



PARENTS' HANDBOOK 2015/16

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Copies of all School Policies are available to view in the School Office and on the school web site.

WELCOME

Welcome to the Iona School. We hope that your time as a parent at the school will be happy, fruitful and fulfilling. This handbook is intended to ease your entry into the life of the school by providing answers to the questions you may have as a new parent.

ETHOS

The Iona School is non-doctrinal and non-sectarian but has a Christian orientation. Our seasonal festivals are of an open nature and children from all religions freely participate.

The work of the teachers is inspired by the wisdom and contemporary relevance of Rudolf Steiner's educational philosophy and how it prepares children for the changing modern world.

We aim to give the children:

- Eternal values
- Self confidence
- A love of learning
- The ability to work with others
- Enduring and practical skills
- Open and tolerant attitudes
- Spiritual freedom

The task of the education at the Iona School can be summarized thus:

- Fostering healthy development in every child
- Enabling children to reach their potential
- Helping children to develop the skills they need to contribute to society

A Brief History of Iona School

The Iona School is founded on the educational ideas and spiritual world-view of the philosopher and educator, Rudolf Steiner (1861 – 1925). A list of Rudolf Steiner's basic books and educational lecture cycles is given in the section, 'Teacher Development and Appraisal'.

The first school based on Rudolf Steiner's indications was founded in Stuttgart, Germany in 1919. This was in response to a request to provide education for children of the workers of the Waldorf Astoria cigarette factory – hence the name Steiner Waldorf.

The Iona School was founded in Nottingham in 1985. After spending its first year in temporary accommodation, the school moved to its present site. The school has grown and developed over the years and is a member of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship (SWSF). The Fellowship organises regular conferences throughout the year.

The Iona School is a Steiner Waldorf School which was founded in 1985. We are a primary school with a Kindergarten and three combined classes.

What is a Steiner Waldorf School?

Integral to Steiner Waldorf education is its view of each child as a unique spiritual individual developing through evolving phases of childhood towards an adulthood in which the individual spirit can find full freedom of expression. Every step in the child's education may be seen as geared to this end.

As the growing child comes to meet more of the world around him, s/he gradually harnesses the capacities of willing, feeling and thinking which are there inside him or her. The unfolding of these faculties is intimately bound up with the child's physical, emotional and spiritual development, and Steiner Waldorf education strives to harmonise these steps.

The school years work with three broad developmental stages, and in a large school these may be sketched in approximately 7 year intervals: within the first 7 years the child will attend Nursery and Kindergarten. From 7 years to puberty at around 14 the child is part of the lower school – the Class Teacher time. Then inside the 7 years between 14 and 21 the child completes the upper school and according to the individual teenager may go onto further education at college or another establishment.

Currently Iona School provides education to cover the years from Kindergarten to Class 5/6.

During these three periods, one can distinguish distinct differences in the child's relationship to the world and consciousness of his or her self.

It is readily apparent in the baby and toddler how an instinctive imitation of the world around them develops their faculties of walking, speaking and thinking. The Nursery and Kindergarten curriculum consciously seeks to build on this natural developmental process.

This faculty of imitation extends far beyond the mere copying of physical actions. The young child senses the moral quality of each adult in each deed, and on this builds early awareness of the feeling for goodness in the world. This is an essential foundation for every individual growing into the contemporary world - a foundation easily eroded by pressure for early academic training.

It is only in the second seven-year period, when the physical body of the child is well established, that formal education begins. This is the class teacher period, and here, moving from imitation, the guiding principle is now imagination.

In these years particularly the teacher can appeal to the child's sense of beauty, drama and the artistic. The child gradually develops an objective awareness of the world around; also his own imaginative soul life develops. He or she is able to explore artistically, colourfully and dramatically all that is presented during the school day.

Within this broad outline of development, common to every child, the child matures as an individual. The Steiner Waldorf curriculum - unique to this education - is built

around these natural stages of child development. Each teacher works sensitively and creatively with the curriculum to meet both the general needs of the children and the particular needs of the individuals in the class.

SCHOOL HOURS

The school day begins at 09.00 and finishes at 15.15. It is essential that all children are in school by 08.55 so that sessions can start promptly. School is open for children at 08.30.

Punctuality is important for the children as it expresses respect for the community of the kindergarten or class.

The importance of punctuality cannot be over-emphasised. All classes begin their day with a verse. In the younger classes there is an emphasis on rhythmic speech, music and movement at the beginning of the day. This regular early morning pattern is a very important part of the classes' daily rhythm and late arrivals can be very disruptive and disturbing.

If a child is ill, or for some reason cannot attend school, a note should be sent from the parent or guardian or a phone message left with the office (0115 9415295) please do not email in absences.

BREAKFAST CLUB

If parents need to drop their children off earlier than 08.30, the Breakfast Club is open from 08.00 to care for them until 08.30, when they become the responsibility of the teachers.

An extra charge is made for this service.

Arrangements can be made with Nursery Staff: 0115 9587392

COLLECTING CHILDREN

Children should be collected promptly at the end of the school day: 15.15. If parents or carers are late their children will be placed in After School Care and the appropriate charge will be made.

If a child is going to be collected by someone other than a parent or usual carer (including a situation where your child is collected to play at a friend's home), the following is required:

- The school must be given **written authority in advance**, or on the morning of the day in question, identifying the person who will be collecting the child (eg *I give permission for Bill to be collected by Ann Carpenter on Tuesday 10th April 2006*). A password must also be provided.
- Arrangements must be made to identify any person collecting who is not already known to staff
- Saying that a child will be going home with another child **does not give authority**

- **Only in absolute emergency** should the office be contacted regarding collection arrangements, this must be done by telephone (0115 9415295) please ensure you have a password ready.
- Please do not send alternative arrangements via email.

Please note that it is a legal requirement that we can only allow a child to leave the premises with an authorized person.

AFTER SCHOOL CARE

This runs from 15.15 to 17.30, Monday to Friday, during term time.

Sessions should be booked in advance in the After School Club folder in Reception and any session booked will be charged for unless 24 hours notice is given.

Please see the Financial Information Sheet for up-to-date details of costs.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

“Regular school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process.

Parental responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance. Parents should ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn. Furthermore, they need to see themselves as partners with schools in the education of their children.”

School Attendance, Department for Education and Skills

Reporting Absences

In case of illness the school should be informed, by phone, before 09.00 on the first day of absence. If the illness continues beyond two or three days it will be necessary to communicate further. This should be followed by a letter of explanation for the school records.

Requests for absence from school

Medical: Where possible, parents should try to arrange medical appointments out of school hours. If this is not possible, teachers should be notified in writing at least 24 hours in advance of the appointment.

Family Holidays: these should be taken during school holidays. Parents wishing to do otherwise must request permission from the College of Teachers, in writing, **prior to the holiday taking place, otherwise the absence will be recorded as unauthorized.** Forms for this purpose can be obtained from the school office. Please hand these back to the office well in advance, so that teachers can incorporate this into planning for plays etc.

Authorising an absence is at the discretion of the College of Teachers; requesting permission does not guarantee authorisation.

Also see Financial Information Sheet for up-to-date details of costs.

COMMUNICATION

Contact details of the Iona School

**Address: The Iona School, 310 Sneinton Dale, Nottingham. NG3 7DN.
Tel: 0115 9415295. Email: admin@theionaschool.org.uk**

- **Financial queries related to fee payments (during term time and school holidays): fiona@theionaschool.org.uk**
- **Admissions/Change of contact details: dominique@theionaschool.org.uk**
- **Correspondence of Chair of College: richard@theionaschool.org.uk**

Because the Iona School (like all Steiner Waldorf Schools) has no head teacher at its centre, the role of the Communications Manager is very important. The Communications Manager acts as the conduit between school and parents and can be contacted in the school office during term time only.

Yet new parents soon discover how important they themselves are for the healthy running of the school. The social life of the community depends on each individual teacher's and parent's participation and it is difficult to imagine Iona functioning at all without the active involvement of both parties.

In the sections which follow, we outline some key parts of the communication network which play their essential part in maintaining a healthy community and for community building.

Parents' Evenings

Parents' Evenings are held at least twice a year for each class and Kindergarten:

- Parents are told about the lessons that children have been having and may take part in some classroom activity and experience the kind of approach we take with the children
- Look at their child's work
- Preview of what is coming up
- Discussion about the class as a whole - social issues
- Practical issues e.g. preparation for outings
- School issues e.g. fundraising, management
- Parents have the opportunity to put items on the agenda and ask questions
- There is no public discussion of individual children

Meeting Parents of Individual Children

During the course of the year the Class Teacher will try to have at least one meeting with the parents of each child in the class or Kindergarten. This meeting will provide an opportunity to

- discuss your child's progress
- share observations about your child's development
- discuss if there is the need for any extra support
- discuss any issues which you or the teacher think are relevant to further mutual understanding of your child and to help meet his/her needs

Such meetings may be requested by the teacher or by the parents.

If a child is experiencing difficulty in some aspect of life (academic, social or health) it may be helpful for parents and teachers to have a number of shorter meetings to ensure that a supportive dialogue is established.

Written Annual Reports

A written report for class children will be sent to parents annually and will be completed before the end of the summer term. These reports contain general information about the work covered in the course of the year and teachers' comments about the child's relationship to the work and the progress made.

Parents Email List

The Communications Manager will contact you by email regularly to remind you about school events, with requests for help, school announcements and to circulate the newsletter and any other topical information relating to Steiner education in the form of press releases. New families will be asked to register for this service at the Administrators meeting.

Social Media

Iona School also has a Facebook page and is on Twitter. Parents can opt to join these groups that are managed by the Communications Manager.

Newsletter

Our Newsletter provides parents and teachers with up-to-date information on the various events and happenings at Iona School. Items to be published should be brief and should have the contributor's name at the end. Any items for inclusion should be sent to the following e-mail address - dominique@theionaschool.org.uk

School Web Site: www.theionaschool.org.uk

The school has a website that is largely aimed at current and prospective parents in the UK and overseas. It carries general sections on the school and its curriculum and the admission procedure. With our current parents in mind we also have a section which gives term dates and a diary of important events including dates of parents' evenings. We endeavour to update the website information on a regular basis.

Friends of Iona

The Friends of Iona School is an online community that has been created to allow everyone who has a connection to the Iona School to come together and be a part of one big community. The school has always had an amazingly loyal network of supporters and The Friends of Iona School exists to bring them all together under one umbrella.

It is free to join and we encourage all parents to do so. By joining you will:

- Have access to articles about Iona and education in general
- Hear about forthcoming events
- Catch up with news about ex-pupils
- Be able to view photos from events
- Be able to access our forum (coming soon)

Be kept informed of fund-raising opportunities

You can join on the school's website, www.theionaschool.org.uk -- look for the Friends of Iona School.

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The Iona School Association

Structure and Organisation

The Iona School Association (ISA) is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity.

ISA provides the legal framework for the practice and development of Steiner Waldorf Education at the Iona School.

One of the founding questions at the beginning of the school in 1985 was that of finding an organizational form that would help to support appropriate working relationships between parents, teachers and trustees (governors) so that the needs of the children could be met as fully as possible.

- **All parents of children attending the Iona School and teachers working in the school are automatically members of the ISA.**
- **Parents of former pupils and friends who wish to support the school may ask to join ISA by writing to the School Manager.**
- **You may opt out of membership of ISA whilst your child is still at the school. This should be done by writing to the School Manager.**

The Iona School Association is a heterarchical (non-hierarchical) *Community of Interest*, and a legal reflection of all those involved in the school.

The purpose of the association is to represent the long-term interests of the school by holding an Annual General Meeting in which the school Governance Team (Trustees) is appointed and held accountable for the effective governance of the school. Accounts are approved and auditors are appointed at this AGM. **The College of Teachers** is responsible for **pedagogical governance** and works closely with the School Management Team.

Whole School Meetings:

Whole School Meetings are held each term with the intention of keeping parents informed of the work of the College and management team. We discuss questions, suggestions and points of interest brought by parents and staff. It is a fruitful forum for sharing ideas about fundraising, recruitment and other projects.

Through these meetings we all develop awareness about the needs of the school community. Parents with time and skills can help with or initiate projects and work in partnership with teachers and the management team.

School Support Teams are a vital part of the economic and social life of the school and all parents are expected to participate.

The College of Teachers

The College of Teachers has the responsibility for **pedagogical governance** and the development of the education. It is responsible for the effective management of the school but has chosen to delegate this task to the School Management Team.

It is the central task of the College to maintain the integrity of the Iona School as a Steiner Waldorf School. It appoints the School Management Team and the College representative on that team. The College also appoints the school's representative on the Council of the Fellowship of Steiner Waldorf Schools in the UK. College members are teachers who are committed to Rudolf Steiner's philosophy of education and who are established in their work at the school Staff Meetings.

The School Office

Iona's School Office is in the main building. It is open during school hours. All enquiries must go through the office. For enquiries relating to finances, school policies, complaints must be directed to Fiona Stuart, School Manager. All enquiries pertaining to School Admissions or Communications (website, newsletter, press and publicity) must be directed to Dominique Allen, Communications Manager. The office is also the place to find general information such as:

- The Iona School prospectus and other general leaflets on Steiner Waldorf education
- Application forms and fee scales for new pupils
- Further details on school policies and health and safety guidelines
- Copies of the current year's accounts

Messages

Important telephone messages will be passed on to children and teachers. The best time to ring in with a message is before 11.00, in time for the 10.40 break. After office hours, messages can be left on the answering machine and will be dealt with first thing the following morning. In real emergencies a message will be taken direct to the teacher of the child concerned.

When office staff are called away or in a meeting, the telephone will default to the answer phone. Messages will be checked regularly.

Family and Children's Details

Details of each child, family contact addresses and telephone numbers are held on our computer database. This is only as accurate as the information given to us. Please do keep us informed of address changes or any other details. Parents whose telephone numbers are ex-directory must make sure that the office is given a suitable emergency contact number.

Payment of Accounts

Please arrange to pay monthly fees at the beginning of the month (for the month ahead). All invoices are emailed to parents at the start of each month.

The School's bank details are on the top of the invoice, payment is to be made electronically by BACS or by cheque. We do not accept cash payments.

If you default on payment, we reserve the right to charge for each email or letter we send to you regarding your debt. Please see the financial policy (on the website or the school office can provide you with a hard copy) for further details.

If you have paid a deposit, we will refund this, less any outstanding debts.

Who to ask if you have a question, concern or complaint

Please contact Fiona Stuart, School Manager in the school office who will either answer your question or pass on your question/concern to a teacher as appropriate. In the unlikely event of a complaint the school does have a complaints policy. All policies can be accessed in the school office or via the school website so please contact the administrator for guidance.

Iona Classes and their Equivalents in State Schools

The chart below shows the order of the classes at the Iona School and how these correspond with state schools. For the purpose of placing children in their correct classes, Iona takes its year as starting on September 1st, in line with the local state sector.

Age	Iona Class	State School Year
3+	KG Yr1	
4+	KG Yr2	Reception
5+	KG Yr 3 (Transition)	Year 1
6+	Class 1	Year 2
7+	Class 2	Year 3
8+	Class 3	Year 4
9+	Class 4	Year 5
10+	Class 5	Year 6
11+	Class 6	Year 7

CLOTHING

There is no uniform at the Iona School but it is essential that children are dressed in sensible and practical clothing which is appropriate to the season. The way that children present themselves at school does affect their relationship to their work. We need parents to take responsibility for following our requirements, as this is an important issue that affects the teaching environment. Please do not put us in the position of having to address this with you or the children.

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS TO ENSURE THAT THEIR CHILDREN ARE DRESSED APPROPRIATELY.

Shoes should be of a basic “school type” or plain trainers (single colour) – shoes that fully support and protect the feet. Unfortunately, ‘Crocs’ are not ideal school shoes.

They should not:

- have gimmicks (eg flashing lights)
- have ‘designer’ labels
- be fashion shoes
- have high heels
- be ballet shoes

Sandals should be “shoe type” with no open toes or loose straps.

They should not be:

- flip-flops
- jellies

Socks must be worn at all times.

Wellingtons should not be worn in class.

Trousers should be properly fitted. Jeans are acceptable provided they are not high fashion, eg ripped or excessively baggy.

They should be: ankle length

They should not:

- touch the floor
- be “joggers”

Skirts and dresses are acceptable provided they are a straightforward cut and at least knee length.

Tops should be simple with no cartoons, logos or writing and they should completely cover the midriff when the hands are raised over the head.

Jewellery. For reasons of safety and distraction no jewellery should be worn. If a child has pierced ears, only studs may be worn.

Haircuts. Regular, suitable haircuts which show the child’s face and grooming are helpful to the children.

No hair dye.

No nail varnish.

Food Code

The morning break is from 10.40 to 11.00 and there is the opportunity for the children to have a snack and drink. The lunch break is from 12.40 to 13.30, which includes time to eat lunch and play.

Children attending Kindergarten can either have a vegetarian dinner which is prepared in the School kitchen or bring a packed lunch. School dinners are ordered each morning at register time.

Bearing in mind the need for a nutritious diet and how this can support the child’s education, healthy snacks and packed lunches are recommended.

- Filtered water is provided in each classroom

Electronic Media

Mobile phones, cameras, iPods, iPad, hand held gaming consoles and other electronic media are not allowed at the school. Parents will be contacted if children are seen with any electronic media in the school, After School Club or Breakfast Club.

Mobile: occasionally Class 5 children sometimes need to bring mobile phones to school once they start travelling to and from school independently. These must be left in the teachers care for the duration of the school day and collected at home time.

Equipment

Essential equipment such as crayons, pens, recorders, woodwork PPE and wood, Eurythmy shoes, are purchased by the school as and when the child needs it and then invoiced to the parents/carers at the end of the month as required.

Lost Property

Parents should ensure that clothing and other items brought to school are clearly marked with the child's name. Items of clothing which have been found are collected in at the end of each day. Please ask at the school office.

Celebrating the Seasonal Festivals

Festivals are an important part of the school's social and spiritual life. The children take part in plays, musicals, performances, singing, eurythmy and recitation. All parents are invited and encouraged to attend. The starting time of 5pm is designed to help make this possible.

Michaelmas

Seasonally this is a time of harvest and the gathering of fruit, a time also when we 'draw in' after the summer and focus on the qualities, portrayed by the Archangel Michael, of courage and strength.

Christmas

The season of **Advent** heralds the time of Christmas. During Advent there is much creative activity both in and out of school. To mark the beginning of this period of waiting leading up to Christmas we hold the festival called the **Advent Spiral**. The mood is one of peace and reverence and is the beginning of several weeks of festive preparation. The **Advent Fayre** is one of the biggest fund-raising events of the year at the Iona School and is very popular, people return year after year even when their children have moved on. The term finishes with a **Christmas Festival** in December and Singing around the Tree on the last afternoon of the autumn term.

Easter

During the time coming up to the Easter festival the children might decorate eggs, and these are then used to decorate the school. At the Iona School the Easter Festival is often celebrated jointly with the school's birthday (29th April) after the Easter break.

St. John's Tide

At midsummer, when the days are long and as the sun reaches its highest point, the school celebrates the birthday of St. John by the lighting of a St. John's fire on the land, an event accompanied by much singing.

Summer/End of Year Festival

At the end of the school year we have a festival to celebrate the work of the year and say farewell to those that are leaving the Iona School.