



Gifts and Hospitality Policy

Approved by: Board of Trustees on: 25th February 2021

Date of next scheduled review: February 2024

1. Introduction and aims

This policy aims to ensure that:

- The 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 using public funds
- Trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities as charitable trustees and company directors
- Members, trustees, local governors 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, including those 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 Responsibilities of all in staff or governance roles

Members, trustees, local governors and staff:

- Must demonstrate appropriate standards of behaviour, including honesty and integrity, in order to ensure that public confidence and trust in the school, Q1E trust, and teaching profession is upheld;
- 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 consult the director of finance and/or the headteacher before accepting or offering any gifts or hospitality with a value of over £50, and must record these on the gifts and hospitality register (see appendix 1) within 7 working days, even if declined (unless they are a member of staff offered a larger gift by a group of parents/carers, as per section 5.1 below).

4.2 Trustees

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 Headteachers

Headteachers:

- Are responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of and understand this policy, and that it is being implemented consistently;
- 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;
- Will ensure, alongside the director of finance, that decisions on whether individuals or the trust can accept or offer gifts or hospitality with a value of over £50 are in line with this policy.

4.4 The director of finance

The director of finance will ensure that:

- Will ensure the trust maintains a gifts and hospitality register;
- Will ensure that 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;
- Will ensure that the trustees and headteachers are provided with information on gifts and hospitality received and given, as appropriate;
- Will ensure, alongside the headteacher, that decisions on whether individuals or the trust can accept or offer gifts or hospitality with a value of over £50 are in line with this policy.

4.5 The school business manager

The school business manager is responsible for submitting items to be added to the trust gifts and hospitality register on a day-to-day basis.

5. Acceptable gifts and hospitality

5.1 Offers of gifts and hospitality received

- The trust does not wish to discourage all gift-giving. Tokens of gratitude are always appreciated and the spirit of giving is to be nurtured. Generally, gifts of nominal value may be accepted.
- Members, trustees, local governors and staff can accept gifts and hospitality that have a value of up to £50, without declaring or recording these. Staff may accept larger gifts purchased by groups of parents, for example those given to class teachers from the parents of all children in their class. These do not have to be pre-approved or recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.
- However, the offer of any gift or hospitality, whether from outside or inside the school, which might be interpreted as **an attempt to influence an employee in his or her conduct** towards pupils, parents or other employees or **influence a decision around provision of a service** must be treated with caution. Advice should be sought from the headteacher and/or director of finance if in any doubt.
- 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 director of finance or the headteacher.
- Any member, trustee or member of staff who is offered such gifts or hospitality must consult the director of finance or the headteacher before accepting. 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

- Restricted funds must not be used to provide gifts or hospitality. This includes the General Annual Grant (GAG) and other funds that must be used for the purpose for which they were given.
- Alcohol must not be purchased out of the school/trust budget (restricted or unrestricted funds).

- Any gifts or hospitality provided by schools/the trust, such as a working lunch for visitors, must not be extravagant. A maximum value of £25 per head should be used as a guideline.
- The director of finance or the headteacher must be consulted about any proposal to provide gifts or hospitality with a value of over £50.

6. Unacceptable gifts and hospitality

The following must never be offered or accepted:

- Money (gift vouchers for shops are usually fine - please check if in any doubt)
- Gifts or hospitality from a potential supplier or tenderer in the immediate period before tenders are invited or during the tendering process

If in any doubt, the headteacher or director of finance should be consulted.

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 director of finance. The headteacher or director of finance 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;
- fails to declare items to be recorded on the gifts and hospitality register, in line with this policy.

8. Monitoring arrangements

The gifts and hospitality register is monitored regularly by the director of finance.

The trust has robust internal and external audit procedures.

This policy is reviewed and approved by the board of trustees.

Appendix 1: gifts and hospitality register

Date	Name	Description of gift/hospitality and approximate value	Party offering gift/hospitality	Accepted/rejected	Approved by