

Policy A16 – Gifts & hospitality

1. Aims

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to outline The University of Brighton Academies Trust's process with regards to the offering and/or receiving of gifts and hospitality.
- 1.2 The policy aims to give clear guidance to all members, trustees and staff on the appropriate action to be taken when offering or receiving a gift, hospitality, prize or reward.
- 1.3 The Trust is committed to ensuring that governance of the Trust and its academies is conducted in accordance with the highest standards of integrity, probity and transparency. The Trust is also committed to ensuring value for money in the use of public funds.
- 1.4 This policy does not cover the action which will be taken if these guidelines are not adhered to. Please refer to the Disciplinary Procedure.

2. Legislation and guidance

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association, and all applicable laws/statutes.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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, local board members 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 £25 on the gifts and hospitality register (see appendix 1) within 7 working days, even if declined.
 - Must consult the Trust's Head of Finance before accepting or offering any gifts or hospitality with a value of over £25.
- 4.2 Board of Trustees:
 - The Board 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 Senior leaders:
 - Senior leaders (Executive Team members, principals and heads of service) are responsible for ensuring that staff in their teams / academies are aware of and understand this policy, and that it is being implemented consistently.
 - The relevant senior leader 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 their team / academy and the Trust and to those outside the organisation.

- They will also ensure, alongside the Head of Finance, that decisions on whether individuals or the Trust can accept or offer gifts or hospitality with a value of over £25 are in line with this policy.
- 4.4 The Head of Finance, on behalf of the Executive Director of Finance and Operations, 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 Trustees, via the Risk and Audit Committee, are provided with information on gifts and hospitality received and given, as appropriate.
 - The Head of Finance will also ensure, alongside the relevant senior leader, that decisions on whether individuals or the trust can accept or offer gifts or hospitality with a value of over £25 are in line with this policy.
 - The Head of Finance may delegate day to day responsibility for maintaining the gifts and hospitality register to a member of the trust’s central finance team.
- 4.5 Parents:
- The Trust recognises that parents/carers may wish to give small tokens of gratitude to academy staff. This policy is not intended to discourage this practice and all small gifts given with this intention are gratefully received.

5. Acceptable gifts and hospitality

5.1 Offers of gifts and hospitality received.

- 5.1.1 Members, trustees, local board members and staff can accept gifts and hospitality that have a value of up to £25. These do not have to be pre-approved or recorded on the gifts and hospitality register.
- 5.1.2 Generally, gifts of nominal value, such as small tokens of appreciation, may be accepted. If in any doubt, members, trustees, local board members and staff must consult the Head of Finance or the relevant senior leader.
- 5.1.3 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 Head of Finance or relevant senior leader.
- 5.1.4 Any gifts or hospitality offered with a value of over £25 must be recorded on the gifts and hospitality register within 7 working days, even if declined. Any member, trustee, local board member or member of staff who is offered such gifts or hospitality must consult the Head of Finance or Principal/line manager before accepting.
- 5.1.5 If a senior leader or a trustee is the recipient, or intended recipient, of any offer of gifts or hospitality, they must inform the relevant responsible officer as shown in the table below and record the offer on the register:

Recipient/intended recipient	Report to
Principal/line manager / head of service	Head of Finance
Head of Finance	Executive Team Member
Executive Team Member	Chair of Risk & Audit Committee
Trustee	Chair of Risk & Audit Committee
Chair of Risk & Audit Committee	Chair of the Board of Trustees

- 5.1.6 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.
- 5.2.1 Any gifts or hospitality provided by 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. Normally such hospitality should be provided using the trust’s catering facilities. Where this is not the case, reasons must be stated when submitting a claim for reimbursement.
- 5.2.2 Alcohol must not be purchased out of any budget in the trust.
- 5.2.3 Expense claims should be made in accordance with usual procedures and receipts must always be enclosed.

- 5.2.4 The Head of Finance must be consulted about any proposal to provide gifts or hospitality to individual members of staff with a value of over £25.
- 5.2.5 Staff benefits, parties and gifts to groups of staff should be considered in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation. All proposals to offer gifts and hospitality must be reviewed by the Executive Director of Finance and Operations and Head of Finance to ensure equality across the Trust and correct tax treatment.

6. Unacceptable gifts and hospitality

- 6.1 The following must never be offered or accepted:
- Monetary gifts.
 - Gifts or hospitality offered to family members, partners or close friends of members, local board 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.
- 6.2 This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

7. Declining gifts and hospitality

- 7.1 Any member, trustee, local board member or staff member who is offered any of the unacceptable gifts or hospitality outlined in section 6 above should politely decline the offer.
- 7.2 If they feel it would not be appropriate for them to decline, they should refer the matter to the relevant senior leader or Head of Finance. The relevant senior leader or Head 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.
- 7.3 Disciplinary action will be taken against anyone who fails to decline gifts or hospitality the trust has deemed unacceptable.
- 7.4 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

- 8.1 The gifts and hospitality register is monitored regularly by the Head of Finance and reported to the Risk & Audit Committee.

9. Links with other policies

- 9.1 This gifts and hospitality policy is linked to the:
- Staff code of conduct
 - Staff disciplinary procedures
 - Accounting policy
 - Whistleblowing policy

10. Policy status and review

Written by:	Head of Finance
Owner:	Head of Finance
Status:	Approved
Approval date:	11/05/20
Review Date:	2024

Appendix 1: Gifts and Hospitality Register

Date	Name	Description of gift/hospitality	Approximate value	Party offering	Accepted /Rejected	Approved by
			£			
			£			
			£			
			£			