

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, Trustees, 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 parent council and any other bodies working under the Iona School name.

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 educational setting school. However, no organisation or culture can function without some basic agreed principles and rules in place. In this vein, this document aims to set out everybody's legal and professional obligations, together with some agreed minimum standards. It is hoped that all staff will find this useful, and it will also serve to remind existing staff of minimum standards.

All staff/volunteer/agency workers and Trustees 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 staff/volunteer/agency workers and Trustees 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 an atmosphere of trust and professionalism. This includes active attendance at meetings and completing all relevant mandatory work and requests from the school's management.

Where decisions do not fall within the remit of one person or team, issues will need to be discussed in an appropriate forum and a way forward agreed. Staff should feel they are able to express their views during the decision-making process in a professional manner. However, no professional setting can function and develop without its members making sacrifices for the greater good of the school and the principle of collegiate working. In this way, once a decision is reached, all staff need to 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 raise concerns and/or to support each other. Policies must be agreed and decisions reached in the appropriate forum. Staff are expected to uphold school policies and procedures, and raise any concerns about the ethos or running of the school in a professional and appropriate way. To bring into question a decision or policy, 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. Informing parents or pupils that you do not support a school policy / decision and / or actively not adhering to agreed

policies/decisions are actions which are unacceptable to the school, as they may undermine colleagues, management or even bring the school into disrepute.

There may be times when other commitments prevent us from fully adhering to the spirit of this policy, but by large staff are expected to support each other and the school wherever possible by being flexible, professional, covering colleagues' lessons/duties when they are off and taking on occasional additional work when requested to do so. CPD (continuous professional development) is your responsibility to ensure that it is completed and correctly documented in a timely manner, using school and fellowship resources, along with any other training/ development that may be appropriate. It is expected that this work will be completed during paid leave outside of school working hours.

Where there are disagreements or difficult relationships between people at work, it is encouraged to talk to each other informally and professionally to try to resolve the differences, bearing in mind that everyone should have the best interests of the school and its pupils at the forefront of any decisions, a mediator can be used if appropriate (this could be a member of staff or a Trustee). 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

Staff/volunteer/agency workers and Trustees set examples of behaviour which can be copied by pupils as imitation features heavily within Steiner education. Therefore, everyone is expected to use appropriate language and behaviour which they would want to be imitated by pupils or visitors.

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, volunteers and Trustees 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, maintaining a suitable DBS check that is appropriate for working with children and or vulnerable individuals criminal charges are likely to be regarded as unacceptable and acts of gross misconduct.

Staff should exercise caution when using social media or other online forums and be aware of the risks to themselves and others. Inappropriate use of social media sites may bring staff, the school or the school community into disrepute. We have a clear policy on social media which bars all employees and Trustees of The Iona School from being 'friends' or 'following' any current pupils, any ex-pupils under 18 years of age or any current parents on any social media platform. 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.

Safeguarding Pupils

Staff/volunteer/agency workers and Trustees have a duty to safeguard pupils from: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect including domestic violence at home. 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 and the start of year academic year, 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.

If you are working alone with a pupil, the door must remain open and another staff member must be aware of your activities and location during the session. 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 the most recent ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ - please ensure you read this and keep it safe for reference. A copy is also available in the staff room and on the school website.

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 that information. All issues discussed at meetings are confidential and should not be discussed with those who are not privy to the information. 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 and safeguarding policy. 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 or family member. Staff must never promise a pupil/student that they will not act on or share 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 including progression to another educational setting.

Dignity, Diversity and Inclusion

As a Steiner school, we strive to establish a strong community with strong moral values among our staff, volunteers, Trustees and pupils. Respect for people from all backgrounds 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 2010, you should refer to the school's Whistleblowing Policy. Gifts from suppliers or associates of the school must be declared to School Business Manager Nick Delaforce-Sanders, with the exception of 'one off' token gifts from pupils or parents with a cost limited of £20. 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 in value.

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 Nick Delaforce-Sanders. Failure to do so is considered gross negligence and will be dealt with accordingly.

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 or visitors to the school.

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. Further information on this can be found on our 'Positive Handling / Physical Intervention' policy which is located on our website, or from the schools Business Manager.

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 Nick Delaforce-Sanders. The school's Deputy DDSLs are Julie Wyer and Janine Ray. 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 matter of urgency. 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.

Reporting Sick and Absence Leave

All staff, volunteers must report any sick leave or non-attendance to their line-manager before 7am on each day of non-attendance. They must also email / text Nick Sanders in the Business Department each day of non-attendance. 'Fit to work' notes are to be submitted to Nick Sanders via email after 7 days of continued sick leave. Any leave taken that is not pre-approved will not be paid and could lead to disciplinary or a misconduct investigation that could result in dismissal.

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 Ofsted. 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 Ofsted.

Issue Date


This policy takes effect from February 2023.

Review Date

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

Endorsement

Full endorsement to this policy is given by:

Name:	Martin Taylor
Position:	Trustee
Signed:	
Date:	February 2023

Related Policies

- Social Media Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Positive Handling / Physical Intervention Policy

Also see employment contract for further information.

The Iona School