

## **Policy for the use of the school minibuses for transport between home and school**

### **Introduction**

Borrowdale School has two minibuses which are used to transport pupils on educational visits. The school is happy for them also to be used for transport between home and school, subject to the terms set out below, to increase access to the school for families outside the catchment area.

When the minibuses are used for pupil transport between home and school there are three guiding principles, and these principles must be taken together:

- a. The school does not provide a bus service for pupils to/from school; responsibility for transporting children to/from school rests with each child's parents or carers.
- b. Use of the buses for transport to/from school is different from a normal car share, because it is not simply a private arrangement among parents; overall responsibility for use of the minibuses rests with the school.
- c. Parents who choose to use the school minibuses are agree to act in accordance with all relevant school policies and procedures and agree to the terms set out in this document.

This document operates in conjunction with, but not limited to, the following school policies:

- Parent Code of Conduct
- Health and Safety Policy
- Child Protection Policy

### **1. General terms of the arrangement**

- 1.1 The minibus is driven by volunteers.
- 1.2 There will be a chaperone for each journey made by each minibus.
- 1.3 Each minibus will only be used for home–school transport if enough volunteers come forward to drive and chaperone the bus on a regular basis.
- 1.4 All volunteers on the minibuses must have a DBS check arranged by the school before they begin volunteering.
- 1.5 All drivers of the minibuses must pass a driver's assessment, arranged by the school, before they begin driving the minibus.

## **Conditions of using the minibus**

Parents must accept the following terms if they decide to participate in the minibus arrangement for transporting their child between home and school.

2.1 To use the minibus, parents must volunteer to drive or chaperone on the bus, and undertake the required checks before doing so. The only exceptions to this are as follows:

2.1.1 If there are already sufficient volunteers driving and chaperoning the bus and the existing body of volunteers agrees that no further volunteers are required. Such an exception would be subject to ongoing review. Once made it does not guarantee continued use of the bus without volunteering.

2.1.2 If there are exceptional family circumstances which mean that the parents or carers are reliant on the bus, and genuinely unable to volunteer, and at the same time their child's wellbeing is dependent on continued attendance at this school. The decision on whether such exceptional conditions apply rests with the school. This does not constitute a right to a place on the minibus, but the school can ask the minibus community to transport pupils if these circumstances apply. The ability to do so will depend on sufficient volunteers and bus places being available.

2.2 To use the minibus, parents must pay a contribution towards fuel costs as determined and requested by the school.

2.3 To use the minibus, parents must share contact details with the other parent volunteers and make themselves contactable by the most commonly used means of communication among the group. The current means of communication is a Whatsapp group.

2.4 Parents using the minibus recognise that the arrangement is on a mutual voluntary basis, and does not constitute a contract.

2.5 Participating in the arrangements by volunteering and contributing towards fuel does not mean that parents have a right for their child to be transported on any given day.

2.6 Parents are responsible for their child up until the minibus departs. All parents with children on the bus (not just the driver and chaperone) are jointly responsible for ensuring the bus departs on time. It is not acceptable for parents to leave the departure place before the bus departs unless they have explicitly delegated care of their child to another adult.

2.7 Safety of the pupils will always come first, and if on any given journey there are insufficient volunteers or the weather conditions are judged by school to be dangerous, the responsibility for transporting each child rests with that child's parents or carers.

2.8 Parents must collect their child at 15.20 after the return journey. It is not acceptable to be late and rely on others adults to care for children that are not their own without prior arrangement.

### **Responsibilities of parents and volunteers**

- 3.1 To act in accordance with the school's Parent Code of Conduct.
- 3.2 To set a good example to the children through their behaviour and the way they interact with the children and each other.
- 3.2 To refrain from bringing animals onto the bus.
- 3.3 To work together to create a minibus rota. To share the minibus rota among all participants and with the school.
- 3.4 To alert the school if there are insufficient volunteers to drive or chaperone either of the buses, either on a regular or a one-off basis.
- 3.5 To agree with each other the timing and pickup points for the bus journeys.
- 3.6 To arrange the timing in such a way that the children arrive at school by 8.50am.
- 3.6 To fulfil requested financial contribution towards fuel to be requested from participating parents.
- 3.7 At the end of a journey home, to notify school if any children have not been collected, and to stay with those pupils until they are collected either by the school or by their parents/carers.
- 3.8 When driving or chaperoning on the minibus, to act in the best interests of all the children, putting safety first.
- 3.9 Drivers of the bus will drive safely, calmly and adhere to speed restrictions.
- 3.10 Chaperones will aim to maintain a calm atmosphere on the bus and will inform the headteacher of any bad behaviour.

### **Responsibilities of the school (headteacher and governors)**

- 4.1 To monitor the application of this policy.
- 4.2 To oversee and carry out the maintenance and insurance of the minibus.

- 4.3 To carry out DBS checks and driver assessments for the volunteers.
- 4.4 To take decisions as to when the minibuses can or cannot operate, for example due to adverse weather conditions or lack of volunteers.
- 4.5 To set the financial contribution towards fuel to be requested from participating parents.
- 4.6 To apportion funding to the minibus from the school's budgets, as appropriate.
- 4.7 To decide whether to request that the volunteers transport any additional children, from families in need who are unable to volunteer (see 2.12).
- 4.8 To act on any notifications from chaperones about bad behaviour on the bus. This includes deciding any penalties for continued bad behaviour, such as exclusion from the bus.

### ***Non-Collection of Pupils from the minibus drop-off point***

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Parents have not collected their child</b>                                                                                                                                                                                               | Chaperone contacts the school to report. School then calls pupil's emergency contact numbers in hierarchical order. If contact is established, alternative collection arrangements may be made. The school will contact the chaperone and explain the alternative arrangements. |
| <b>10 minutes after non-collection at the normal time</b>                                                                                                                                                                                   | If still no response, arrangements will be made to return the pupil to school, where the child will be supervised until collected.                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>30 minutes after non-collection at the normal time</b>                                                                                                                                                                                   | Continue to make repeated attempts to contact the normal emergency contact numbers provided by the parent/carer. If still no response, call the Police and explain a child has not been collected.                                                                              |
| <b>1 hour after non-collection at normal time</b>                                                                                                                                                                                           | Telephone Children's Services Safeguarding Hub on 0333 2401727 and seek further advice, providing the pupil's name, age and the details of all provided contact numbers.                                                                                                        |
| A full written report of the incident will be recorded and held. Ofsted will be made aware of any serious childcare incidents but usually only if the Police or Children's Services are involved and concerns remain for a child's welfare. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |



## **Parent Minibus Agreement**

I \_\_\_\_\_ (name), parent of \_\_\_\_\_ (name of child), declare that I have received, read and understood the terms and conditions of the minibus policy. I understand my obligations under this policy and agree to comply fully with them.

Please return this slip to the school office as soon as possible.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_