

Gifts and Hospitality Policy

Eppleton Academy Primary



Approved by:	L Jackson (Headteacher)	Date: September 2024
Approved by:	Governing Body	Date: Ratified Dec 2024
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1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

- The academy trust's funds are used only in accordance with the law, its articles of association, its funding agreement and the latest Academies Financial Handbook
- The trust and those associated with it operate in a way that commands broad public support
- The trust has due regard to propriety and regularity, and ensures value for money, in the use of public funds
- Trustees fulfil their fiduciary duties and wider responsibilities as charitable trustees and company directors
- Members, trustees and staff are aware of what constitutes acceptable gifts and hospitality, and the process that must be followed if they are presented with any of the same

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Academies Financial Handbook, which states that academy trusts should have a policy and register on the acceptance of gifts, hospitality, awards, prizes or any other benefit which might be seen to compromise the personal judgement or integrity of members, trustees, staff and/or any other representative of the trust.

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Definitions

Gifts are any items, cash, awards, prizes, goods or services, offered without expectation of payment or benefit. Gifts also include goods or services offered at a discounted rate, or on terms not available to the general public.

Hospitality is defined as food, drink, accommodation or entertainment (such as cultural or sporting events) provided free of charge, heavily discounted or on terms not generally available to the general public.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Members, trustees and staff

Members, trustees and staff:

- Must not give or accept gifts or hospitality to or from a third party where it might be perceived that their personal integrity has the potential to be compromised, or that the trust might be placed under any obligation as a result of acceptance
- Must not use their official position to further their private interests or the interests of others
- Must not solicit gifts or hospitality
- Must record any gifts or hospitality offered to them or the trust with a value of over £30 on the gifts and hospitality register (see appendix 1) within 7 working days, even if declined
- Must consult the headteacher, before accepting or offering any gifts or hospitality with a value of over £30.

4.2 Academy trustees

Academy trustees will ensure that the trust's funds are used in a way that commands broad public support, pays due regard to propriety and regularity, and provides value for money.

4.3 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of and understand this policy, and that it is being implemented consistently.

The headteacher will act with the utmost integrity on all matters relating to gifts and hospitality, ensuring that they set a good example to the rest of the school and trust and to those outside the organisation.

They will also ensure, alongside the School Business Manager that decisions on whether individuals or the trust can accept or offer gifts or hospitality with a value of over £30 are in line with this policy.

The headteacher is responsible for communicating the school/trust's rules and expectations about gift-giving to parents.

4.4 The School Business Manager

The School Business Manager will ensure that:

- The trust maintains a gifts and hospitality register
- Figures for transactions relating to gifts made by the trust are disclosed in the trust's audited accounts, in accordance with the Academies Financial Handbook
- The academy trustees and headteacher are provided with information on gifts and hospitality received and given, as appropriate

They will also ensure, alongside the headteacher that decisions on whether individuals or the trust can accept or offer gifts or hospitality with a value of over £30 are in line with this policy.

4.5 Admin Staff

The admin staff in the school office are responsible for maintaining the gifts and hospitality register on a day-to-day basis.

5. Acceptable gifts and hospitality

5.1 Offers of gifts and hospitality received

Members, trustees and staff can accept gifts and hospitality that have a value of up to £30. These do not have to be pre-approved or recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.

Generally, gifts of nominal value, such as small tokens of appreciation, may be accepted. If in any doubt, members, trustees and staff must consult the SBM or headteacher.

Similarly, hospitality such as working lunches may be accepted in order to maintain good relationships with key contacts, provided the hospitality is reasonable in the circumstances. If in doubt, guidance must be sought from the SBM or headteacher.

Any gifts or hospitality offered with a value of over £30 must be recorded on the gifts and hospitality register within 7 working days, even if declined. Any member, trustee or member of staff who is offered such gifts or hospitality must consult the SBM or headteacher before accepting.

If the headteacher is the recipient, or intended recipient, of **any** offer of gifts or hospitality, they must inform the chair of the board of trustees and record the offer on the gifts and hospitality register.

Failure to declare any offer of gifts or hospitality on the register in line with this policy will be treated as a staff disciplinary matter.

5.2 Offers of gifts and hospitality given

- It is acceptable to use the school's budget to offer hospitality to staff or visitors in certain circumstances. This may include occasions such as paying for staff's food and lodgings at Derwent Hill, or other similar residential visits.
- Staff may be given gifts on certain occasions e.g. flowers at the end of school concerts.
- When working off-site, (such as when on residential training courses) staff may claim back their travel expenses to and from the venue. The cost of overnight board and lodgings can be claimed, if the venue is in a location too far away for travel there and back in one day to be practical, however, all attempts should be made for the expenses to be reasonable. Alcohol will not be classed as an expense.
- If travel expenses are to be claimed for, receipts must be kept and submitted. If staff are travelling in their own car, then mileage must be logged before and after travel, so that expenses can be calculated. Staff should always attempt to car share. When claiming expenses, the relevant claim forms must be filled in and submitted to the school office.

Any gifts or hospitality provided by the trust, such as a working lunch for visitors, must not be extravagant. A maximum value of £30 per head should be used as a guideline.

Alcohol must not be purchased out of the school budget.

Expense claims should be made to the School Business Manager and receipts must always be enclosed.

The SBM or headteacher must be consulted about any proposal to provide gifts or hospitality with a value of over £30.

6. Unacceptable gifts and hospitality

The following must never be offered or accepted:

- Monetary gifts
- Gifts or hospitality offered to family members, partners or close friends of members, trustees or staff
- Gifts or hospitality from a potential supplier or tenderer in the immediate period before tenders are invited or during the tendering process
- Lavish or extravagant gifts or hospitality, even if they relate to activities the recipient undertakes in their own time.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

7. Declining gifts and hospitality

Any members, trustee or staff member who is offered any of the unacceptable gifts or hospitality outlined in section 6 above should politely decline the offer.

If they feel it would not be appropriate for them to decline, they should refer the matter to the headteacher or School Business Manager. The headteacher or the School Business Manager may decline the offer or donate the gift or hospitality to a worthy cause, and must also record the offer on the gifts and hospitality register.

Disciplinary action will be taken against anyone who fails to decline gifts or hospitality the trust has deemed unacceptable.

Failure to declare any gifts or hospitality offered on the gifts and hospitality register, in line with this policy, will be dealt with as a staff disciplinary matter.

8. Monitoring arrangements

The gifts and hospitality register is monitored regularly by the headteacher, the School Business Manager and other admin staff.

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Headteacher and approved by the Governing Body.

9. Links with other policies

This gifts and hospitality policy is linked to the:

- Staff code of conduct
- Staff disciplinary procedures
- Financial Handbook

