

## *Medical Officers of Schools Association Guideline*

### **School Vehicle Safety**

1. MOSA recommends that schools should agree and enforce, in consultation with the School Medical Officer, a policy for safe use of school vehicles. Detailed codes of practice for safe use of minibuses have been produced by a number of institutions and could serve as a starting point for such a policy document. (See Further Information overleaf.)
2. All school passenger carrying vehicles should be in a clean and roadworthy condition, regularly maintained according to the manufacturer's schedules and checked for faults before and after each day's journeys. All faults should be recorded, reported and safety critical faults should be rectified before any children are carried. A driver should refuse to carry children in an obviously unsafe vehicle and a log of all journeys should be kept, recording details of mileage, passenger numbers, drivers, faults noted and any accidents or incidents.
3. The approved, distinctive official signs indicating that children are being carried should be fixed to the front and the rear of the vehicle.
4. Each passenger should occupy an individual seat and wear a correctly installed and fitting seat belt of approved design whenever the vehicle is in motion.
5. School PCV drivers should be competent drivers used to working with children. They should receive regular instruction and examination in First Aid (including resuscitation), and vehicle evacuation. Verbal, or preferably written, safety instructions (as in the case of passenger aircraft) should precede each journey. Driving should be limited to nine hours out of the 24, with not more than four and a half hours, either cumulatively or continuously, being driven without a minimum break of 45 minutes, which may be taken as a passenger in the same vehicle. Journeys should be planned with appropriate comfort stops. Drivers should be familiar with the routes and schools should be advised, before departure, of itineraries and estimated times of arrival and return.
6. School PCV drivers should be under 65 with at least five year's driving experience and no conviction for serious driving offences. They should sign a declaration of medical fitness to drive, bearing in mind the medical conditions which impair consciousness, coordination, visual acuity and hearing. Ideally, they should meet the medical standards applicable to Group 2 Passenger carrying vehicles (PCV) licence holders. At all times whilst driving, they must be free from the untoward effects of any type of drug, including tobacco and alcohol, and be aware of the slow clearance from the body of the latter and its potentiation of the untoward effects of many common and over the counter remedies. Drivers must be aware of the dangers of cumulative fatigue, and not commence long journeys when tired, nor drive in sleeping hours.
7. If possible, another adult, in addition to the driver should be present whenever children are being carried, to enforce safety procedures, ensure acceptable behaviour and act as a relief driver.
8. All school PCVs should carry a First Aid kit and a fire extinguisher to statutory standards, plus a neck collar and an assortment of splints, which should be replenished as necessary. Also, a correctly functioning "hands free" mobile telephone or two-way radio, torch, motoring association membership card, spare keys, a "space blanket", reflective clothing, a hammer/seat belt cutter and breakdown warning signs should be carried. Where long

journeys in remote areas or in inclement weather are undertaken, emergency rations and snow shovels should be carried. Drivers must be aware of the correct procedure to be followed in the case of road accidents.

9. No smoking or consumption of alcohol by driver, escort or passengers should be allowed. See 5 & 6.
10. Luggage must be stored correctly, both inside and on the roof of the vehicle, so as to allow unimpeded entry and exit. All passengers should have ready access to an emergency exit and the vehicle must not be refuelled when children are on board.
11. Any trailer towed must be loaded correctly (and trailer and vehicle not overloaded) and must comply with the latest regulations. (See below)

### **Further Information**

Fact Sheets: "*Trailers*", "*Driving a Minibus*" and a book "*At A Glance Guide to The Current Standards of Fitness to Drive*" (1999) are available free from

#### **The Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)**

Tel: 01 792 792 792

"At a Glance.." is also available on line at [www.dvla.gov.uk/at\\_a\\_glance/aag\\_contents.htm](http://www.dvla.gov.uk/at_a_glance/aag_contents.htm)

Comprehensive information on minibus licensing, driving, seatbelt and trailer regulations are supplied by

#### **The Community Transport Association:**

Highbank, Halton Street, Hyde. Cheshire. SK14 2NY.

Tel: 0161 366 6685

Email: [cta.man@dial.pipex.com](mailto:cta.man@dial.pipex.com)

or

A Block, Arlington Road Works Depot, 211 Arlington Road, London NW1 7HD.

Tel: 01 71 284 4600

Email: [cta.lon@dial.pipex.com](mailto:cta.lon@dial.pipex.com)

Website: [ds.dial.pipex.com/town/terrace/pi21/work.htm](http://ds.dial.pipex.com/town/terrace/pi21/work.htm)

Examples of detailed codes of practice for safe use of minibuses available online:

[www.nottingham.ac.uk/safety/minibus.htm](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/safety/minibus.htm) (University of Nottingham Safety Office)

[www.lancs.ac.uk/users/safety/section.22/body.htm](http://www.lancs.ac.uk/users/safety/section.22/body.htm) (University of Lancaster)

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