

Transport – minibuses, coaches and cars

This guidance applies to drivers of cars and minibuses whilst undertaking transport of children or adults who are vulnerable on church approved activities.

General Responsibilities

Transport arrangements to or from church activities are the responsibility of parents or carers of individual children and adults. They are the responsibility of the PCC if the PCC organises them. Transporting children and adults who may be vulnerable on behalf of the church is a regulated activity.

Responsibility of organisers

- Those organising outings requiring the use of private cars or minibuses are responsible for ensuring that drivers are aware of this procedure.
- Approved drivers must be recruited according to the Diocesan Safer Recruitment procedures. This includes the requirement for a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service reference.
- To ensure that this procedure is adhered to, you are advised to obtain from those people who are recruited to transport children or adults who may be vulnerable in their cars or drive minibuses:
 - a signed undertaking, covering the issues below
 - sight of their driving licence and their insurance certificate, ideally taking a copy to hold on file or recording the details.

All transport

Consent

- Children should not be taken out in transport without the prior consent of their parents or carers
- Adults who may be vulnerable should give permission to being transported themselves, and discretion used in consulting first with their carers or family
- Care should be taken when assisting children or adults who may be vulnerable to board and alight vehicles, both to ensure the road is safe to do so and in following the guidelines on physical contact.

The driver

- All those who drive children or adults who may be vulnerable on church organised activities should be over 21 and should have held a full current driving licence for over two years

- Any driver who has an endorsement of more than 6 points on their licence should inform the Parish Safeguarding Officer
- Any driver who has an "unspent" conviction for any serious road traffic offence e.g. a drink driving offence or dangerous driving or racing on the highway should not transport children or adults who may be vulnerable for the church.
- Drivers who are not children's or adult workers should be recruited for the task through the normal recruitment process.
- Drivers must always be in a fit state i.e. not under the influence of alcohol; not taking illegal substances; not under the influence of medicine which may induce drowsiness

TRANSPORT IN PRIVATE CARS

Seat belts in cars:

- Only cars fitted with seat belts (both front and rear) may be used, and the numbers of people transported should not exceed the number of seat belts available
- All car passengers are required to wear safety belts in the front and rear seats
- All children up to 3 years old must be carried in a child restraint
- Rear-facing baby seats must not be used in a seat protected by a front air-bag unless the air-bag has been deactivated manually or automatically
- Children from aged 3 up to 135cm in height (approx. 4'5") or their 12th birthday (whichever they reach first) must use baby/child seats, or booster cushions for older children
- All passengers aged 13 years or older must wear an adult seat belt if available

The vehicle/insurance:

- All cars that carry children or adults who may be vulnerable should be comprehensively insured.
- The insured person should make sure that their insurance covers the giving of lifts relating to church sponsored activities. It is the responsibility of car owners to check that their vehicle is insured for the transportation of children or adults who may be vulnerable. While the transportation of passengers without reward (i.e. for petrol money only) would normally be covered under "social/domestic use", vehicle owners **MUST** check with their insurers. Additional cover can very often be included for a small extra charge
- All cars that carry children or adults who may be vulnerable should be clean and in a road worthy condition
- At no time should the number of people in a car exceed the number of seatbelts in the car.

Escorts:

- Another responsible adult should accompany the driver, to assist with any emergencies
- Gender balance for escorts should be considered in relation to male and female passengers

- If in an emergency a driver has to transport one child or vulnerable adult on his or her own, the child or vulnerable adult must sit in the back of the car.

MINIBUSES, BUSES AND COACHES

Seat belts in minibuses, buses and coaches:

- It is compulsory for passengers aged over 13 years to wear a safety belt if provided when travelling in a minibus, bus or coach
- The legislation that requires baby/child seats and booster cushions to be used in cars does not apply to minibuses, buses and coaches – i.e. commercial companies do not have to provide this equipment. However, a school or local authority (and therefore assume a church) contracting vehicles to carry children in their care should ensure that the children are provided with a safe journey
- It is therefore recommended that only mini-buses with fitted seat belts (both front and rear) may be used, and all children and adults should use the seat belts.

Permit to drive:

- When using a minibus, whether owned, hired or borrowed, all drivers must hold the correct permit on their driving licence or take the appropriate driving test
- Drivers with entitlement to drive cars prior to 1 January 1997 (shown as group A, B for automatics on an old style licence or as category B and D1 not for hire or reward on a new style licence) can drive a minibus provided they are over 21 and under 70, the minibus has a maximum of 17 seats including the driver's, and is not being used for hire or reward
- This minibus entitlement remains valid in the UK and on temporary visits abroad until the licence is next renewed. When this happens, the minibus entitlement can only be issued by making a special application which involves meeting higher medical standards. Minibus entitlement is normally renewed for 3 years
- If minibus entitlement is not renewed, or the car licence was obtained after 1 January 1997, the driver may drive a minibus with a maximum of 16 passenger seats provided:
 - it is driven on behalf of a non-commercial body for social purposes but not for hire or reward;
 - the driver is aged over 21 and under 70 years;
 - the driver has held a car licence (category B) for at least 2 years;
 - the driver is providing his/her service on a voluntary basis; and
 - the minibus maximum weight is not more than 3.5 tonnes excluding any specialist equipment for the carriage of disabled passengers
- When driving a minibus under these conditions, no payment must be received other than out of pocket expenses; no trailer can be towed; and minibuses may only be driven in the UK

- Drivers aged 70 or over will need to make a special application which involves meeting higher medical standards
- Regular drivers of minibuses should be encouraged to take a MiDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) test, organised by the Community Transport Association U.K. (CTA) which promotes a nationally recognised standard for the assessment and training of minibus drivers. It is a membership based scheme that has been designed to enhance minibus driving standards and promote the safer operation of minibuses. Further information is obtainable from www.uk-roadsafety.co.uk/midas.

Escorts:

- There must be another responsible adult travelling as escort in the rear of the vehicle, in most cases sitting next to the door
- The adult should be responsible for ensuring a reasonable standard of behaviour, and particularly that children's or adults who may be vulnerable' seat belts remain fastened.
- If noise or behaviour appears to be getting out of control, the vehicle should be stopped until calm is restored.
- The adult should also supervise boarding and alighting.