

Staff and Visitor Code of Conduct Policy

This policy aims to give all staff/volunteer/agency workers and Trustees strict guidelines in which to work for the benefit of other staff and the children at The Iona School.

Purpose, Scope and Principles

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff employed by the school, all school volunteers, all staff on The Iona School duties whilst out of school (e.g. school trips) and all members of the school's council of management.

The Iona School can only be successful in providing children with an outstanding Steiner education through the behaviour of its staff, volunteers and Trustees, whether this behaviour is with children, colleagues or external agencies. Just as we want the pupils to be themselves, to follow their own path and act with integrity, we also want our colleagues to do the same. This is central to any Steiner school. As such, the work that teachers and other employees carry out must be done out of freedom and trust. Our actions must not only be derived from obligation but also as free acts born from personal integrity and a commitment to the children. However, no organisation or culture can function without some basic agreed principles in place. In this vein, this document aims to set out employees' legal obligations, together with some agreed minimum standards. It is hoped that new staff will find this useful and it will also serve to remind existing staff of minimum standards.

School staff are role models and are therefore in a unique position of influence in terms of setting a good example to all pupils within the school. As a member of our school community, each employee has an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the school. In some circumstances, this applies outside working hours and outside the school premises.

Collegiate and Cooperative Working

The Iona School has a strong Steiner ethos. Staff strive to work out of principles of anthroposophy. Central to this ethos is collegiate working. Staff are expected to foster trust and professional working relationships by working collaboratively and collegiately with each other. This includes active attendance at and participation in meetings and, where full responsibility teachers are concerned, curriculum development and relevant mandate work.

Where decisions do not fall within the remit of one person, issues will need to be debated in an appropriate forum. Staff need to and should be able to express their positive and negative views during the decision-making process. However, no community can function and develop without its members making some personal sacrifices for the greater good of the school and the principle of collegiate working. In this way, once a decision is reached, all staff therefore need to remain loyal to and adhere to that decision, even if they represented the minority that opposed it.

It is important that wherever possible, we all use the right channels of communication, both to challenge each other and support each other. Policies must be agreed and decisions reached in the appropriate meetings. Staff are expected to uphold school policies and procedures, and raise any concerns about the life or running of the school in a responsible and appropriate way. To challenge colleagues' decisions, the right channel to use is the forum in which the policy or decision was originally agreed or the person who made the decision / wrote the policy. Telling parents or pupils that you do not support a school policy / decision and / or actively not adhering to agreed policies/decisions are both instances of actions which are unacceptable in that they may undermine colleagues or even bring the school into disrepute.

There may be times when other commitments prevent us from supporting each other, but by and large staff are expected to support each other wherever possible by being flexible, covering colleagues' lessons/duties when they are off sick and taking on occasional additional work.

Where there are disagreements or difficult relationships between people at work, staff are expected to talk to each other informally and professionally to try to resolve the differences, using a colleague as mediator if appropriate. Whilst this is not always possible (e.g. where serious allegations are made or in instances of bullying), it is anticipated that the complaints procedure and staff grievance procedure will be used once informal steps have failed to help matters.

Setting an Example

School staff and volunteers set examples of behaviour which can be copied by pupils. Imitation features heavily within Steiner education. All school staff are therefore expected to use appropriate language and behaviour which they would want to be imitated.

Conduct Outside of Work

As a school that is proud of its heritage, ethos and standing in the community, we take pride in our reputation and expect staff to avoid any actions that may damage the reputation of the school, employees' own reputations or the reputation of other members of the school community. In particular, criminal offences that involve violence, possession or use of illegal drugs or sexual misconduct are likely to be regarded as unacceptable and acts of gross misconduct.

Staff should exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Inappropriate use of social network sites may bring staff, the school or the school community into disrepute. We have a very clear policy on social media which bars all employees of The Iona School from being 'friends' on social media with any current pupils, any ex-pupils under 18 years of age or any current parents. We would treat any deviation from this policy as gross misconduct.

Staff may undertake work outside school, either paid or voluntary, provided that it does not conflict with the interests of the school nor be to a level which may contravene the working time regulations or affect an individual's work performance.

Suitability Document

Each volunteer and staff member will sign a disclosure document, this is the DFE document that outlines if a person has any involvement with a person who has undertaken severe criminal activities. This no longer extends to family members and partners (as of September 2019).

This document MUST be filled in annually or at least a form signed to say there have been no changes. It is a mandatory duty for any staff member or volunteer to inform the manager of any changes so we can work with you and seek advice. It is your duty to always notify the School Business Manager of any changes that have occurred. If you do not tell the manager you will be subject to disciplinary procedures, under gross misconduct.

Safeguarding Pupils

All staff, volunteers and agency workers have a duty to safeguard pupils from: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. You must always think “it can happen here” and never think “it won’t happen here”. This duty includes reporting concerns about a pupil to the school’s DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) for Child Protection as highlighted on the Safeguarding Policy.

You are obliged to read the school’s Safeguarding Policy and Whistleblowing Policy and must be familiar with these documents, in addition to this, any other documents that you are asked to read. Staff are expected to take reasonable care of pupils under their supervision with the aim of ensuring their safety and welfare.

If a staff member is concerned that a correct safeguarding procedure is not followed then any person can make a referral, please see safeguarding policy for further information. You will submit an annual safeguarding quiz and disclosure when requested.

Working alone with a pupil should be avoided if possible. However, it is recognised that this is not always possible. In these instances, if possible you should be seated near an open door, within the line of sight of those walking past the door. However, we do recognise that during support lessons this may not be appropriate. Staff should use their discretion as needed. It is essential that the environment helps the pupil feel safe and that the potential for allegations is minimised.

You have been provided with a copy of ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ - please ensure you read this and keep it safe for reference.

Confidentiality

Where staff have access to confidential information about pupils or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the pupil. All issues discussed at college meetings are confidential and should not be discussed with those who are not members of college.

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a pupil is bullied by another pupil (or by a member of staff), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school procedure. Care should be taken to use the right channels when discussing such cases. Safeguarding investigations should be carried out by one person and staff should only discuss these issues with pupils with permission from the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Investigator.

Staff have an obligation to share with the school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a pupil. Staff must never promise a pupil/student that they will not act on information that they are told by the pupil.

Pupil Development

As in all schools, staff must comply with school policies and procedures and collaborate with colleagues and external agencies where necessary to support the development of pupils. Staff are expected to follow reasonable instructions or requests that ultimately support the development of pupils.

Dignity, Diversity and Inclusion

As a Steiner school, we strive to establish a strong community with strong moral values among our staff and pupils. Respect for people from all walks of life is therefore essential, regardless of their age, race, sexuality, gender, marital status, religion, beliefs or transgender status. We also aim to help pupils to understand that we live in a multi-cultural society. Staff must support and comply with policies relating to equal opportunity, British values, inclusion, access and bullying, and must help create a fair and inclusive school environment.

Honesty and Integrity

As a school we aim to maintain high standards of honesty and integrity. This includes the handling and claiming of money and the use of school property and facilities. All staff must comply with the Bribery Act 2010. A person may be guilty of an offence of bribery under this act if they offer, promise or give financial advantage or other advantage to someone; or if they request, agree, accept or receive a bribe from another person. If you believe that a person has failed to comply with the Bribery Act, you should refer to the school's Whistleblowing Policy. Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to School Business Manager, with the exception of 'one off' token gifts from pupils or parents. Personal gifts from individual members of staff to pupils are likely to be seen as inappropriate and could be misinterpreted by the pupil or pupil's parents – especially where gifts are repeated or generous.

Substance Abuse, Medication on Site and Prescriptive Medication

All staff must understand that whilst caring for the children at The Iona School, they must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substances. If they are given prescriptive medication you must ask the GP or person dispensing my medication to ensure that this medication does not impair your ability to look after the children under your care. If this is the case, you must inform the School Business Manager. Failure to do so is considered gross negligence.

Staff must understand that any personal medication bought into The Iona School must be securely locked away from the reach of children, either in the Teacher's Room or a locked cupboard out of the classroom, they must not be in bags that could be accessed by children.

Touch, Behaviour and Physical Contact with Pupils

School staff recognise the value that appropriate touch has for the children in our care and we will provide physical comfort or consolation to a child who expresses a need for such.

We will not touch a child in a potentially sexually sensitive area unless the child has incurred injury that necessitates immediate medical attention and contact in that way. In such circumstances, we will, as adults, make every effort to ensure that another adult as witness is present in order to protect ourselves and the child.

We will not touch a child who in any way expresses that they do not wish to be touched, unless in the extreme case of needing to restrain a child who is in danger to themselves or others.

If staff need to hold/restrain a child, they should always ask themselves?

- Is a less intrusive intervention preferable?
- Do we have to act now?
- Am I the best person to be doing this?

In less urgent situations and if at all possible, the member of staff should advise the child calmly and repeatedly about what they are going to do and why.

Physical contact may be misconstrued by a pupil, parent or observer. Touching pupils, including well-intentioned informal and formal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, can, if repeated regularly, lead to questions being raised. Staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with pupils and should avoid attributing 'touching' to their teaching style as a way of relating to pupils.

There are of course occasions when physical contact is acceptable or necessary. These usually fall into one of four categories. Please read the Restraint Policy.

Staff should never:

- use negative contact as a form of punishment, for instance, saying 'no' and tapping the child;
- use raised voices or strong words, words must always be gentle, explaining and calm.

The Use of Mobile Phones / Camera Phones / Camera Tablets / Camera Laptops / Cameras

The Iona School aims to keep all children within its care safe. This includes raising awareness of potential danger through the taking of, and /or distributing of, photographs or moving images. At no point can a mobile phone be taken into Kindergarten. All phones must be securely locked away in the lockers provided. They must not be taken out and used in the setting.

Any visitors to the setting must also observe the same policy - this includes parents, prospective parents and contractors.

Any staff member who sees a person using a phone must immediately ask them to stop and leave the setting. Staff members must only use their phones on their break times, or in the case of an emergency, with prior approval.

To clarify, the following rules apply:

- Staff phones/camera phones are allowed to be used in the Teacher's Room during break times;
- Walky-talky non camera phones must be taken on the land;
- If a member of staff needs to make a private call they will inform the senior member of staff present and a room will be found to make the call;
- They will not be used at any other time unless an emergency occurs;
- No images of pupils will be taken on personal image recording devices at any time. This is to ensure safeguarding of pupils and staff;
- Camera phones/tablets/laptops/cameras are not allowed into the Kindergarten under any circumstances.
- No mobile camera phones to be used near children under any circumstances;
- The school has a camera, all pictures taken on this will be removed by office staff and the memory card wiped.

First Aid and Caring for Pupils with Particular Problems

Staff who have to administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that other children or another adult are present if they are in any doubt as to whether necessary physical contact could be misconstrued.

Wherever possible, staff who have to help children with toileting difficulties should be accompanied by another adult, and pupils should, wherever possible, be encouraged to change themselves.

It is accepted that there will be some situations where pupils will present particular problems for staff and the emphasis must therefore be on what is reasonable in all the circumstances. In situations where regular physical assistance is necessary it is advisable that parents and staff formally acknowledge this in writing.

Discussions with Pupils, Comments by Teachers

As with physical contact, comments by staff to pupils, either individually or in groups, can be misconstrued. As a general principle therefore staff must not make unnecessary comments to and/or about pupils which could be construed to have a sexual connotation. It is also unacceptable for staff to introduce or to encourage debate amongst pupils in class, or elsewhere, which could be construed as having a sexual connotation that is unnecessary given the context of the lesson, or the circumstances. At the same time it is recognised that a topic raised by a pupil is best addressed rather than ignored.

Systematic use of insensitive, disparaging or sarcastic comments is also unacceptable.

Relationships and Attitudes

All staff should understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their dealings with pupils. Intimate relationships between a member of staff and a pupil are regarded in law as a breach of trust. It is a criminal offence for a teacher or other persons who work with children to breach this trust, punishable on conviction by a fine and/or a term of imprisonment. This legislation includes all children under the age of 18.

From time to time staff may encounter pupils who display attention-seeking behaviour, or develop crushes on them. Staff should aim to deal with those situations sensitively and appropriately, but must ensure that their behaviour cannot be misinterpreted. Best practice in this situation would be to seek advice from one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads immediately.

Pastoral Care and Situations where Conversations of a Sensitive Nature may be Appropriate

A number of teachers have a pastoral responsibility for pupils and in order to fulfil that role effectively there will be occasions where conversations will cover particularly sensitive matters. Staff must, in these circumstances, use their discretion to ensure that, for example, any probing for details cannot be construed as unjustified intrusion. Other staff may, from time to time, be approached by pupils for advice. For example, a pupil may appear distressed and you may feel the need to ask if all is well. In such cases you must judge whether it is appropriate for you to offer counselling and advice or whether to refer the pupil to their class teacher

Extra-Curricular Activities, Class Trips etc.

Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in extra-curricular activities, or in a residential setting during a class trip, outdoor education centre or extended visit away from home. Typically a less formal approach than usual is appropriate in these settings, but that can be open to misinterpretation by pupils and the standard of behaviour expected of staff will be no different from the behaviour expected within school. Class trip leaders should instruct all helpers and parent-volunteers on what is appropriate behaviour for the situation.

Information Technology

Staff must exercise caution when using information technology and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Do not give your home email address or mobile phone number to any pupil or parent. For email, always use your school email address. Do not be tempted to give out your own number.

Giving Children Food

Staff and volunteers must not, under any circumstances give children their own food or any food that has not been prepared for them by the school or the child's parents. If a child has an allergy, then this could have fatal effects. Also, staff must not encourage children to share their food.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the school is Susanne Buerstein. The school's Deputy DSLs are Eileen Hickman, Emma Stacey and Chantell Walker. *Reminder: All concerns over the well-being of a pupil or concerning any child protection issue should be addressed in confidence to the DSL as soon as possible.* Please see the Safeguarding Policy.

Health and Safety

All staff, college members and volunteers are obliged to familiarise themselves with the Health and Safety Policy and adhere to it.

Personal Appearance

Whilst we do welcome diversity across the workplace, we would ask that tattoos are not above the collar line and facial piercings are taken out before each work day (not including ear piercings), unless these are for religious reasons. Tattoos that contain foul language or are offensive to any one section of the community will not be permitted and must be covered at all times. It is your responsibility to wear appropriate and professional clothing as to your role, whilst bearing in mind that you need to be able to maintain a good sense of safety. Logos and offensive words on clothing is not permitted in your normal day wear. We uphold the rights to wear certain clothing for religious reasons.

Disciplinary Action, Misconduct and Convictions

All staff need to recognise that failure to meet the standards of behaviour and conduct within the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal. As with all environments where children or vulnerable adults are present, staff at The Iona School are obliged to notify the school without delay if they are convicted of a criminal offence, if proceedings are brought against them or a formal accusation is made of a criminal offence. It should also be noted that employers have to notify the relevant authority when teachers are dismissed or cease employment for reasons of misconduct or incompetence, or where they resign in circumstances where dismissal was a possibility. Where employers judge misconduct to involve a risk of harm to children and young people, they are required to refer cases to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). Under the provisions of Home Office Circular 45/86, teaching is a 'notifiable' occupation. This means that the police report any conviction or caution of a teacher to the DBS. Offences involving a risk of harm to children, or to vulnerable adults, are considered by the ISA.

Issue Date

This policy takes effect from August 2019.

Review Date

This policy will be reviewed and revised on an annual basis.

Endorsement

Full endorsement to this policy is given by:

Name:	Mr Martin Taylor
Position:	Trustee
Signed:	
Date:	19 th November 2019

Related Policies

- Social Media Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Positive Handling Policy

Also see employment contract for further information.