

<b>HOPEWELL SCHOOL</b>
<b>Driver and Vehicle Policy</b>

## **Introduction**

Hopewell school recognizes that the driving of vehicles for the transport of pupils, staff and visitors plus the movement of goods and materials is an essential part of its operation. As such, under its obligations in legislative and civil law the company requires each person engaged in driving activities to do so in a manner that poses no harm to themselves, our pupils or other road users.

To that end we believe, irrespective of blame, all road traffic incidents are preventable and all risks can be contained. Consequently, Hopewell School operates to a policy of zero accident involvement. As a vehicle driver, you are not only responsible for your own safety, you are also responsible for the safety of others who may be affected by your actions. Therefore you are required to drive at all times, in a manner that is safe, responsible and in line with the law.

The law places responsibilities on the owner of a vehicle and the driver of that vehicle to ensure that it is used in a legal, safe and roadworthy condition, and that the driver holds a valid licence for that class of vehicle.

## **Breach of law**

Where drivers commit motoring and parking offences on company business they are personally liable for any fines and convictions that may result. Hopewell School reserves the right to pay such penalties on behalf of the driver and deduct the cost from salary. Any driving offence or behavior that is deemed to endanger the young people in our care or other road users will be investigated and may as a result of the investigation subsequently result in disciplinary action being taken.

## **Drivers**

Employees will only drive, on school business, vehicles for which they hold the appropriate license.

When driving on Hopewell School business or in company vehicles, drivers must remember that they are ambassadors for Hopewell School and must ensure that their behavior reflects an appropriate image. Drivers are expected to be courteous at all times and must conform to the "Highway Code" and relevant legislation.

Drivers must be aware of the effects that alcohol or drugs may have on their driving abilities, taking special notice of the risk of being unfit the morning after a night of heavy consumption. Drivers must not drive under the influence of alcohol when driving on Hopewell School business.

Many prescribed and over-the-counter medications can cause drowsiness and other effects that may affect a driver's ability to control a vehicle. If taking prescribed medication then advice should be sought from a doctor, and drivers must ensure they are aware of the effects of any non-prescription drugs.

Fatigue is a major cause of crashes, especially on motorways and long trunk road journeys where monotony can make you feel sleepy. Drivers should always follow the rules on domestic driving as follows:

- A break of at least 15 minutes must be taken every 2 hours or sooner if the driver feels tired

- After 4 hours of driving then the driver must take at least a 30 minute break in addition to the 15 minute break after 2 hours
- A total of no more than 11 hours maximum can be worked and/or driven in any one 24 hour period
- The maximum time spent driving in a 24 hour period must not exceed 9 hours

## **Vehicles**

The Head Teacher will ensure that all company vehicles are serviced, inspected, tested and maintained in accordance with the manufacturers ' recommendations and the records of which should be held on file for each vehicle. They will appoint a suitable member of staff to act as Transport Co-ordinator to discharge this duty.

The Transport Co-ordinator, for the setting, will ensure that weekly vehicle checks are carried out as described in Appendix 1 and recorded on the record of weekly check form (Appendix 2), this includes ensuring the driver log book is completed and that current recorded mileage matches the current odometer reading.

Drivers must carry out a shorter safety check, before every journey and record the findings in the vehicle log, kept in the vehicle (Appendix 2). Defects should be reported to the Transport Co-ordinator immediately.

On the return to site, the vehicle must be cleaned, the vehicle log completed and any defects report handed over to the Transport Co-ordinator or a member of SLT.

## **Privately Owned Vehicles**

Staff should not use their personal vehicles to transport pupils.

## **Passenger Safety**

The safety of pupils is the responsibility of the Trip Organiser (and driver), who will organise a seating plan as part of the risk assessment. The following procedures must be followed:

- The driver has only one role on any journey – to drive the vehicle. Drivers are not responsible for the management of pupils whilst driving and must be protected from distraction.
- Overall responsibility for the management of pupil's behavior rests with the most senior or experienced member of staff who should normally be seated in the rear of the vehicle.
- In protecting the driver, pupils should be seated according to the level of risk they present, with the lowest risk pupil seated behind the driver and the highest risk pupil seated in the rear seat on the opposite side of the vehicle to the driver.
- No pupil is allowed to travel in the front seat of any vehicle driven on Hopewell School business without the permission of a member of SLT.

All passengers, whether staff or pupils, must be seated in the correct position in any vehicle and must wear the appropriate correctly adjusted seat belt, or restraint, as required by law. If any person in the vehicle is not wearing an appropriate seat belt the driver must pull over and stop as soon as it is safe to do so. The protocols for the transportation and supervision of pupils are based upon the individual risk assessments for the pupil and the off site visit risk assessment as set out in Hopewell School's Off-Site Visits Policy.

Where child locks are fitted they should be activated. Head restraints, where fitted, must be correctly adjusted.

### **Mobile Phones**

When undertaking a journey on school business a fully charged mobile must be carried and, given the unpredictable nature of our pupils, it should be switched on and ready for use. However, whilst transporting young people the driver must not text, make or take calls even via a Bluetooth device. The phone must be held and used by the escorting member of staff.

### **Smoking**

In line with smoke-free legislation, smoking is not permitted in any school vehicle.

### **Eating and Drinking**

Drivers must not drink or eat whilst the vehicle is in motion. Where food is consumed in a school vehicle it is the driver's responsibility to ensure all packaging and spills are removed from the vehicle on return to school.

### **Emergency Procedures**

Should the vehicle be involved in a collision or suffer a mechanical failure the driver's prime concern is the safety of the pupils in their care along with that of any accompanying staff. In either event, the driver must summon immediate assistance from the appropriate emergency service, breakdown provider and the school.

All school vehicles must carry the following:

- First aid kit
- Foam fire extinguisher
- High visibility jackets (one for each seat)
- Seat belt cutter and emergency hammer
- Torch
- Jack and wheel set
- Warning triangle
- Emergency guidance as detailed in Appendix 3

### **Driver Action**

Bring the vehicle to a safe halt ideally at the side of the road. Activate the hazard warning lights then assess the situation, in terms of safety. If an accident has occurred, look to the treatment of any injured occupants and the need to summon other emergency assistance. The driver, in conjunction with the emergency services, should decide the best action to take in terms of the safety of passengers. In most circumstances the passengers should leave the vehicle from the side away from traffic flow and put on a high visibility jackets. They should then proceed to a place of safety away from the vehicle and moving traffic to await recovery. If the weather is severe, or there are doubts regarding the ability of staff to keep the pupils safe, a decision to stay on-board the vehicle may be taken. In such circumstances, urgent help should be requested and if possible the passengers moved to the front of the vehicle. Further actions specific to accidents and breakdowns are given in Appendix 3.

## **Personal Safety and Violence**

If any passenger's behavior becomes sufficiently disruptive to cause distraction to the driver, then the vehicle must be stopped as soon as possible until the situation is resolved. If necessary contact should be made with the school and assistance requested.

## Appendix 1

### Vehicle Maintenance Checks

Before carrying out any check of the vehicle ensure it is stopped with the parking brake securely set, the engine switched off and the ignition key removed to prevent unintended starting of the engine. When checking under the bonnet in the engine compartment avoid touching any hot components that may cause burns, and avoid wearing loose clothing that could entangle in revolving parts if the engine was started. Allow the engine to cool before checking the oil or coolant level. Coolant could be ejected from the header tank if it is opened before it has cooled.

### Weekly Checks

Hopewell School's Transport Co-ordinator will carry out a weekly check of the condition of all School vehicles. This check will be recorded on a "Record of Vehicle Inspection" (Appendix 3) noting any defects and corrective action.

The weekly check covers the following:

- All external bodywork and interior trim must be checked for damage or defects.
- All vehicle lights and indicators must be cleaned and checked to make sure they are working.
- Windows and mirrors must be cleaned and checked for damage.
- Rear view mirrors must be cleaned and checked for damage.
- Rear view mirrors must be cleaned and checked for damage.
- Rear view mirrors must be correctly adjusted.
- Windscreen wipers must be inspected for damage to the rubber wiping surface.
- Windscreen washers must be working and fluid reservoir filled with water and additive appropriate to the season.
- Engine oil level must be checked and topped up as required.
- Cooling liquid level must be checked and topped up as required.
- The vehicle must be fully and correctly refueled.
- Wheels must be checked to ensure there is no damage and the nuts and fixings are secure.
- Tyres must be checked to ensure they are inflated correctly. Check tyre pressures when the tyre is cold. The manufacturer's handbook will show the correct pressure for the load and operating conditions.
- Tyres must be checked to ensure they have adequate and legal tread depth. To meet legal requirements the tyres, of any passenger vehicle for no more than 8 passengers and driver must have the base of any groove of the original tread pattern visible and at least 1.6mm of tread depth across at least the centre  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the tread width around the entire circumference.
- Tyres must be in good condition with no damage. If a tyre has any cut greater than 25mm or 10% of the width of the tyre (whichever is the greater), lump, bulge, tear or ply cord or structure exposed then it is illegal and dangerous and must be replaced.
- Steering, horn, parking brake, other controls must function satisfactorily.
- All seats must be securely fixed, adjusted correctly and clean.
- All safety equipment, including seat belts, in good order and adjusted correctly.
- Any additional equipment, such as dust pan and brush, high visibility jackets, warning triangle, fire extinguisher and first aid kit are secure and in good order.
- Check the log book to ensure all journeys are correctly recorded, there are no gaps in the mileage record and all reported defects have been rectified.

Appendix 2

Vehicle Mileage and Daily Log

## Appendix 3

### Vehicle Breakdown

In the event of vehicle breakdown on the road, appropriate warning lights t be illuminated. If the view is restricted, consideration should be given to deploying other means of warning approaching traffic. Whenever possible, drivers and all passengers should leave the broken down vehicle and retire to a safe place away from moving traffic. Special consideration should be given in the event of breakdown on a motorway or high-speed dual carriageway. Drivers must contact the senior member of staff on duty, for advice or assistance regarding the breakdown, especially when young people are being carried in the vehicle.

Should your vehicle suffer a mechanical breakdown:

- Think of other road users
- Ensure everybody wears a high visibility jacket
- Get your vehicle off the road if at all possible
- Warn other traffic by switching on your hazard warning lights
- Place a warning triangle at least 45 metres (150 feet) behind your vehicle on the same side of the road. Always take care when placing them and **DO NOT use warning triangles on a motorway**
- Leave the sidelights on in poor visibility or if its dark
- Summon assistance ensuring you give the exact location in detail
- Do not let anyone stand:
  - Between your vehicle and approaching traffic
  - Where they may prevent other road users seeing your lights
  - Where your vehicle may be pushed if crashed into

If your vehicle develops a problem on a motorway, if possible leave at the next exit or service station. If you cannot do this then follow the guide above for any breakdown with the following additional points:

- Pull onto the hard shoulder
- Stop as far to the left as possible
- Turn your steering wheels to the left
- Try to stop near an emergency telephone
- Have EVERYONE leave the vehicle by the left hand doors, with the driver distributing high visibility jackets to all passengers
- Ensure everyone stays away from the carriageway; use these in preference to a mobile phone. The direction to the nearest emergency telephone is shown by arrows on the white posts at the back of the hard shoulder
- Give full details to the police, and let them know how vulnerable you are e.g. escorting a group of pupils with special needs
- Return and wait in a safe place near your vehicle