



Slough and East Berkshire
C of E Multi Academy Trust

Gifts and Hospitality Policy

Category:	Statutory
Owner:	SEBMAT Directors and Local Governing Bodies
Ratified by Trustees/Directors	March 2024 Signature: <i>Chamers</i>
Date Policy to be reviewed (every 2 years):	March 2026

Contents

1. Aims.....	2
2. Legislation and guidance	2
3. Definitions.....	2
4. Roles and responsibilities	2
5. Acceptable gifts and hospitality.....	4
6. Unacceptable gifts and hospitality.....	5
7. Declining gifts and hospitality	6
8. Monitoring arrangements	6
9. Links with other policies	7
Appendix 1: gifts and hospitality register	8
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1. 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 Academy Trust 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, trustee/directors , governors, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) 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 [Academy Trust Handbook](#) and the SEBMAT Finance Manual, 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/directors, governors and staff

Members, trustees/directors, governors, the CEO 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 £20 on the gifts and hospitality register (see Appendix 1) within 7 working days, even if declined
- Must consult the Finance Director or headteacher before accepting or offering any gifts or hospitality with a value of over £20

4.2 Academy trustees/directors

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 in each school

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 Finance Director, that decisions on whether individuals or the Trust can accept or offer gifts or hospitality with a value of over £20 are in line with this policy.

4.4 The Finance Director

The Finance Director 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 Academy Trust Handbook
- The academy trustees and headteachers 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 £20 are in line with this policy.

4.5 The Clerk of Governors

The Clerk of Governors is responsible for maintaining the gifts and hospitality register on a day-to-day basis.

4.6 Parents

This policy is also relevant to parents. They need to be aware that there are restrictions on giving gifts to teachers.

The Trust does not want to discourage all gift-giving, and that small tokens of gratitude are appreciated. It is for the schools to provide guidance on the appropriate value of gifts and circumstances when they might be offered.

At the same time the Trust does not support teachers and other staff from accepting gifts worth more than £20.

5. ACCEPTABLE GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

5.1 Offers of gifts and hospitality received

Members, trustees/directors, governors, the CEO and staff can accept gifts and hospitality that have a value of up to £20. 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/directors, governors, the CEO and staff must consult the finance director or respective 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 Finance Director or headteacher.

Any gifts or hospitality offered with a value of over £20 must be recorded on the gifts and hospitality register within 7 working days, even if declined. Any member, trustee/director, governor, the CEO or member of staff who is offered such gifts or hospitality must consult the finance director or headteacher before accepting.

If the headteacher is the recipient, or intended recipient, of **any** offer of gifts or hospitality, they must inform the CEO 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.

The following are considered acceptable gifts or favours:

- a modest working lunch to discuss business
- attendance at trade fairs or similar events where there is a general invitation to customers
- attendance at cultural or sporting events sponsored by the company concerned
- attendance at a company anniversary celebration

Special consideration

Trustees/directors, governors, the CEO and members of staff involved in making buying decisions should not accept excessive, frequent or regular gifts, hospitality, entertainment or other services from existing or prospective suppliers. When considering whether to accept such offers, they consider whether they could affect their independence or cause concern that they might affect their independence.

5.2 Offers of gifts and hospitality given

- The trustees/directors and local governing bodies approves any expenditure on gifts, hospitality, ex-gratia payments. The school maintains a log of these. Such expenditure is only authorised if the governing body can demonstrate that they have taken into account the principles of probity, accountability and value for money.
- Expenditure on hospitality from public funds is only incurred in the provision of education. Modest hospitality is occasionally provided outside the workplace. The headteacher maintains a register of the occasions when hospitality is provided, the number of people involved and the costs incurred.

Any gifts or hospitality provided by the Trust, such as a working lunch for visitors, must not be extravagant. A maximum value of £20 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 Finance Director and receipts must always be enclosed.

The Finance Director or headteacher must be consulted about any proposal to provide gifts or hospitality with a value of over £20.

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/directors/governors, the CEO or staff
- Gifts or hospitality from a potential supplier or tenderer in the immediate period before tenders are invited or during the tendering process
- Holidays, hotel accommodation or a company flat
- Tickets for cultural or sporting events not sponsored by the company concerned
- 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.

The PROVEIT Test can be useful in determining whether the offer is acceptable.

Purpose	Token, thanks or seeking a favour? (Token or thanks: Yes; favour: No)
Rules	What are they? Does this situation conform?
Openness	Is the offer transparent?
Value	Expensive or inexpensive
Ethics	Does the offer fit with the trust's/school's ethics? Is this an exceptional circumstance?
Identify	Who has made the offer?
Timing	Are you about to make a decision about the giver?

All staff, the CEO, governors and directors are required to inform the clerk to governors of such offers as they arise. The Clerk to Governors will maintain a register of gifts and favours offered and whether these were accepted or rejected.

Therefore, gifts should not be accepted if they appear to be disproportionately generous, or could be construed as an inducement to effect a decision or action, whether business, educational, or other.

7. DECLINING GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

Any members, trustees/directors, governors, the CEO 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 Finance Director. The headteacher or Finance Director 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 Finance Director and be open to internal audit.

This policy will be reviewed every two years by SEBMAT's Finance and Resources Committee and approved by the trustees/directors after consulting with the headteachers and chairs of governors.

9. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This gifts and hospitality policy is linked to the:

- Staff code of conduct
- Staff disciplinary procedures
- Accounting policy

This SEBMAT Policy was endorsed by the Directors in March 2024.

This policy will be reviewed every two years. (next review March 2026)



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Appendix 1: gifts and hospitality register

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