vehicles to maintain a record of drivers who are permitted to drive school vehicles. The information is also useful to help ensure that clauses in the school's insurance policy are not breached.

### **Key Points**

Those who may be permitted to drive school vehicles include teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteer parent drivers.

In order to make it clear which vehicles individuals are allowed to drive, the vehicle registration number of each vehicle should be listed in the "Cleared to Drive Vehicles Listed Below" column.

For those schools, which operate larger passenger vehicles, it might also be useful to keep a record of driver training. For large passenger vehicles (those with 17 passenger seats, ie: 17 seats excluding the driver), drivers should undertake driver training through a commercial driver training school and obtain a PCV (passenger carrying vehicle) category licence (ie: Category D for vehicles with more than 8 seats). It is recommended that any driver of a school minibus undertake a training course. Suitable courses are provided by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, the Institute of Advanced Motoring and many local authorities.

The "Categories" column heading on the form refers to the categories of vehicles which the licence holder is entitled to drive according to his or her driving licence. The categories, which are relevant to this form, are as follows.

- B - The full licence which allows holders to drive cars (not exceeding 3.5 tonnes) and vehicles with up to 8 passenger seats.
- C1 - This allows drivers to drive goods vehicles up to 7.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight. For example, this might be used if a large van was hired to escort a school trip or to move some heavy materials from one site to another.
- D1 - For drivers of large school or other buses of over 16 passenger seats, if the vehicle does not operate under the permit scheme.

A "Vocational Licence" is one which allows a driver to drive a public service vehicle (PSV). When the EC licence was introduced, with the new categories of entitlement, a rule was introduced which specified that drivers of mini-buses which have more than 8 but not more than 16 seats must hold a category D1 licence and drivers of large vehicles should hold a category D entitlement. However, the Permit Operations contained under ss18-21 of the Transport Act 1985 allow organisations, including education organisations (Class D passengers, ie: pupils belonging to an educational establishment and staff or others who accompany them), to be exempt from this category of licence. In other words, provided that the school bus, regardless of size, has a Permit, the driver need only hold a full licence and be over 21 unless he or she holds category D entitlement which allows a driver who is 18 or over to drive a "small" bus, ie: up to 16 passenger seats.

The Government is considering whether or not drivers of large buses under the Permit scheme should hold a category D entitlement, but as yet this has not been included in legislation.

This form should be revised annually and the old form should be discarded. Drivers whose circumstances change, ie: who are convicted of a motoring offence, or whose licence is now free from penalty points, should notify the person who maintains this record so that he or she can amend it.



## **VEHICLE JOURNEYS**

### **Introduction**

The objective of the following form is to act as a control and monitoring document for the use of school vehicles.

### **Key Points**

The competent person in charge of school vehicles should maintain this form. The details of each journey should be entered as soon as it is complete. One form should be filled in for each vehicle each month. In this way this form can be used in conjunction with the other forms in this section to provide an overview of the control and administration of the school's transport.

Columns 3 and 4 are the same, ie: "Journey To", so that the outward destination of a return journey can be recorded. For example, in order to record a journey to The Mount School from Manor School and back again the columns would be filled in as follows:

|                |                  |              |
|----------------|------------------|--------------|
| "Journey From" | "Journey To"     | "Journey To" |
| Manor School   | The Mount School | Manor School |

With regard to the column headed "Purpose of Journey", it might be more useful to devise a code rather than trying to include a lot of detail in a small space.

It is recommended that this form is retained for 15 months after completion.



## **VEHICLE HIRE**

### **Introduction**

The objective of the following form when completed is to provide a summary of vehicles, which are hired by the school. The information should be useful to allow comparisons to be made between companies. Information should include prices charged, punctuality, friendliness or otherwise of the driver, cleanliness of the vehicle, performance of the vehicle and any other comments which might be helpful next time a vehicle is hired.

### **Key Points**

For this form to be useful and not just a repetition of information, which is collated elsewhere, comments and remarks column should always be filled in. Rather than generalities, a code could be devised which both simplifies the details and becomes immediately identifiable for comparison purposes.

Suggested codes include:

- punctual (1)
- late (2)
- vehicle clean and tidy (3)
- vehicle dirty or untidy (4)
- driver pleasant, helpful, thoughtful and considerate (5)
- driver unhelpful, inconsiderate and unpleasant (6)
- all seats fitted with seat-belts (7)
- driver possessed a Level 2 NVQ (8)
- company sent wrong size vehicle (g).

It is recommended that this form is retained for 15 months after completion.



## **VEHICLE DEFECT SHEET**

### **Introduction**

The objective of a defect reporting system is to ensure that any defects which come to light are dealt with efficiently and quickly in order to minimise the length of time the vehicle is out of service (downtime). Any delays in rectifying defects can cause inconvenience, increased cost and possibly an increasing level of danger.

### **Key Points**

A supply of vehicle defect sheets should remain on the vehicle at all times.

The sheet should be filled in after each journey, even if there are no defects. If this is the case, "no defects" should be written in the defect column. In this way, the time when the defect occurs can be identified. The last person to drive the vehicle on each day should return the form to the person named on the sheet.

Each driver should also complete the *Vehicle Journeys* record, including the defect status columns. This should also help to maintain a record of whether or not defects are being rectified.

It is recommended that the following form be retained for 15 months after completion.



## **DEFECT REMEDIAL ACTION**

### **Introduction**

The objective of the following form is to record the action, which is taken in relation to the defects, which are reported on the Vehicle Defect Sheet.

### **Key Points**

When the person responsible for the vehicles receives the "Vehicle Defect Sheet", he or she should check whether any defects have been reported. The severity of the defect(s) should be determined and a decision should be made as to the course of action, which should be taken to rectify the defects.

Some defects are not considered serious enough to warrant immediate rectification. Rectification of these can be included in the next scheduled maintenance and service. If this is the case, it is advised that drivers be notified individually, in writing, to this effect. Alternatively, a notice may be placed on the vehicle. In this way, the driver or drivers who reported the defect would know that a decision has been taken based on the defect report.

It is recommended that these records be maintained for 15 months.



| <b>Document Control Information</b> |               |
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