

FOX WOOD



SAFE DRIVING GUIDANCE

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Fox Wood Special School Safe Driving Guidance

Issued in Compliance with Warrington Borough Council (WBC) Standard Operating Procedure (SOP 02) Driving at Work

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1. Purpose and Objectives

This document provides procedures for Fox Wood School staff when undertaking work-related driving using Council, school, or employees' own vehicles. Health and safety law applies to work activities on the road in the same way as it applies to all work activities.

The objectives of this Guidance are to:

- **Promote a safe driving culture** within the organisation.
- Ensure that staff who drive vehicles for work demonstrate safe, efficient skills and good road safety habits at all times.
- Ensure all vehicles are in a safe, clean, and roadworthy condition to maximize safety for drivers, occupants, and other road users.

2. Code of Conduct

While driving Fox Wood vehicles (e.g., minibus) or their own vehicles for work purposes, staff must comply with traffic legislation, be conscious of road safety, and demonstrate safe driving habits.

The following actions, among others, will be viewed as **serious breaches of conduct** and may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal:

- Drinking or being under the influence of drugs while driving.
- Driving while disqualified.
- Reckless or dangerous driving causing death or injury.
- Failing to stop after a crash.
- Acquiring points leading to licence suspension.

The Head Teacher and Line Manager must ensure that others are not put at risk by work-related driving activities. The Council could be at risk of prosecution under the **Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007** if serious management failures contribute to an employee's death while driving for work.

3. Responsibilities of the Employer (Line Manager/Head Teacher)

Managers must manage the risks to drivers as part of the school's health and safety arrangements. The employer should ensure that employees understand their responsibilities to ensure vehicles are legal, safe, and well-maintained.

The Head Teacher/Line Manager must:

- **Risk Assessment:** Complete a risk assessment for driving at work, covering, for example, organising journeys, training, and vehicle maintenance. Staff must adhere to the school driving risk assessment.
- **Licence Checks:** Check driving licences regularly. The Council has adopted the best practice of checking driving licences **every 6 months** for those who drive every day, and **annually** for those who occasionally drive (e.g., for meetings or training). Access to DVLA records must be obtained with the licence holder's consent.
- **Insurance Verification:** Verify the insurance status of employees using private vehicles for work, ensuring the policy includes **business use cover**. Even occasional activities such as driving to a meeting or training course are business use and require appropriate insurance.
- **Training:** Ensure employees are properly trained (e.g., MIDAS minibus training) and receive safety-critical information.
- **Mobile Phone Policy:** **Do not expect employees to answer calls when they are driving.** Ensure employees understand their responsibilities not to use a hand-held or hands-free mobile phone while driving.
- **Fatigue Management:** Ensure work-related journeys are properly planned, taking account of adequate time, breaks, driver fatigue, and weather conditions.

4. Responsibilities of Employees (Drivers)

Employees must ensure they have read and understood **SOP 02 Driving at Work**.

4.1 Documentation, Insurance, and Fitness

Every driver of a vehicle used for business must:

- **Licence and Insurance:** Ensure they hold a current driver licence and/or business insurance for the class of vehicle they are driving. If using a private vehicle for work, the vehicle must be legally registered and insured for the purposes of work. Employees must present their licence, insurance certificate (including business use cover), and MOT certificate (if applicable) for inspection.
- **Notification of Changes:** Immediately notify their supervisor or manager if their driver licence has been suspended, cancelled, or had limitations placed upon it.
- **Health:** Notify the Line Manager or Head Teacher without delay if they are aware or suspect they are unfit to drive because of a medical condition or medication likely to affect their ability to drive safely.
- **Eyesight:** Satisfy the eyesight requirements in the Highway Code, including being able to read a number plate in good daylight from a distance of **20**

metres. If corrective lenses are needed, they **MUST** be worn at all times while driving.

4.2 Prohibited Conduct (Mobile Phones and Drugs)

- **Mobile Phone Use:** Staff driving for work **must never make or receive calls, send or read texts or emails, or otherwise use a mobile phone or other similar device, whether hand-held or hands-free, while driving.**
 - The use of hands-free sets still increases the likelihood of the driver being distracted and involved in an accident, risking prosecution for failing to have proper control of the vehicle.
 - Employees are expected to switch their phone to silent or voicemail while driving.
 - If the phone must be used, the employee **must stop the vehicle in a safe place, apply the parking brake, and switch the engine off.**
 - **The only exception is making a call to 999 or 112 in a genuine emergency when it is unsafe or impractical to stop to make the call.**
- **Drugs and Alcohol:** Never drive under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. Excessive alcohol or illegal drugs consumed the night before could still render the driver unfit to drive. Employees must heed warnings provided by their GP or pharmacist on prescription drugs.
- **Smoking:** Smoking (including e-cigarettes and vaping) is prohibited in any Council/school vehicles, or in privately owned vehicles when carrying passengers for business.

4.3 General Driving Duties

- **Safety Belts:** Wear a safety belt at all times.
- **Distraction:** Avoid distraction when driving; the driver must adjust stereos/mirrors before setting off or pull over safely to do so.
- **Fatigue:** Take regular and adequate rest breaks when driving and stop when tired.
- **Speed:** Drive within the legal speed limits, including driving appropriately in the conditions.

5. Road Traffic Accident Procedures

Employees must follow these procedures in the event of a crash or incident while driving for school business:

1. **Stop and Secure:** Immediately stop the vehicle and use hazard warning lights. Ensure your own safety first and help any injured people.
2. **Contact Emergency Services:** Call the Police and Ambulance immediately if anyone is injured or there is serious damage to vehicles or property.
3. **Gather Details:** Gather and exchange details with third parties (name, address, registration, and insurance details) and take witness contact details. If a camera is available, discreetly photograph the scene.
4. **Do Not Admit Liability:** Remain calm and courteous; do not argue or show aggression, and **do not accept liability.**

5. **Internal Reporting (Fleet Vehicles):** If driving a Council/School fleet vehicle, employees must complete the “**At Scene Bump Card**” provided by Fleet and Support Services **within 24 hours** of the incident occurring. The Council’s Fleet Support Services Team must be informed.
6. **Internal Reporting (All Accidents):** Contact the Line Manager/Head Teacher immediately to inform them of the situation. The Manager must ensure the accident is recorded on the Council’s **on-line Accident Reporting System** in line with SOP 05.
7. **Personal Insurance Notification (Mandatory):** If you have an accident or are involved in an incident whilst driving a council or school vehicle, **you must report it to your personal motor insurance provider**. Failure to do so could result in the policy being declared null and void.

6. Driving a Minibus

Minibus driving must adhere to specific legal conditions.

- **Licence:** Drivers may be able to drive a minibus (up to 16 passenger seats) using a standard car licence if it is **not for ‘hire or reward’**.
- **Conditions:** The driver must be 21 or older and have held the driving licence for at least 2 years.
- **Size/Weight:** The minibus must have a maximum of **17 seats** (including the driver). The maximum weight must not exceed **3.5 tonnes** (or 4.25 tonnes including specialist equipment for disabled passengers).
- **Towing:** Drivers **must not tow** behind a minibus when carrying passengers.
- **Passenger Safety:** All passengers must be seated and use seat belts. The driver **MUST ensure** that children under 14 years of age wear seat belts or sit in an approved child restraint suitable for their weight if they are under 1.35 metres tall.
- **Equipment:** A fire extinguisher and first aid kit should be in a prominent position.

7. Contact Information

Further detailed information is contained in the WBC SOP 02 Driving at Work.

Contact Details

WBC Community Safety & Resilience (Health & Safety) Team

WBC Fleet Services Team (Vehicle issues/Bump Cards)

Insurance Team (Alison Weir)

Telephone Extension

01925 442174 or 442169

01925 443043 or 442727

01925 442613