9-10. Why do we not need to be careful to write $\frac{1}{2} \left[\mathbf{p}_1 \exp(-i\mathbf{k} \cdot \mathbf{x}) + \exp(-i\mathbf{k} \cdot \mathbf{x})\mathbf{p}_1 \right]$ in the matrix elements?

In this case $\mathbf{p}_1$ is not an operator, hence $\mathbf{p}_1$ and the exponential commute.