



# Gifts and Hospitality Policy

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Avonreach Academy Trust

This document sets out the regulations for the MAT and member academies.

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# 1. Introduction

1.1 Avonreach Academy Trust is committed to the values of probity and accountability. All members, trustees, staff and local governors should conduct themselves with integrity, impartiality and honesty at all times. Staff should maintain high standards of propriety and professionalism.

1.2 All members, trustees, staff and local governors must act in accordance with the Nolan Principles of Public Life:

**Selflessness** - holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

**Integrity** - holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

**Objectivity** - holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

**Accountability** - holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

**Openness** - holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

**Honesty** - holders of public office should be truthful.

**Leadership** - holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

1.3 The guiding principles are:

- The conduct of individuals should not create suspicion of any conflict between their official duty and their private interest.
- The action of individuals acting in an official capacity should not give the impression to any member of the public, to any organisation with whom they deal or to their colleagues that they have been (or may have been) influenced by a benefit to show favour or disfavour to any person or organisation.

1.4 All members, trustees, staff, and local governors must have regard for the [Bribery Act 2010](#) in relation to the acceptance of any offers of gifts or hospitality.

## 2. Purpose and Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all members, trustees, local governors and members of staff. For the purposes of this document, 'staff' applies to all staff, at school and trust level, members, trustees and local governors. Procedures apply to gifts from students and their families as well as from suppliers of goods and services.
- 2.2 Hospitality received from or the giving of hospitality to a third party is generally not acceptable. The exception to this general principle is where there is a genuine need for the development of legitimate and ethically sound business relationships and the hospitality offered will genuinely assist the development of this.
- 2.3 Even then only modest hospitality is acceptable, and the following procedures must be complied with at all times. **Any gift or hospitality over the value of £25 for any individual gift must be declared.**
- 2.4 **Gifts offered by collective group, e.g. parents, must be declared if the value exceeds £25 and the declaration should include the details of the individual contributors.**
- 2.5 **Individual gifts with a value in excess of £100 for a collective gift must be declined.**

## 3. Definitions

- 3.1 For the purpose of this policy:
- "hospitality" means any form of gift, entertainment, personal reward or favour or anything of value;
  - "modest" means low cost and moderate frequency and level;
  - "trivial" means a very small low value item such as a calendar, pen, a small box of chocolates or a very small promotional item.

## 4. Hospitality

- 4.1 Hospitality can take a variety of forms, some of which staff may accept, some of which should be declined.
- 4.2 Staff may be offered hospitality as a normal business practice in a way that is directly linked to their role. Examples of this kind of hospitality include the offer of refreshments at business meetings or the offer of lunch or dinner at the end of an official engagement. This kind of conventional hospitality may be accepted and does not need to be declared.
- 4.3 Staff may also be offered other forms of hospitality which are not related to their role and are not linked to trust or academy business. This might include substantial offers of social functions, travel or accommodation, offers of tickets and invitations to sporting, cultural or social events. **These forms of hospitality must be declined.**
- 4.4 If any member of staff is in doubt about whether it is appropriate to accept any offer of hospitality, they should seek advice from the Chief Financial and Operations Officer (CFOO).

4.5 Staff must never canvas or seek gifts or hospitality.

## 5. Gifts

5.1 Staff should not accept gifts or rewards from any organisation or individual with whom they have contact in the course of their work as an inducement either for doing something or not doing something in their official capacity. Particular care should be taken about any gift from a person or organisation which has, or is hoping to have, a contract with the trust or the school. Gifts of a trivial or inexpensive nature may be accepted (e.g. diaries, calendars), but more substantial or expensive offerings must be declined.

5.2 Gifts are deemed to include:

- Goods provided for personal or other private use
- Personal services
- Loans of equipment, vehicles etc. for personal use
- The provision of goods / services at preferential cost for personal or other private use

5.3 If unsolicited gifts of a substantial nature arrive from contractors, they should be returned with a polite explanation that the trust's policies do not permit their acceptance.

5.4 Modest gifts to staff from parents of pupils can be accepted provided it is given in good faith and is not seen as an attempt to gain advantage. Substantial or expensive gifts should be politely declined advising that the trust's policies do not allow their acceptance. **Staff may accept gift vouchers from parents; however, in line with this policy, anything over the value of £25 must be declared and individual or collective gifts with a value in excess of £100 must be declined.**

5.5 Alcohol or cash gifts must always be declined.

## 6. Gifts and Hospitality Offered by Avonreach Academy Trust

6.1 Staff must be mindful that the value of all gifts and hospitality offered by the trust are sourced from public funding, and the expectation is that such funding will be used for legitimate purposes and demonstrate value for money.

6.2 To achieve propriety in the use of public funds, gifts for members of staff who are leaving or have a personal celebration should only be bought with voluntary contributions from colleagues.

6.3 In exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate for the trust to provide a gift with a value of up to £50 for an individual gift in a 12-month period. For example:

- providing a bouquet of flowers to a seriously ill employee, or to a longstanding employee who is retiring;
- giving a box of chocolates to someone who has provided services free of charge.

It may be appropriate to consider a charitable donation through voluntary contributions instead.

- 6.4 Under no circumstances must alcohol be offered as a gift
- 6.5 Under no circumstances must cash be offered as a gift
- 6.6 It is acceptable for Avonreach Academy Trust to provide modest hospitality in the way of working lunches and/or dinners to existing and potential contractors and stakeholders subject to a genuine business reason.

## 7. Registration of Gifts and Hospitality

- 7.1 Members, trustees and local governors must record an offer of or the acceptance of any gifts by making a declaration to the Governance Professional. The Governance Professional will maintain a consolidated register of gifts and hospitality for the trust.
- 7.2 It will be the responsibility of individuals to complete the declaration form for all gifts and hospitality offered/received in line with this policy.
- 7.3 Staff must discuss the offer of or the acceptance of any gifts or hospitality with the Headteacher. The Headteacher will confirm whether or not the offer of a gift or hospitality can be accepted and indicate their decision on the declaration form.
- 7.4 Staff should make a declaration as soon as possible after the offer or receipt of gifts or hospitality. Declarations must be completed using the [Gifts and Hospitality Declaration Microsoft Form](#), the links can also be found on the intranet.
- 7.5 It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that all gifts and hospitality are recorded and submitted in line with this policy.
- 7.6 Staff should consult the CFOO for any guidance as required. In general terms, if you have any doubt about whether an item should or should not be declared, you are advised to declare it.

## 8. Policy Breach

- 8.1 Staff who fail to declare the acceptance/provision/decline of hospitality and gifts in accordance with this policy may be subject to disciplinary action under the trust's disciplinary policy.