

Associate Code of Conduct Policy

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to promote high standards of conduct from all associates of St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. It will also help protect associates by ensuring they are clear about the behaviour that is expected of them, the boundaries within which they should operate and what behaviour is unacceptable.

It is the responsibility of all associates to familiarise themselves with this Code of Conduct.

1) Positive behaviours encouraged by St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. include:

- Being supportive, approachable and reassuring to all students and service users
- Showing respect, patience and treating all people as individuals
- Being respectful of a student's right to privacy
- Treating and valuing all children and young people as individuals
- Being consistent, fair and equitable with all students and service users
- Being supportive in a manner appropriate to age and stage of development

2) Behaviours to be avoided

St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. will reduce abusive situations for children/young people/service users and help protect associates from false accusations by ensuring everyone is aware of behaviours to be avoided which may include:

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with a child or young person away from others
- Taking students and service users alone in car journeys, however short
- Taking students to your home
- Compromise the safety of a child/young person or service user or lead an associate into a challenging situation with any student.
- Ensuring that any time spent with children and young people takes place in as open a setting as possible. When it is unavoidable that these things do happen, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge within the organisation and/or the child or young person's parent.

3) Unacceptable behaviours

Unacceptable behaviours are those that should always be avoided in the interests of the safety of all those involved in St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. The following are examples of behaviour which are unacceptable and will never be permitted or tolerated. They include:

- Engaging in rough physical games including horseplay
- Engaging in sexually provocative or inappropriate activities
- Allowing or engaging in inappropriate touching of any form
- Allowing children/young people/ adults to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Making sexually suggestive comments about or to a child/young person/adult even in fun
- Letting allegations made from a child/young person/adult go unchallenged or unrecorded

- Doing things of a personal nature for children that they can do themselves
- Promising to keep secrets

NB: Associates who engage in unacceptable behaviour will face disciplinary action.

Expected Conduct

Associates are expected at all times to:

- Treat all students, associates and all service users with courtesy and respect
- Comply with reasonable requirements or instructions given by the directors
- Familiarise themselves with and adhere to policies and procedures of the Organisation
- Carry out their duties with integrity, care and diligence
- Promote and protect the good reputation of St. Columb's School of Music Ltd.
- Preserve the confidentiality of all information attained by them in the course of their work and avoid dealing with the media on any issue unless specifically authorised
- Continue to develop their effective contribution by participating in training and Continual Professional Development programmes
- Not act in a way which is discriminatory towards individuals or groups for reasons of age, disability, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity, race, colour, faith, marital status or gender
- Take reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of themselves, colleagues, students and all St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. service users.
- Avoid inappropriate physical contact unless in an emergency situation
- Dress in a way which is appropriate to their position and duties
- Be absent from work only when authorised or when ill
- Be punctual to demonstrate respect for others and to make best use of working time
- Refrain from using offensive language
- Not attend work or carry out duties whilst under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or other substances which prevent them from doing so competently

Personal conduct outside of the Organisation

An associate's conduct in their private life becomes a matter of concern for St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. where it damages the organisation's reputation or makes them unsuitable for their work. Behaviour relating to violence, dishonesty, substance abuse including alcohol, sexual offences and other serious offences are likely to come into this category.

Gifts and Hospitality

Associates must not solicit gifts or benefits that might in any way compromise or influence them while working for the organisation.

Conflict of Interest

In discharging St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. business, all associates need to be aware of actual, potential or perceived conflicts which might arise between their private interests and their organisational responsibilities. Actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest may arise in connection with, for example:

- Personal and family relationships
- Associate and student relationships
- Financial interests and affiliations
- Receipt of gifts and benefits
- Acceptance of outside professional work which may compromise the organisation
- Use of St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. information;
- Misuse of St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. premises, equipment and materials
- External activities and public comment

This list is not exhaustive.

It is the responsibility of associates to disclose to the directors details of situations that may give rise to an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest. The directors must be especially alert to the various situations in which conflicts of interest may arise and handle such situations with common sense and in a sensitive manner.

4) Anti-bullying guidelines

Bullying can take a number of forms and its effects are extremely serious for children and young people. Bullying can cause considerable distress to the extent that it affects health and development and can cause children and young people significant harm. The following anti-bullying guidelines have been developed by Kidscape and highlight how to identify bullying and how to respond to it. (These guidelines particularly refer to any group activities involving children and young people, which may be carried out under the auspices of St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. Associates are reminded that an Anti-bullying/Harassment policy also exists within St. Columb's School of Music Ltd.

Statement of Intent

St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of children/young people. The organisation considers bullying of any kind to be unacceptable. If bullying does occur, all children should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively by associates.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional** - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding possessions, threatening gestures)
- **Physical** - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Racist** - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures

- **Sexual** - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Homophobic** - because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- **Verbal** - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- **Cyber/online** - all areas of internet, such as email and social media misuse, mobile phone threats by text messaging and calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Children who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Associates have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying should it occur when they are working with children and young people.

Objectives of these guidelines

- Associates, children/young people and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All children and parents should know the guidelines on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. takes bullying seriously. Children and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Associates should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child, for example:

- Is frightened of attending any organised group activities
- Becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"

Prevention

When working with children and young people associates will use the Kidscape methods for helping children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Writing and signing a group code of behaviour
- Making up role-plays (or using Kidscape role-plays)
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters.

Further reading on anti-bullying can be found at www.kidscape.org.uk

Further resource for associates

Keepsafe Code

Children and young people should understand that their bodies belong to them and that no-one has the right to do anything to them which makes them feel uncomfortable. They should be given the knowledge to recognise unacceptable behaviour and be encouraged and supported to seek help if it should occur. The following Self Protection – Keepsafe Code may help Children and in safeguarding themselves.

Self-Protection – Keepsafe Code

'Kidscape', the campaign for children's safety, was founded in 1984 to enable children and young people to learn about personal safety. With the help of parents, teachers, police and other adults, children and young people are taught ways to deal with bullies and approaches by strangers and even known adults who may try to abuse them.

They have developed a Keepsafe Code:

1. Hugs

Hugs and kisses are nice, especially from people we like. Even hugs and kisses that feel good and that you like should never be kept secret.

2. Body

Your body belongs to you and not to anyone else. This means all of your body. If anyone harms you or tries to touch your body in a way which confuses or frightens you, say "No!", if possible, and tell someone.

3. No

If anyone other than you, even someone you know, tries to touch you in a way you don't like or that confuses you, or which they say is supposed to be a secret, say "No!" in a very loud voice.

4. Run or get away

Don't talk to anyone you don't know when you are alone, or just with other children. You don't have to be rude, just pretend you didn't hear and keep going. If a stranger, or a bully, or even someone you know tries to harm you, get away and get help. Make sure you always go towards other people or to a shop if you can.

5. Yell

Wherever you are, it is alright to yell if someone is trying to hurt you. Practice yelling as loud as you can in a big, deep voice by taking a deep breath and letting the yell come from your stomach, not from your throat.

6. Tell

Tell a grown up you trust if you are worried or frightened. If the first grown up you tell doesn't believe or help you, keep telling until someone does. It might not be easy, but even if something has already happened that you have never told before, try to tell now. Who could you tell?

7. Secrets

Secrets such as a surprise birthday parties are fun. But some secrets are not good and should never be kept. No bully should make you keep the bullying a secret and no-one should ask you to keep a kiss, hug or touch secret. If anyone does, even if you know that person, tell a grown up you trust.

8. Bribes

Don't accept money or sweets or a gift from anyone without first checking with your parents. Most of the time it will be alright, like when you get a present for your birthday from your grandma. But some people try to trick children into doing something by giving them sweets or money. This is called a bribe – **don't ever take one!** Remember, it is possible that you might have to do what a bully or older person tells you, so that you can keep yourself safe. Don't feel bad if that happens because the most important thing for you is to be safe.

9. Code

Have a code word or sign with your parents or guardians, which only they and you know. If they need to send someone to collect you, they can give that person the code. **Don't tell the code to anyone else.**

5) The Code includes guidelines relating to physical contact

Any physical contact should be 'child-centred' and appropriate to the task/activity required. Associates should also remember that gender, culture and ethnicity can often influence how we approach physical contact with children and young people.

It may sometimes be necessary for associates to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or are children with additional needs. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents. In an emergency situation which requires this type of help, parents should be fully informed, as soon as reasonably possible. In such situations, it is important that you ensure you are sensitive to the child and undertake personal care tasks with the utmost discretion.

6) Guidelines relating to diversity and additional needs

The diversity in the needs and practices of service users must always be taken into consideration at St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. Associates must not discriminate against children/young people or adults who have different cultural backgrounds and beliefs. They must also be aware of diversity in the beliefs and practices of children and young people and their families. When working with service users associates need to ask about cultural needs and be aware of the difficulties posed by any language barriers or other communication difficulties. Anti-discriminatory practice is at the core of the organisation's ethos and a zero tolerance towards discriminatory practice will be implemented. St. Columb's School of Music Ltd. has a responsibility to ensure that any child/young person or adult with additional needs is treated with equity, fairness and inclusion

7) Guidelines on the use of technology, including photography

These guide lines should be read in conjunction with the Social Media Policy for Associates of St. Columb's School of Music Ltd.

The internet is an unmanaged, open communications channel. Anyone can send messages, discuss ideas and publish material with little restriction. These features of the internet make it an invaluable resource used by millions of people every day. The development of technology in the past ten years and accessibility of the internet on mobile phones, tablets and features such as Apps, means that online safety for children and young people is increasingly important. It is commonplace for children and young people to communicate via texts, blogs, messaging and also play games consoles online. Parents and organisations should be aware of safeguarding issues and keep abreast of the vast changes and practical implications.

Some material on the internet is published for an adult audience and can include graphic violence and adult content, including pornography, information on weapons, crime and racism. With increased accessibility to the internet comes the need to educate children and young people about the benefits, risks and responsibilities of using information technology and how to keep themselves safe.

Safeguarding children and young people in the digital world emphasises the need to understand and use new technologies in a positive way. Internet safety is less about restriction and more about education about the risks as well as the benefits, so we can support children and young people to feel confident online. We can also support children and young people to develop safer online behaviours.

Organisations need to protect themselves from legal challenge and ensure that associates work within specified boundaries, or code of behaviour. They also need to ensure that children and young people are protected from harm.

The law is catching up with internet developments, for example, it is an offence to store images showing child abuse and to use email, text or instant messaging (IM) to “groom” children or young people.

Nevertheless, we know that technologies, such as social networking websites and mobile phones can be misused by those who are intent on harming children or young people. Children and young people can also place themselves at risk and be vulnerable to abuse. When communicating via the internet and mobile phones, young people tend to become less wary and talk about things more openly than they might when communicating with someone face to face.

This can leave children and young people open to other areas of abuse such as cyber bullying.

What is cyber bullying?

'The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber bullying is a different form of bullying which can happen 24/7, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

Cyber bullying is a type of aggression such as sending or posting harmful or cruel text or images using the internet or other digital communication devices. Therefore, it is important that all adults are aware of the potential dangers to children and young people and are able to prevent them from being harmed. It is not only adults who

may harm children and young people online. Some young people use technology to harm other children. This can be because they are able to create their own content via mobile phones and social networking sites. Some young people create their own illegal and inappropriate material, sometimes unwittingly, which puts themselves and others at risk. These are particular issues for organisations working with children and young people as there is growing concern as to what is and is not permissible in the area of communication between associates and children within an organisation. As modes of communication have changed, it is important that associates know how to appropriately communicate with children and young people to ensure their safety and minimise risks and misunderstandings.

There have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs in publications and on websites. Photographs can be used to identify children and young people when they are accompanied by personal information. This information could make the child vulnerable to an individual who may wish to “groom” this child for abuse. Also, the content of the photo could be used or adapted for inappropriate use.

It is vital that parents are aware of, and parental consent is gained for any photographs taken of children and young people, and how the photographs will be used and displayed. The organisation will make decisions about the type of images they consider suitable and that appropriately represent the organisation’s activity, without putting children at increased risk. An important factor when assessing the risks involved in the use of images of children is the potential for inappropriate use of the images.

Guidelines on Using Mobile Phone, E-mail and Social Media

In order to ensure clarity and understanding these additional guidelines are designed to help associates at St. Columb’s School of Music Ltd. to follow aspects of good practice on what is appropriate in terms of mobile phone and internet contact when working with children and young people.

- Anything which compromises the ability of associates to maintain a safe environment and give their full attention to the supervision of children and young people, such as using a mobile phone, should be avoided. A blanket ban is not necessary as mobiles may obviously be useful in emergency situations.
- Associates should never give their mobile number to children and young people, befriend them on social networking websites or contact them directly through email unless the organisation has prior parental consent to do so
- Most social networking sites have a minimum joining age. Associates should be aware of this and if a child or young person under the minimum age attempts to contact the organisation or add the organisation as a ‘friend’ through this method, the child’s parent should be notified.

Guidelines on Taking Photographs

Rules to Remember

- If the child/young person is named, avoid using their photograph
- If a photograph is used, avoid naming the child/young person
- Ask for the young person's permission to use their image (16+) e.g. Consent Form
- Ask for parental consent to use an image of a child/young person e.g. Parental Consent Form
- If necessary, only use images of children and young people in suitable dress to reduce the risk of inappropriate use. There are clearly some sports activities, for example, swimming, gymnastics and athletics when the risk of potential misuse is much greater than for other activities. With these, the content of the photograph should focus on the activity not on a particular child and should avoid full face and body shots. So, for example, shots of children in a pool would be appropriate or if poolside, waist or shoulder up.
- If inappropriate images of children or young people are used by a staff member or volunteer at any time, the safeguarding children and young people reporting procedures, as detailed in Standard 3 should be implemented.

Guidelines for Use of Photographic Filming Equipment

- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour
- Issue the photographer with identification which must be worn at all times
- Inform children, young people and parents that a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs
- Do not allow unsupervised access to children/young people or one to one photo sessions at events
- Do not approve/allow photo sessions outside the events or at a child/young person's home
- If parents or other spectators are intending to photograph or video at an event, they should also be made aware of your expectations
- Adults should be asked to register at an event if they wish to use photographic equipment
- Children, young people and parents should be informed that if they have concerns they can report these to the Chairperson
- Concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography should be reported to the event organiser and recorded in the same manner as any other safeguarding concern.

8) Sanctions in the case of associates breaching the Code of Behaviour and guidelines within this policy

Associates should understand that if they are unsure about their actions and feel they may have breached the code of behaviour, they should consult with the directors. They should also understand that a breach is a serious issue that will be investigated.

In the event of the code of behaviour being breached sanctions will be applied depending on the seriousness of the breach. This may include additional training and supervision, disciplinary action, or the staff member being permanently removed, or the volunteer being asked to leave. If the breach constitutes harm/risk of harm, then referral to Social Services, police and the Disclosure and Barring Service may be appropriate.