



Gifts & Hospitality Policy

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This policy also applies to related parties i.e close family members of staff, members, trustees and governors. For the purposes of this policy, any reference to “employee” includes Members, Trustees, Governors and Staff.

Introduction

The Learning for Life Trust is committed to the highest level of integrity, honesty and accountability in all its business dealings. All employees are expected to maintain high standards of propriety and professionalism in all their dealings, ensuring they are free from any conflict of interest through their business in the name of Learning for Life Trust or any of the academies within the Trust.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Learning for Life Trust Finance Policy & Procedures Manual and Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy. The principle of integrity requires that employees should not place themselves under an obligation that might influence, or be perceived to influence, the conduct of their duties. This means that the receipt of hospitality and gifts must be transparent, subject to clear restrictions and that any that are accepted must be declared and recorded. In order to protect all individuals associated with the Trust, and the reputation of the Trust and its academies, from accusations of bribery or corruption, employees must take extreme care that none of their dealings, directly or indirectly, could be deemed as a reward or benefit, in line with the Bribery Act 2010.

This Act makes it a criminal offence to:

- offer, promise or give a bribe
- request, agree to or accept a bribe (by an organisation)
- fail to prevent bribery by those acting on its behalf (associated persons)
- to obtain or retain business or a business advantage for the organisation.

Under this Act, a bribe is ‘a financial or other advantage’ offered, promised or given to induce a person to perform a relevant function or activity improperly, or reward them for doing so. The Trust and each Academy will hold a Gifts and Hospitality Register. All gifts/hospitality over the value of £30 must be recorded in the Gifts and Hospitality Register.

Policy 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
- Employees 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.

Legislation

This policy is based on the Academy Trust 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 employees and/or any other representative of the trust. This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association

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.

Roles & Responsibilities

Members, Trustees, Governors and Staff (and their related parties):

- 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 school days, even if declined.
- Must consult the Chief Financial Officer or Accounting Officer before accepting or offering any gifts or hospitality with a value of over £30. *or Chair of Trustees in the case of it being the Accounting Officer

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.

The Executive Team:

The Executive Team is responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of and understand this policy, and that it is being implemented consistently. The Executive 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 Trust and to those outside the organisation. They will also ensure 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 Chief Financial Officer:

The CFO will ensure that:

- The Trust and each academy 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 Executive Team are provided with information on gifts and hospitality offered or received and given, as appropriate. They will also ensure 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.

Parents:

It is common for appreciative parents and pupils to register their thanks for the work of staff in the form of a small personal gift. If these are valued at less than £30 these are perfectly acceptable without reference to senior members of staff. Group gifts worth more than £30 are acceptable provided that individual contributions do not exceed £30 and the total value of the gift does not exceed £200. Staff members should not encourage gift making and seek advice from senior colleagues.

Other:

Where a more valuable gift, benefit or service is offered which is to the good of the Academy, rather than an individual, it must be referred to the CFO, for approval within their discretion; if acceptable, then these terms must be recorded in the register.

Acceptable Gifts & Hospitality

Employees 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 or free promotional pens, calendars, diaries and similar items, may be accepted. If in any doubt, employees must consult the CFO. 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.

Other hospitality may be accepted for instance where:

- There is a genuine need to impart information or represent The Learning for Life Trust (or any of its academies) in the community.
- An event is clearly part of the life of the community or where Learning for Life Trust academies should be seen to be represented.
- The hospitality concerns attendance at a relevant conference or course where it is clear the hospitality is corporate rather than personal. If in doubt, guidance must be sought from the CFO.

Any gifts or hospitality offered with a value of over £30 must be recorded on the gifts and hospitality register (appendix 1) within 7 school days, even if declined. Any employee who is offered such gifts or hospitality must consult the CFO before accepting.

If a member of the Executive Team 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 disciplinary matter.

Sponsorship

Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor the activity of the Learning for Life Trust (or academy within), whether by invitation, tender or negotiation, or voluntarily, the basic conventions concerning the award of contracts, and acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply.

Offers of gifts and hospitality provided by the Trust, such as a working lunch for visitors, must not be extravagant. For working visitors, a maximum of £20 per head applies. At the discretion of the Executive Team for other visitors/hospitality events, a maximum value of £50 per head should be used as a guideline.

Alcohol must not be purchased out of the Trust/Academy funds.

Expense claims should be made to the relevant finance office and receipts must always be enclosed. The CFO must be consulted about any proposal to provide gifts or hospitality of any value. If the Executive Team should propose to or provide gifts or hospitality over the value of £50, they should consult with and/or inform the Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee.

Unacceptable Gifts & Hospitality

The following must never be offered or accepted:

- Monetary gifts
- Gifts or hospitality offered to family members, partners or close friends of employees
- 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.

Declining Gifts & Hospitality

Any employee who is offered any of the unacceptable gifts or hospitality outlined in the section 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 CFO. They 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 or refer the matter that 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 disciplinary matter.

Making Gifts & Hospitality

When making gifts, the Trust must ensure the value is reasonable, is within the scheme of delegation, the decision is documented and achieves propriety and regularity in the use of public funds.

Any gifts of hospitality proposed by the Trust must be approved by the Accounting Officer and Chair of Trustees and be reported to the next board meeting. They must ensure that the gift is justified within the objects of the Trust and is in full compliance with the Academy Trust Handbook. All gifts must be recorded in the register of gifts made by the Trust (Appendix 2).

Monitoring Arrangements

The gifts and hospitality register is monitored regularly by the CFO and reported to the Risk and Audit Committee.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 Years by the CFO and approved by the Audit and Risk Committee.

Appendix 1 – Register of any gifts & hospitality received

Date	Name	Description	Offered by	Accepted/Rejected	Approved By

