

## Watery Lane Preschool Minibus Policy



### Policy Statement

The preschool will use a minibus where necessary for outings, trips and visits which aim to improve the opportunities open to and education of children attending the preschool. At the same time it is appreciated that such activities can carry a higher element of risk to both children and staff. This policy has been written to minimise risk and to set out procedures which will help to ensure the safety of all users.

### Procedures

#### 1. Care and maintenance of vehicles used

- Minibuses hired by Watery Lane Preschool will be operated by ATWEST, St Dubricious First School, WSAT, West Somerset College, PALs or Kilve Court. All of these are maintained to the very highest standards with regular checks.
- All vehicle deficiencies observed, and reported on, are repaired to the required standard as reported on the inspection sheet, within the time stated.
- A copy of all vehicle inspection reports are kept on file in the offices attached to the operators minibuses.
- Every care is taken to ensure that the vehicle is kept clean, and in roadworthy condition at all times. It is a requirement that all persons using the bus undertake to clean it out at the end of use and that it is in a condition suitable for the next user.

#### 2. Persons driving the vehicle

- Drivers are reminded that they have charge of the vehicle. This includes the safety of all passengers and the security of the vehicle whilst it is in their use. They must undertake to make all checks as listed below and must assume all responsibility for its roadworthiness given the statements in part 1 above.
- No element of the vehicle's condition or safety can be assumed beyond that implied in part 1 above.
- ALL DRIVERS MUST HAVE A 'CLEAN' DRIVING LICENSE FREE FROM ENDORSEMENTS RELATING TO DANGEROUS DRIVING OR SPEED OFFENCES.

- ALL DRIVERS MUST HAVE COMPLETED THE APPROVED COURSE OF TRAINING AND HOLD RELEVANT CERTIFICATION AS PRESCRIBED BY SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL VEHICLE SAFETY DEPARTMENT.
- All drivers must show evidence of compliance with the above requirements when requested. Only drivers in compliance will be added to the approved drivers list held by the Manager(s). This list will be reviewed annually. A 'named' driver may be removed from the approved list if they do not follow the operating procedures set out in this policy.

### 3. Using the vehicle

- It is a requirement that at the start of every journey the following checks are made. These can be sub divided into three categories for ease of use: visual, under bonnet and functional.

#### Visual check (walk around the vehicle)

- Doors (unlocked but shut) and operating smoothly
- Tyres (pressure, wear and damage) –
  - Does a tyre look partially deflated when compared to others
  - Is there sufficient tread depth (at least 1mm across  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the width of tread continuous around the circumference
  - Is there any obvious damage or cuts to the sidewalls of the tyres
- Wheel security
  - Where wheel nuts are not covered ensure there is no sign of looseness
- Body condition for damage
  - A walk around the vehicle when carrying out the tyre check will highlight any damage to the body, lights or mirrors
  - Light lenses, mirrors and number plates for cleanliness
  - Current tax disc and permit displayed
  - The presence of and location of a fire extinguisher and first aid kit

If any of the points checked are unsatisfactory seek professional help.

#### Under bonnet

- Engine oil level
- Brake and clutch fluid level
- Radiator coolant level
- Oil / fuel leaks (obvious by strong odour or ground insoection)

Ensure all levels are above the minimum mark, otherwise do not drive.

## Functional check

On entering the vehicle, first ensure the hand brake is on and gear lever is in neutral then check:

- Driver's seat (correct posture)
- Seat belt (properly adjusted)
- Mirrors (set correctly)
- Operation of lights, indicators and stop lights (these work when the ignition is on or can be tested by operation or, in the case of brake lights, against a wall or window)
- Location and operation of:
  - Screen wipers / washers, horn and any switches
  - Warning lights and gauges e.g. fuel level
  - Hand brake and pressure of foot brake
  - Presence and location of fire extinguisher and first aid kit (check content complies with list of contents)
- Having moved off a functional test of steering, brakes and speedometer
- Seat belt adjusters (correctly functioning)

## Safe loading

It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure the safety of the passengers whilst on the bus and in the embarking and disembarking process. The driver's responsibility also extends to the loading of the minibus in respect of luggage and equipment and its safe placement.

## Passengers

Thought must be given to the parked position of the minibus for safe entry and exit of passengers and which door(s) should be used. Whenever possible, passengers should gain entry via the nearside (left) door. The driver should supervise this operation, giving assistance where appropriate.

The seating and placement of passengers is also very important, as this will affect the handling of the bus. Ensure that heavier passengers are seated evenly across the mid area of the bus and over the rear axle (this conforms with the safety policy of having adults seated adjacent to the rear and side doors).

As a minimum, seat belt adjusters must be used and where they are not present booster seats must be used. Where available booster seats will be used in addition to seatbelt adjusters for added protection in line with Government advice:

<https://www.gov.uk/child-car-seats-the-rules/when-a-child-can-travel-without-a-car-seat>

## Equipment

Equipment should be placed at the rear of the vehicle. A minibus has no crumple zones – in the event of a rear end collision equipment will act as a buffer to absorb damage rather than risk injury to passengers.

It is important that equipment is correctly stowed and secured; using either seat belts or bungee cords can do this. Equipment should not be stored in the gangways, permitted to block the rear (emergency) door or the alternative side door. These form the escape routes in the event of an emergency, obstructions delay disembarkment and can cause injury. When carrying passengers, the rear door must be unlocked from the outside to enable the door to be opened from both sides.

## BREAKDOWN PROCEDURES

Most breakdowns occur from simple neglect. When the vehicle is well maintained and serviced as recommended, the likelihood of a breakdown is greatly reduced. In addition, the regular checks before every use help to highlight actual and potential problems between inspections and services.

The minibuses contain details of their breakdown call out and recovery systems in place and the driver should make themselves familiar with these before the journey. The preschool mobile phone will be carried on all trips for use in case of emergency.

In the event of a breakdown:

- Get the vehicle off the carriageway into a safe position
- Use a warning triangle at a minimum of 50m away from the vehicle, extending the distance appropriately if parked on or near a bend
- If the vehicle is stopped in a hazardous position on the road, disembark all passengers and move them away from the vehicle to a safe location
- Phone for assistance

If it should be deemed necessary to arrange alternative transport back to preschool the following should be considered:

- Contact parents and arrange for collection (children travelling with a parent other than their own would be accompanied by a DBS checked member of staff)
- Contact the vehicle operator and ask for a substitute vehicle to be brought out

## Links to other policies and legislation

Please also see our policies on Risk Assessment, Outings, Health and Safety, Safeguarding Children and Child Protection, Mobile Phone policy, COVID Risk Assessment

<b>A Unique Child</b>	<b>Positive Relationships</b>	<b>Enabling Environments</b>	<b>Learning and Development</b>
1.2 Inclusive Practice	2.2 Parents as Partners	3.3. The Learning Environment	4.1 Play and Exploration
1.3 Keeping Safe	2.3 Supporting Learning	3.4 The Wider Context	4.2 Active Learning
1.4 Health and Well-Being			4.3 Creativity and Critical Thinking

This Policy was adopted at a meeting of **Watery Lane Preschool** held on .....

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee .....

Name of signatory ..... Role of signatory .....

Date to be reviewed .....