

General

123. The group leader must give careful thought to planning transport. County and controlled schools should follow LEA transport policies. The main factors to consider include:

- ▼ passenger safety;
- ▼ the competence and training of the driver to drive the proposed vehicle and whether the driver holds the appropriate valid licence;
- ▼ number of driving hours required for the journey and length of the driver's day (including non-driving hours);
- ▼ capacity and experience of driver to maintain concentration - whether more than one driver is needed to avoid driver fatigue;
- ▼ type of journey - will the visit take place locally or will it include long distance driving ie motorways?
- ▼ traffic conditions;
- ▼ contingency funds and arrangements in case of breakdown/emergency;
- ▼ appropriate insurance cover;
- ▼ weather;
- ▼ journey time and distance;
- ▼ stopping points on long journeys for toilet and refreshments;
- ▼ supervision.

Legislation

124. The employer, usually the LEA or governing body in schools, should satisfy themselves that all travel arrangements, including the hire of private

coaches or buses, are suitable for the nature of the visit. In practice head teachers will normally carry out these checks.

125. The driver is responsible for the vehicle during the visit.

126. Seat belts: All minibuses and coaches which carry groups of three or more children aged between 3 and 15 years inclusive must be fitted with a seat belt for each child. The seats must face forward and seat restraints must comply with legal requirements. For further information contact the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR). See Annex B for address details.

Supervision on transport

127. The level of supervision necessary should be considered as part of the risk assessment for the journey. The group leader is responsible for the party at all times including maintaining good discipline.

128. The driver should not normally be responsible for supervision. Driver supervision may be sufficient if a small number of older children are being taken on a short journey. All group members should be made aware of the position of the emergency door and first-aid and anti-fire equipment on transport. The group leader should also be aware of alternative routes or means of travel in the event of delay or cancellation.

129. Factors that the group leader should consider when planning supervision on transport include:

- ▼ level of supervision that will be necessary on double decker buses/coaches - one supervisor on each deck should be appropriate in normal circumstances;
- ▼ safety when crossing roads as part of the journey - the group leader should ensure that pupils know how to observe the safety rules set out in the Highway Code and the Green Cross Code. Pedestrian crossings and traffic lights or

footbridges should be used to cross roads, whenever possible;

- ▼ safety on buses, trains, ferries and boats - the group leader should make clear to pupils how much or little freedom they have to roam. Misbehaviour is a main cause of accidents to children on such means of transport. Appropriate supervision and discipline should be maintained at all times. Pupils should also be made aware of what to do in an emergency and where emergency procedures are displayed;
- ▼ booking transport - the group leader should arrange for seats to be reserved well in advance to ensure that the party can travel together;
- ▼ safety of pupils whilst waiting at pick-up and drop-off points and when getting on or off transport, particularly when using UK vehicles abroad. Pupils should be made aware of safety rules and expected standards of behaviour. See Transport and pupils in Chapter 4 paragraphs 97 - 98;
- ▼ safety while on stops or rests during the journey - group leaders should plan with the driver sufficient stops at suitable areas to ensure the safety of all group members including the driver. Drivers of buses and coaches must comply with legislation covering maximum periods of driving and minimum rest periods;
- ▼ safety of the group in the event of an accident

or breakdown - the group should remain under the direct supervision of the group leader or other teachers wherever possible;

- ▼ head counts, by the group leader or another delegated teacher or supervisor, should always be carried out when the group is getting off or onto transport;
- ▼ responsibility for checking that seat belts are fastened;
- ▼ consider whether a visible and easily recognisable article of clothing should be worn in common by pupils;
- ▼ pupils should be made aware that they are not allowed access to the driving area at any time;
- ▼ group members should be made aware that travel sickness tablets should only be administered to a pupil with previous authorisation from the parents;
- ▼ Vetting non-teacher drivers. See Vetting suitability in Chapter 3 paragraphs 75 - 78.

Hiring coaches and buses

130. The group leader is responsible for ensuring that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company. Professional operators of buses and coaches are legally required to be licensed. Schools using operators to transport pupils should ensure that the operators have the appropriate public

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service vehicle (PSV) operators licence. When booking transport, the group leader should ensure that seat belts are available for pupils. Whilst seat belts must be fitted on coaches which carry groups of children, they are not legally required on buses. Buses where seat belts are not fitted are not normally appropriate for visits involving long journeys.

131. If any of the group use a wheelchair, the group leader should ensure that transport used has appropriate access and securing facilities. It may be appropriate to use portable ramps. DETIR can provide advice. See Annex B for address details.

Licences and Permits

132. A public service vehicle (PSV) licence is required by schools running or hiring their own vehicles where any payment is made towards the cost of pupils being carried. There are two types of licence - restricted (for up to two vehicles) and standard national (more than two vehicles). Local Traffic Commissioners can provide advice and application forms for PSV operator licences.

133. Schools can apply to their local council (for maintained schools) or the local Traffic Commissioner (for non-profit making schools - usually registered charities) for a permit issued under Section 19 of the Transport Act 1985. Permit holders are exempt from the need to hold a PSV operators licence and, in certain circumstances, from meeting all the driver licensing requirements. Section 19 Permits cannot be used outside the UK and separate rules exist for all those wishing to take minibuses abroad. DETIR can provide advice - see Annex B for contact details.

134. The law on driver licensing no longer permits

car drivers who pass their test after 1 January 1997 to drive minibuses without passing a Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) driving test or unless they are driving under a Section 19 Permit. This does not apply to existing licence holders who are over 21 years of age.

135. Drivers of any vehicle must ensure that they have the correct entitlement on their licence.

Private cars

136. Teachers and others who drive pupils in their own car must ensure their passengers safety, that the vehicle is roadworthy, and that they have appropriate licence and insurance cover for carrying the pupils. Volunteers should be carefully vetted by the school before they are permitted to drive pupils in their car.

If necessary, assurances should be requested by the head teacher. See Vetting suitability in Chapter 3 paragraphs 75 - 78.

137. The driver is responsible for making sure that pupils have a seat belt and use it at all times. Vehicles without seat belts should not be used.

138. Head teachers or group leaders who wish to use parents, volunteers or other pupils to help transport pupils in their own cars, must ensure that they are aware of their legal responsibility for the safety of the pupils in their cars. Parents agreement should be sought (on the consent form) for their children to be carried in other parents cars. It is advisable that parents driving pupils are not put in a position where they are alone with a pupil. The group leader should arrange a central dropping point for all pupils rather than individual home drops.

Transport in the school minibus

139. Many schools use their own minibuses for short frequent journeys and sometimes for longer trips. Minibuses have a maximum capacity of 16 seated passengers plus the driver. They must comply with the various regulations about construction and fittings.

A forward facing seat with seat belt must be provided for each child. Some important regulations are the Minibus (Conditions of Fitness, Equipment and Use) Regulations 1977 and the Road Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations 1996. DETR can provide further advice. See Annex A for publication details and Annex B for contact details.

School minibus driver

140. Although the chair of governors or head teacher is ultimately responsible for the school minibus, the driver is responsible for the vehicle during the visit. The minibus driver must be qualified to drive a minibus and have a valid and clean driving licence - see Licences and permits above. It is advisable for all those who may drive the school minibus to receive training in minibus driving and the management of passengers. The head teacher should ensure that teachers driving school minibuses have a rest period before driving. Minibus drivers must always adhere to transport Regulations. DETR

can provide advice on relevant transport legislation. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents have issued Minibus Safety: a Code of Practice 1996. See Annexes A and B for contact addresses and publication details.

141. The minibus driver must:

- ▼ observe LEA and/or governing body guidance, where appropriate;
- ▼ not drive when taking medication or undergoing treatment that might affect their ability or judgement;
- ▼ know what to do in an emergency;
- ▼ know how to use fire fighting and first-aid equipment;
- ▼ avoid driving for long periods and ensure that rests are taken when needed;
- ▼ clarify and comply with transport regulations and the requirements of the vehicle's insurance cover;
- ▼ take into consideration the effects of teaching and the working day;
- ▼ have regular medical checks eg eyesight.



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see paragraphs 199 – 200 in Chapter 9.

Maintenance and checks of the school minibus

142. The chair of governors or head teacher will usually be responsible for the school minibus. However, a head teacher may delegate to a willing member of staff responsibility for carrying out regular checks and ensuring that the minibus is maintained. This member of staff should report to the head teacher, who is responsible, along with the governing body and/or LEA and other teachers, for ensuring the safety of pupils on school-organised journeys. The person responsible for maintaining the minibus should:

- ▼ check the vehicle's condition on a weekly basis;
- ▼ ensure proper servicing by a reputable garage;
- ▼ maintain the record-of-use book with the service history, insurance and other relevant documents;
- ▼ check with the head teacher or governing body before allowing anyone not so authorised to drive the vehicle;
- ▼ ensure that any teachers driving the minibus are competent and have undertaken suitable training to do so;
- ▼ always be informed before other teachers use the school minibus;
- ▼ ensure that drivers of the school minibus are aware that the vehicle should always be logged in and out.

For organising your own transport for visits abroad