

Code of Conduct: Staff, Tutors and Volunteers

June 2026

Statement

Merton Music Foundation (MMF) is committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment for all its staff, tutors, volunteers, visitors and students. This Code of Conduct outlines the expected behaviour of all adults working for or on behalf of MMF.

Professionalism and Respect

All MMF staff, tutors and volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner at all times.

This includes:

- Treating all students, parents, and colleagues with respect and courtesy.
- Maintaining appropriate boundaries with students and colleagues.
- Refraining from engaging in any behaviour that may be perceived as bullying, discrimination, harassment, or intimidation.
- Avoiding the use of inappropriate language or behaviour.
- Maintaining appropriate professional dress whilst engaged in MMF activities.

Safety and Security

MMF is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all students and staff. All staff, tutors and volunteers are expected to:

- Follow all health and safety procedures and guidelines.
- Report any accidents or incidents to the relevant senior staff.
- Refrain from engaging in any behaviour that may compromise the safety or security of students, colleagues, visitors or the organization.

Vision Panel

When working with children & young people on behalf of MMF, ensure appropriate safeguarding measures have been taken including only teaching in a room which has an internal window / vision panel. If no vision panel is present, you should leave the door open and alert MMF leadership so the situation can be addressed.

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- Touch is a natural part of how children learn, grow and develop. However, appropriate boundaries must always be maintained between adults and children/young people at MMF.
- MMF staff, tutors & volunteers should avoid making physical contact with pupils wherever possible, other than in specific circumstances as outlined here, and only ever with the pupil's full consent.
- There may be some instances where physical contact is appropriate, for example when comforting an upset or distressed pupil, supporting musical technique or administering first aid. In SEND settings, touch also may be required to support pupils with movement or self-regulation.
- Where physical contact is used, it must always be 'Safe Touch'. Safe Touch is defined as physical contact that if otherwise avoided would be inhumane, unkind, detrimental and/or potentially emotionally or physically damaging to the pupil.
- Safe Touch typically occurs in the presence of other adults or responsible children and is never invasive, humiliating, aggressive or flirtatious. Pupils should never be touched in a way that could be misinterpreted as anything other than appropriate adult-child support.
- Pupils should not be touched between the waist and mid-thigh, or on/near the chest, diaphragm or ribs (unless specifically required for First Aid). Pupil's cultural norms and boundaries should also be considered in relation to physical touch; in many cultures touching the head is a socially inappropriate, for example – and so this should be avoided.
- When correcting posture / technique, adults should model and seek to describe corrections to pupils in the first instance. Only where this has proved fruitless, a tutor's professional judgement may be that physical contact is necessary for learning. Your intention and the purpose of this must first be explained to the pupil, and touch can only be initiated with the pupil's full consent. The pupil has the right to say 'no' and this must be respected. Contact should be limited as much as possible and in accordance with these guidelines. It is never acceptable for you to ask a pupil to touch you, or to ask pupils to touch each other.
- Where physical contact is required to prevent harm or damage to property, this must be proportionate and reasonable, avoiding injury to the pupil. Any intervention must be undertaken in line with school guidelines, including 'Restrictive interventions, including use of reasonable force in schools – guidance for schools in England April 2026'. MMF staff, tutors and volunteers are encouraged to seek support from school staff / MMF leadership in the first instance before attempting restrictive intervention themselves, wherever possible. If a restrictive intervention is used, you must report this to safeguarding@mmf.org.uk without delay.

Confidentiality and Privacy

All MMF staff, tutors and volunteers are expected to respect the confidentiality and privacy of students, parents, and colleagues. This includes:

- Refraining from discussing confidential information with unauthorized individuals.
- Ensuring that all personal data is handled in accordance with the Foundation's Data Protection Policy and relevant data protection regulations.
- Respecting the privacy of students and parents, and avoiding any behaviour that may be perceived as invasive or intrusive.

Mobile Phone Use

MMF recognises that mobile phones, including smart phones and devices, are an important part of everyday life and can be an effective pedagogical and productivity tool. We are committed to ensuring that the risks posed by such devices are managed appropriately, in line with best safeguarding practice.

Staff, tutors and volunteers are expected to abide by the policies in place in any Merton schools in which they teach regarding acceptable use of mobile phones. In most schools, adults are not permitted to use mobile phones in front of pupils or in classrooms / communal spaces. Many schools prohibit staff carrying phones on their person whilst on school premises. Please check the policy in the school(s) in which you teach.

Staff, tutors and volunteers must never use phone/device cameras whilst working with children and young people on behalf of MMF, other than approved staff and devices where appropriate media consent has been obtained.

MMF uses an online registering system and asks its tutors to update this whilst teaching. If using a phone/tablet to do so, tutors are requested to mark attendance in between lessons, whilst there are no pupils in the room (if this is in accordance with the school's phone policy); or to complete their register in the staff room / outside of school premises, if required.

MMF delivers out of school provision at its music centre sites. In these contexts, it is recognised that phones and other devices can be an effective teaching tool – particularly for playing backing tracks or utilising ear training and practice tools, such as ABRSM's 'Trainer' series of apps. In a music centre context, staff/tutors may utilise phones and devices solely for educational or business purposes, including to complete their register, but should never use these devices for personal use such as internet browsing or making personal calls. Staff/tutors should take care to ensure phone use is minimal and in-line with this policy and explain this clearly to pupils. Any concerns should be raised with a member of SLT immediately.

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Staff, tutors and volunteers must not befriend or follow current or previous MMF students on social media, especially whilst the pupil is under the age of 18.

All staff, tutors and volunteers should:

- be aware of their online reputation and recognise that their online activity can be seen by others including parents, pupils and colleagues on social media;
- ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this policy and other MMF policies;
- be aware that it isn't appropriate to use social media whilst engaging in activity on behalf of MMF in an educational setting;
- be responsible for their words and actions in the online environment.

Staff, tutors and volunteers should not upload any content on to social media sites that:

- is confidential to the MMF or its staff
- amounts to bullying, unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation
- brings the MMF into disrepute
- contains lewd, sexually explicit, threatening or similarly inappropriate or offensive comments, images or video clips
- undermines the reputation of the school and/or individuals
- is defamatory or knowingly false
- breaches copyright
- is in any other way unlawful.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

MMF is committed to promoting equality and diversity in all aspects of its operations. All staff and tutors are expected to:

- Follow the procedures set out in the Foundation's Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.
- Treat all individuals fairly and without discrimination.
- Refrain from engaging in any behaviour that may be perceived as discriminatory or prejudiced.
- Promote equality and diversity in their interactions with colleagues, students, and parents.

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Compliance with Policies and Procedures

All MMF staff, tutors and volunteers are expected to comply with all policies and procedures established by the organization. This includes:

- Familiarizing themselves with all relevant policies and procedures.
- Following all established procedures for reporting incidents or concerns.
- Cooperating with any investigations or inquiries conducted by the organization.

A full list of the Foundation's policies can be found on its website: www.mmf.org.uk/policies

Safer Recruitment / DBS - Change of Circumstances

An enhanced DBS check is carried out for all new staff and tutors and this is updated regularly.

Staff, tutors and volunteers are responsible for informing the Chief Executive if their circumstances change (e.g. receiving a criminal caution/conviction) whilst employed or contracted by the Foundation,

Breach of Code of Conduct

Any member of staff, tutor or volunteer who breaches this Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Foundation's Disciplinary, Capability and Grievance Policy; or termination of their self-employed contract of provision; or removal from the Foundation's rota of approved volunteers, as appropriate to the role.

Reporting

Any staff, tutor or volunteer who becomes aware of a breach of this policy must report it immediately to their line manager or the Designated Safeguarding Lead. MMF will investigate all reports of breaches of this policy and take appropriate action.