

Gifts and Hospitality policy

Signhills Academy

Approved by:	Governing Body	Date: November 2025
Last reviewed on:	N/A	
Next review due by:	November 2026	

Context

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, governors, staff and/or any other representative of the trust.

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Aims / Objectives

This policy aims to ensure that:

- The Academy's funds are used only in accordance with the law, its articles of association, its funding agreement and the latest Academies Financial Handbook
- The Academy and those associated with it operate in a way that commands broad public support
- The Academy has due regard to propriety and regularity, and ensures value for money, in the use of public funds
- Governors fulfil their fiduciary duties and wider responsibilities as charitable trustees and company directors
- Members, governors 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

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 or other academic institutions.

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 or other academic institutions.

Procedures

Members, governors 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 Academy 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 Academy 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 Chair of Governors or Headteacher before accepting or offering any gifts or hospitality with a value of over £25.

Academy governors will ensure that the funds are used in a way that commands broad public support, pays due regard to propriety and regularity, and provides value for money. The Chair of Governors will also ensure, alongside the headteacher, that decisions on whether individuals or the Academy can accept or offer gifts or hospitality with a value of over £25 are in line with this policy.

The Headteacher:

- is responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of and understand this policy, and that it is being implemented consistently.
- 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 to those outside the organisation.
- will also ensure, alongside the Chair of Governors, that decisions on whether individuals or the Academy can accept or offer gifts or hospitality with a value of over £25 are in line with this policy.

The Business Manager will ensure that:

- The Academy maintains a gifts and hospitality register
- Figures for transactions relating to gifts made by the Academy are disclosed in the audited accounts, in accordance with the Academies Financial Handbook
- The Governing Body and Headteacher are provided with information on gifts and hospitality received and given, as appropriate

Offers of gifts and hospitality received

Members, governors 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.

Generally, gifts of nominal value, such as small tokens of appreciation, may be accepted. If in any doubt, members, governors and staff must consult the Chair of Governors or 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 Chair of Governors or Headteacher.

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, governor or member of staff who is offered such gifts or hospitality must consult the Chair of Governors or Headteacher before accepting.

If the Headteacher is the recipient, or intended recipient, of any offer of gifts or hospitality over £25, they must inform the Chair of Governors 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.

Offers of gifts and hospitality given

Any gifts or hospitality provided by the Academy, such as a working lunch for visitors or a token of appreciation for volunteering, must not be extravagant. A maximum value of £25 should be used as a guideline.

Alcohol must not be purchased out of the school budget.

Expense claims should be made to the Business Manager and receipts must always be enclosed.

The Chair of Governors or Headteacher must be consulted about any proposal to provide gifts or hospitality with a value of over £25.

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, governors 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

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Declining gifts and hospitality

Any members, governors 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 Chair of Governors. The Headteacher or Chair of Governors 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 may 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.

Review

Policy review will be lead by: S Carr

