

Gifts, Hospitality and Anti-Bribery Policy

Audience:	School staff Central Team Local Governing Bodies Cluster Boards Trustees
Ratified:	REACH2 Risk and Audit Committee 4 July 2022
Other related policies:	Financial Scheme of Delegation Speak Up and Whistleblowing Policy Staff Expenses Policy Non-staff Expenses Policy
Policy owner:	Chris Perry, Head of Finance
Review frequency:	Every 3 years



At REAch2, our actions and our intentions as school leaders are guided by our Touchstones.

- Integrity** We recognise that we lead by example and if we want children to grow up to behave appropriately and with integrity then we must model this behaviour
- Responsibility** We act judiciously with sensitivity and care. We don't make excuses, but mindfully answer for actions and continually seek to make improvements
- Inclusion** We acknowledge and celebrate that all people are different and can play a role in the REAch2 family whatever their background or learning style
- Enjoyment** Providing learning that is relevant, motivating and engaging releases a child's curiosity and fun, so that a task can be tackled and their goals achieved
- Inspiration** Inspiration breathes life into our schools. Introducing children to influential experiences of people and place, motivates them to live their lives to the full
- Learning** Children and adults will flourish in their learning and through learning discover a future that is worth pursuing
- Leadership** REAch2 aspires for high quality leadership by seeking out talent, developing potential and spotting the possible in people as well as the actual

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Policy Overview

Overarching Principles

REAh2 is committed to the highest ethical standards and acting with integrity in all business activities.

This policy details the school's position on preventing and prohibiting bribery.

Bribery by, or of, employees, agents or consultants, or any person acting on behalf of the school will not be tolerated. The SLT is committed to implementing effective measures to prevent, monitor and eliminate bribery.

Bribery and corruption by individuals are punishable by up to 10 years' imprisonment and the school could face an unlimited fine and serious damage to its reputation; therefore, the school takes its legal responsibilities very seriously.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Establish the responsibilities of the school in observing and upholding our position on bribery and corruption.
- Provide information and guidance to school staff on how to recognise and deal with bribery and corruption concerns.

This policy covers all individuals working for the school at all levels (whether permanent, fixed-term or temporary), and includes governors, volunteers, agents and any other person associated with the school (known throughout the policy as employees).

How This Relates to National Guidance and Statutory Requirements

In accordance with the Academies Financial Handbook, the academy trust should have a policy and register on the acceptance of gifts, hospitality, awards, prizes or other benefits that might compromise their judgment or integrity, and should ensure all staff are aware of it.

Policy in Detail

The Bribery Act 2010

The Bribery Act 2010 came into force on 1 July 2011. It covers bribery and corruption in business activities in the UK and overseas. Under the Bribery Act 2010, a bribe is a financial or other type of advantage offered with the intention of inducing or rewarding improper performance of a function or activity, or knowledge or belief that accepting such a reward would constitute the improper performance of such a function or activity.

A criminal offence will be committed under the Act if:

- An employee or associated person acting for, or on behalf of, the school offers, promises, gives, requests, receives or agrees to receive bribes.
- An employee or associated person acting for, or on behalf of the school, offers, promises or gives a bribe to a public official with the intention of influencing that official in the performance of their duties.
- And, in either case, the school does not have the defence that it has adequate procedures in place to prevent bribery.

Unacceptable practice

It is not acceptable for employees to:

- Give, promise or offer a payment, gift or hospitality, with the expectation or hope that an advantage for the Trust or the school will be received or to reward an advantage already received.
- Give, promise or offer a payment, gift or hospitality to a government official, agent or representative to facilitate or expedite a routine procedure.
- Accept payment from a third party if they know or suspect that it is offered with an expectation of a business advantage in return.
- Threaten or retaliate against another worker who has refused to commit a bribery offence or who has raised concerns under this policy.
- Engage in any activity that may lead to a breach of this policy.

Acceptable practice

This policy does not prohibit normal and appropriate hospitality (both given or received) if the following requirements are met:

- It is not made with the intention of influencing a third party to obtain or retain business or a business advantage, or to reward the provision or retention of business or a business advantage, or in exchange for favours or benefits.
- It is given in the Trust's or school's name, not in the individual's.
- It complies with local law.
- It does not include cash or a cash equivalent, e.g. vouchers, gift certificates.
- It is appropriate in the circumstances, e.g. the giving of small gifts at Christmas time.
- The type and value of the gift is reasonable given the reason the gift is offered.

- It is given openly, not secretly.
- Gifts should not be offered to, or accepted from, government officials or representatives without the prior approval of the Chief Operating Officer or Head of Finance.

The advice of the Trust is to, in all circumstances, consider whether the gift or hospitality is reasonable and justified and to consider the intention behind the gift.

Charitable donations

Charitable donations are considered to be part of the school's wider purpose.

The school may also support fundraising events involving employees. The school only makes charitable donations that are legal and ethical.

No donation must be offered or made in the school's name without the prior approval of the Chief Operating Officer or Head of Finance.

Gifts and hospitality from parents and pupils

It is permissible for staff to accept gifts from parents and pupils, for example, before Christmas and at the end of term.

Gifts of a value of £30 or less can be accepted from parents and pupils without approval from the Headteacher (providing that these gifts do not satisfy the conditions outlined below under the *Staff will not accept* section). These gifts do not need to be recorded in the Gifts and Hospitality Register.

Staff are permitted to accept gifts from groups of pupils or parents up to the value of £30 (providing that these gifts do not satisfy the conditions outlined below under the *Staff will not accept* section). These gifts do not need to be recorded in the Gifts and Hospitality Register.

Staff will not accept:

- Cash or monetary gifts, including tokens and store gift receipts.
- Gifts or hospitality offered to their spouse, partner, family member or friend.
- Gifts or hospitality from a potential supplier or tenderer.
- Lavish or extravagant gifts or hospitality.

Staff will consider the following before accepting gifts or hospitality:

- Whether there is any benefit to the school in them accepting the scale, amount, frequency and source of the offer.
- The timing of the offer in relation to forthcoming decisions.
- Whether accepting the offer could be misinterpreted as a sign of their, or the school's, support or favour.

Where staff believe the offer satisfies one of the conditions under the *Staff will not accept* section above or is above the values outlined above, staff will seek prior approval from the Headteacher before accepting the offer.

In accordance with above, details of the offer will be recorded as outlined in the *Record Keeping* section of this policy.

Staff will not accept any gifts that they believe to be excessive or more than simply a token gift of gratitude at an acceptable time of year, such as Christmas or end of term/year.

If a gift is received without warning, staff will politely decline the gift. Or, if they feel it would be inappropriate to do this, they will refer the matter to the Headteacher as soon as possible to allow the Headteacher to decide the course of action.

In accordance the section *if a gift is received without warning*, the Headteacher may decide to return the gift, ask the chair of governors for their view, or donate the gift to a charity/other local cause.

If staff are unsure whether to accept a gift in any situation, they will speak to the Headteacher.

Parents and pupils will be informed of the school's policy regarding gifts and hospitality and will be encouraged to speak to the Headteacher if they want to give a staff member a gift which is of high value or may satisfy any of the conditions outlined within this policy.

Gifts to staff from the school or Trust

The purchasing of excessive or alcoholic gifts is regarded as irregular expenditure and is strictly forbidden.

The school or Trust may, at the Headteacher's or an Executive Officers discretion, provide staff with token gifts to reward efforts beyond their duties such as significant contributions towards extra-curricular activities. These gifts will be non-monetary, non-alcoholic and cost less than £20. Reasons for such gifts must be formally recorded and it should be clear that the gift is a reward for efforts that go above and beyond their normal, contractual obligations.

In such circumstances the school or Trust should take care to ensure that it recognises all staff who may have performed above expectations to ensure fairness, and not reward only those in high profile or favoured roles.

The provision of gifts to staff for 'life events' or personal circumstances, which are therefore not linked to performance cannot be purchased with public money. It would be acceptable and appropriate for a collection amongst staff in order to purchase a gift in such circumstances.

Paying for Staff Meals

The provision of free meals for staff whilst conducting their normal duties is forbidden.

Staff who are traveling as a part of their role may claim meals, subject to the rules and limits set out in the Trusts Expenses Policies. A member of staff attending a different school does not automatically become entitled to a free meal.

Staff normally working in a specific school cannot have a free school meal, except if they are supervising the children over lunchtime – per the 'Burgundy book' guidelines. This is limited to Teaching staff, and must be made available fairly to all teachers, with only the necessary number of meals being provided. Please note that it is not encouraged or healthy for teaching staff to not take a break at lunchtime, and so this such only be in exceptional circumstances.

Staff have an obligation to avoid unnecessary costs, and therefore meetings should not be arranged solely to facilitate the provision of meals or refreshments to those attending.

If meals or refreshments are provided at staff meetings, whether in school or the Trust, it should be provably necessary, unavoidable and the majority of employees attending should not be at their normal place of work and/or significantly outside their normal working hours.

Any deviation from these rules is likely to have tax implications for the Trust, the school and the individual. In such circumstances, the Trust or school cannot mitigate the individuals tax losses, as the provision of meals is a taxable benefit in kind.

Reporting suspected bribery

Employees are encouraged to raise concerns about any suspicion of bribery or corruption at the earliest possible opportunity to the Headteacher. Issues that should be reported include:

- Any suspected or actual attempts at bribery.
- Any concerns that an employee may be in receipt of bribes.
- Any concerns that an employee may be offering or delivering bribes.

All concerns should be reported following the procedure set out in the school's Whistleblowing Policy.

All reports of bribery will be investigated thoroughly and in a timely manner by the appropriate member of the Trust's or school's leadership team and in the strictest confidence.

Employees who raise concerns in good faith will be supported by the Trust and school and the school will ensure that they are not subjected to any detrimental treatment as a consequence of their report. Any instances of detrimental treatment against an employee for reporting a suspicion will be treated as a disciplinary offence.

Following investigation

The school will invoke disciplinary procedures where any employee is found guilty of bribery and this may result in a finding of gross misconduct and immediate dismissal. The school may terminate the contracts of any associated persons, including consultants or other workers acting for, or on behalf of the school, who are found to have breached this policy.

Record keeping

All schools keep financial records and have appropriate internal controls to provide evidence for the business reasons for making payments to third parties. Employees will make the Headteacher or Head of Finance aware of all hospitality or gifts received or offered over the value of £30; these will be subject to managerial review. A declaration form is in appendix A of this policy.

The Gifts and Hospitality Register is used to record gifts or hospitality that needs to be recorded. Each school, and the Trust will hold their own register. The following information will be recorded:

- The nature of the gift/hospitality
- The date the gift/hospitality was offered
- Who the gift/hospitality was offered by
- Name of staff member the gift/hospitality was offered to
- Value of the gift/hospitality
- Action taken – for example, whether the offer was refused or accepted

Employees' expenses claims relating to hospitality, gifts or expenses incurred to third parties are submitted in accordance with the school's Staff Expenses Policy.

All invoices, accounts and related documents should be prepared and maintained with the highest accuracy and completeness.

No accounts may be kept "off-book".

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by the REAch2 Risk & Audit Committee every 3 years or sooner if required. The limits will be reviewed annually

Appendix 1 – Declaration of Hospitality and Gifts Form

Receiving benefits, gifts, rewards or hospitality in return for providing services (even if these services are part of a usual role) can be perceived as an inducement to show favour to a person or organisation in his or her official capacity. Staff and Governors are advised to decline such offers, but it is acknowledged that there may be occasions when this is not feasible. All staff and Governors should conduct themselves with integrity, impartiality and honesty at all times and should maintain high standards of propriety and professionalism.

If you have received a gift or hospitality, please complete this form and return to **xxxxxx**

Details of the person receiving the Gift or Hospitality

Full Name	
Job Title	
Date of declaration	
Signature	

Description of Gift or Hospitality

Description of gift / hospitality	
Estimated / actual value	
Purpose of the offer	
Person/ Organisation providing the gift or hospitality	
Relationship (or future relationship) to the person / organisation offering the gift or hospitality	
Gift / hospitality accepted	Yes/ No
Any other comments	

Approved by

Full Name	
Job Title	
Date of Declaration	
Signature	

Entered on register	Yes/ No	Register entry no.	
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