



WATERSIDE ACADEMY

DRIVERS POLICY 2024-2025

APPROVED BY GOVERNORS: September 2024

POLICY TO BE REVIEWED: September 2025

Policy Statement

1. This policy aims to support the School in providing a safe working environment for all employees, including travel arrangements when they are part of the working day.
2. The policy applies to all persons who drive on behalf of the School in vehicles owned, leased or hired by the School. It also applies to those who drive their own vehicles on behalf of the School. Failure to comply with its terms may result in disciplinary action. Driving on behalf of the School means both staff who drive regularly as a major part of their job or those who drive occasionally or for short distances, including:
 - travelling to and from meetings,
 - the transport of staff or students,
 - travelling to and from home to a non-permanent place of work, including visits to other establishments, and
 - training courses, seminars, conferences.
3. Travel to and from home to your usual place of work is commuting, and is exempt from this policy.

School Minibus

4. The Site Manager and School Business Manager is responsible for keeping the school minibus roadworthy and in good state of repair. This includes, but is not limited to maintaining records of insurance, servicing and repairs, MOTs, tax and health and safety checks.

License and Insurance – School Minibus

5. The School will maintain a list of staff who can drive the school minibus. The list will include the member of staff's name, date of training, the date on which their driving license was viewed, and the name of the member of staff who viewed the license.

Privately owned vehicles

6. For employees using privately owned vehicles it is their responsibility to ensure that they are licensed to drive, and that the vehicle is correctly insured and roadworthy. For privately owned vehicles, the insurance certificate must state for "business use" or "for purposes in connection with the business/occupation or the trade or profession of the policyholder", or a similar phrase". The School reserves the right to request evidence to ensure this is the case.
7. Employees who regularly travel on the business of the school (i.e. 3 or more days per week when journeys are made) will need to provide copies of their driving license and valid insurance certificate to the HR and Staff Manager.

Travel Expenses

8. The School uses the NJC rates for paying mileage to staff who drive on work business.

Transporting students

9. An employee who needs to transport a student in their private car, all the above conditions relating to driving the vehicle should be observed. Employees must be aware of any potential risk of allegation against them and make their actions as transparent as possible.
10. It is always preferable to avoid a situation where an adult is alone with a student in a car and where possible, another adult should be present as an escort. When students are transported in a private car, they should wear seatbelts and where possible, should avoid sitting in the front seat.

11. For a planned journey, consent for the student to be transported in the employee's private car should be obtained from the parent or carer.
12. For an unplanned journey, e.g. if a lift must be given because a student is not collected from the school after an out-of-hours school visit, efforts must be made to get the necessary consent (verbal or via text) from a parent or carer. The employee should also advise a colleague that the journey is taking place.
13. There may be occasions where a student requires transport in an unusual or emergency situation or where not to give a lift may place a student at risk. In this situation a senior manager should be consulted beforehand where possible or the incident reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible afterwards. Such circumstances must always be recorded.
14. Employees should avoid giving lifts to students outside of the circumstances above and in situations not related to their legitimate professional duties.

Fit to Drive

15. Each time an employee drives a vehicle on behalf of the School it is the individual's responsibility to ensure that they are fit to drive when they take a vehicle onto the public highway.
16. Any person who is required to drive as part of their employment, or as part of an approved activity, must declare to their employer any medical condition which adversely affects their ability to drive safely (all information provided will be treated as confidential). In these circumstances the school will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments, in consultation with the individual employee and Occupational Health, and other support agencies as appropriate.
17. Where a school has a concern about a potential alcohol or drug abuse issue then the employee should not drive on the school's business until and unless the concerns prove to be unfounded.

Disqualification from Driving

18. Employees who drive vehicles on behalf of the School must inform the school immediately of disqualification from driving on the public highway. Where that person drives as a requirement of their job, they will be relieved of all driving duties with immediate effect; following consultation with the individual employee, the school will determine the most appropriate course of action. Each case will be dealt with confidentially and on its own merits.

Road Safety

19. When driving a vehicle owned, leased or hired by the School, each driver is responsible for making sure that the vehicle is roadworthy before embarking on a journey. It is recommended that appropriate driver checks are undertaken before taking the vehicle on the road. The following checks are recommended before each journey:
 - Tyre tread
 - Foot and hand brake operation
 - Lights, indicators and hazard warning lights operate
 - Horn operates
 - Screen wash and wipers operate
 - Seat belts fitted and functioning
 - Mirrors adjusted/adjustable
20. These are tasks which do not require any technical expertise and are the basic checks included in the current UK driving standards examination.
21. Additional checks for long journeys might usefully include:
 - Fluid levels (oil, coolant and screen wash)

- Tyre pressures
- Locks and security functional
- Fuel level

22. It is not intended that checklists are provided or that records of pre-use checks are kept, as it remains the responsibility of any driver to ensure that a vehicle is roadworthy. For employees who use their own vehicles during their employment, individuals are responsible for ensuring that regular checks are undertaken as detailed above to ensure that their vehicle remains in a roadworthy condition.

Route Planning and Scheduling

23. It is expected that where an employee must drive to undertake work-related activity, an assessment of the schedule of driving and work activity is made to ensure that it is reasonable, allows for rest breaks at least every 2 hours, when it is recommended that they should leave the vehicle.

24. It is also important to ensure that the necessary driving will not result in excessive working hours or working at unsociable hours. Employees should apply common sense and not drive when tired or at unsociable hours.

Accidents

25. In the event of an accident occurring whilst driving a vehicle owned, leased or hired by the School the driver should follow the directions shown below for reporting and recording the accident. Where the employee is driving their own vehicle on school business, they should follow the directions of their insurance policy for reporting and recording the accident.

ACTION TO TAKE IN THE EVENT OF AN INCIDENT

At the scene of the incident:

- Stop in a safe place where no further damage is likely to be caused to the vehicle or passengers.
- The driver and/or the escort must make the accident scene as safe as possible.
- Use hazard warning lights and any other devices supplied.
- Where the vehicle cannot be moved to a place of safety, evacuate the passengers to safety. Do not move injured passengers unless they are in immediate danger of further injury.
- Ensure, where possible, one person (driver or escort) remains with the passengers.
- Call the emergency services, if necessary. The driver must stay at the scene until the emergency services (and anyone else with reasonable cause) have taken all the details.
- If involved with a third-party vehicle exchange drivers' and vehicle owners' names and addresses, vehicle and insurance details.
- If involved with a third party get an independent witness name, address and telephone number.
- In the event of injury, the Police must be notified as soon as possible but within 24 hours.

After the incident:

- As soon as possible, but in any event within 3 days, report the incident to a senior manager in school.
- As soon as possible write down the events as you remember them, including any diagrams that may be helpful and complete an insurance accident report form. Give this report to the Operations Manager. These procedures are in addition to the Highway Code requirements to report an accident.

Mobile Phones

26. It is illegal to use a hand-held mobile phone while driving. It is also an offence to "cause or permit" a driver to use a hand-held mobile phone while driving. Therefore, employers can be held liable as well as the individual driver if they require employees to use a hand-held phone while driving.

27. It can be illegal to use a hands-free phone while driving. Depending upon the individual circumstances, drivers could be charged with 'failing to have proper control of their vehicle'. In more serious cases, the use of any type of mobile phone could result in prosecution for careless or dangerous driving. The

Police may check phone records when investigating fatal and serious crashes to determine if use of the phone contributed to the crash.

28. Drivers who use a mobile phone, whether hand-held or hands-free:
- are much less aware of what's happening on the road around them
 - fail to see road signs
 - fail to maintain proper lane position and steady speed
 - are more likely to 'tailgate' the vehicle in front
 - react more slowly and take longer to brake
 - are more likely to enter unsafe gaps in traffic
 - feel more stressed and frustrated
29. Research indicates that they are also four times more likely to crash, injuring or killing themselves and/or other people. Using a hands-free phone while driving does not significantly reduce the risks; problems are caused mainly by the mental distraction and divided attention of taking part in a phone conversation at the same time as driving.
30. Employees who are driving whilst at work are required to comply fully with the law, which prohibits the use of hand-held mobile phones whilst driving. It is also an offence to 'cause or incite' persons who are driving to be in breach of the law.
31. Employees should avoid making contact via mobile phone with other employees when they are known to be driving. Employees are encouraged to make use of the voicemail facility on their mobile phone and make return calls when it is safe to do so.

Smoke Free Vehicles

32. It has been against the law to smoke, or permit others to smoke, in virtually all enclosed public places and workplaces in England. The law extends to vehicles (such as a minibus); and requires vehicles to be smoke free at all times if they are used:
- To transport members of the public
 - In the course of paid or voluntary work by more than one person – regardless of whether they are in the vehicle at the same time.

The school minibus will display a no smoking sign in each compartment in which people can be carried. It is the legal responsibility of anyone who drives, manages or is responsible for order and safety.