



Gifts and Hospitality Policy

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This document applies to all academies and operations of the Vale Academy Trust: www.vale-academy.org

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Gifts and Hospitality Policy

Introduction

- As a general guideline, gifts, hospitality or other personal benefits (hereinafter referred to as “Gifts”) should not be accepted or offered by any member of staff or Governor, except as provided for below.
- The intention of the Policy is to ensure that the Academy Trust can demonstrate that no undue or improper influence has been applied, or could be perceived to have been applied, by any supplier or anyone else dealing with the Academy Trust. The Academy Trust must be able to show that all decisions, whether educational, financial or otherwise are reached on the basis of the proper application of laid-down procedures and for no other reason.
- Any breach of this Policy could lead to disciplinary action and may constitute gross misconduct.

The Receipt of Gifts

- The Academy encourages and expects staff and governors to use their networks and contacts for its benefit. It is however a fundamental requirement on all staff and governors, the contravention of which would be considered to be gross misconduct, that they must not derive any financial benefit beyond their agreed salary from the decisions they make or contribute to, which involve the education of students, or the spending of the significant sums of public money that are entrusted to the Trust. Therefore staff and governors shall not use their authority or office for personal gain beyond their agreed salary and shall seek to uphold and enhance the standing of the Academy Trust by:
 1. maintaining an unimpeachable standard of honesty and integrity in all their business and other relationships complying with the letter and spirit of the law in contractual obligations.
 2. rejecting any business practice that might be deemed improper at all times in their business and other relationships.
 3. act to maintain the interests and good reputation of the Academy.
- Any employee who becomes aware of a breach of Policy must refer to the Academy’s Whistle Blowing Policy and report the alleged breach immediately to his or her line manager who will instigate investigations as necessary.
- Any personal interest that may impinge, or might reasonably be deemed by others to impinge, on an employee's or governor's impartiality, or conflict with the duty owed to the Academy in any matter relevant to an employee's or governor's duties (such as conflicting business interests) shall be declared in writing (please read the Academy Trusts Conflict of Interest Policy 2014). Any member of staff or Governor who is aware of any business dealings

conferring personal gain, or involving their relatives or associates must make an appropriate entry in the Register of Business Interests.

- Staff and governors are permitted to accept gifts, rewards or benefits from students, students' families, members of the public, or organisations which the Academy has official contacts with, only where they are isolated gifts of a trivial character, or inexpensive seasonal gifts (such as chocolates, flowers, diaries or calendars). 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.
- Where purchased items include a "free gift", such a gift should be either used for Academy business or handed to the Academy to be used at charity raffles, pupil prizes, etc.
- In relation to conventional hospitality (lunches, outings, tickets for events, etc.), it may be accepted provided that it is normal and reasonable in the circumstances. However, invitations for the following should not be accepted:
 1. where there is no reasonable business justification for doing so
 2. where an invitation is disproportionately generous
 3. where the invitation could be seen as an inducement to affect a business or other decision.
- Any hospitality, other than of a nominal value (estimate of £50.00) or facilities provided during the normal course of business, should be reported to the Headteacher or the Chair of the LGB or Executive Headteacher (accounting officer for the Trust) as appropriate.

The Providing of Gifts

- The Academy encourages and seeks cooperative relationships between staff, governors, stakeholders and external organisations. Accordingly there can be occasions where it is appropriate for the academy to provide and fund limited gifts, in particular hospitality, which will principally be dealt with in-house. Likewise it may be appropriate for leaving gifts to be provided to staff leaving the employment of the academy, particularly after a long period of service. Such gifts are often supplemented with private contributions from continuing members of staff.