

Aylesford School

and Sixth Form College



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GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY GUIDANCE

Updated: January 2018
Review Date: January 2021
Lead: Headteacher
Via: Standards, Personnel and Curriculum

'from potential to reality'

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Gifts and Hospitality Guidance

This policy is recommended in its current form for adoption to protect the interest of all those who are employed by or who are involved in the governance of the school. As an academy, the governors have assessed this document as relevant to the needs of its employees and all those connected with its governance.

GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY GUIDANCE

Why do we have guidance on gifts and hospitality?

Your conduct as an employee should never lead anyone to question your interests or lead anyone to think that you have been influenced by gifts and hospitality. This is important because your own personal reputation and that of the academy should be seriously affected if you inappropriately accept a gift or hospitality. It is also a criminal offence to demand or accept a gift or reward in return for allowing yourself to be influenced as a local government employee. This is why the academy offers this guidance which applies to all staff.

What is a gift?

A gift is any item or service that you receive free of charge. It also includes any goods or services which you personally are offered at a discounted rate or on terms not available to the general public. It does not include staff offers/discounts which are negotiated corporately. Common gifts included pens, diaries, calendars, mouse mats, books, flowers, bottles of wine, chocolates and other business stationery and promotional items.

What is hospitality?

Hospitality is the offer of food, drink, accommodation or entertainment or the opportunity to attend any cultural or sporting event on terms not available to the general public. Common hospitality includes meals, refreshments, tickets for cultural or sporting events.

What gifts or hospitality can be accepted without approval?

You can accept gifts and hospitality which are small gestures and have only a nominal value without the approval of your Headteacher. Gifts and hospitality of this nature do not need to be recorded and would not be expected to exceed £40.00.

Gifts which can be accepted included – calendars, diaries, mugs, mouse mats, bottle of wine or perfume, small gifts given at the end of the academic year, a courtesy visit e.g. to an educational centre, gifts/token presented to you by foreign visitors where refusal would be regarded as inappropriate.

Hospitality which can be accepted includes – invitations to events or functions where you are representing the academy (e.g. opening ceremonies, trade shows, events where you are invited to speak, events hosted or sponsored by the academy), working lunches provided to enable the parties to continue to discuss business, refreshments offered in connection with any meeting you are attending on behalf of the academy, meals or refreshments funded by other public sector partners as part of joint working/collaboration, meals or refreshments provided as part of a ceremony or event to promote or launch a project or initiative supported by the academy.

What things should I think about before I decided what to do?

You should treat with caution any offer of a gift or hospitality made to you personally. In particular, think about whether there is a benefit to the academy in you accepting the scale, amount, frequency and source of the offer, the timing of the offer in relation to forthcoming academy decisions and whether accepting could be misinterpreted as a sign of your or the academy's support or favour.

If you have any concerns or doubts about the public perception that might be attached to accepting any gift or hospitality, then you must refer it to the Headteacher.

In the case of the Headteacher, approval must be obtained from the Chair of Governors, who will decide.

What gifts or hospitality should never be accepted?

You must never accept:-

- cash or monetary gifts
- gifts or hospitality offered to your husband, wife, partner, family member or friend
- gifts or hospitality from a tenderer in the immediate period before tenders are invited or during the tender process. If you are carrying out day long site visits as part of the tender process, you can accept the offer of lunch provided it is proportionate and not extravagant
- lavish or extravagant gifts or hospitality unconnected to your work such as holidays, overnight stays, air or rail travel, use of a company's own holiday accommodation, after dinners speaker celebrity events, expensive meals where work is not discussed, sporting or cultural events (e.g. theatre tickets, football match, golfing event). This applies even if done in your own time so if in doubt discuss any potential implication with the Headteacher

What should I do if I receive a gift without warning at an event?

If you estimate that the gift is more than just a token you should politely and courteously decline the gift. If you feel that it would not be appropriate to do this, you should refer the matter to your Headteacher as soon as possible and let him/her decide what should be done with the gift. Your Headteacher may decide to return the gift, may ask the Chair of Governors for a view or may donate the gift to a worthy local cause.

What should I do if I get offered a gift or hospitality?

You must make sure that all offers you receive which are more than just a token are recorded.

How are offers of gifts or hospitality recorded?

- A register of gifts and hospitalities is kept with the Headteacher's PA, Miss Anna Timson. Please ask to update the register when necessary.

In this way, all offers of gifts and hospitality that are more than just a token (whether accepted or not) are recorded. This document then becomes the gifts and hospitality register.

Do I need to record offers that I decline?

Yes – all offers of gifts or hospitality which are more than just the stated value must be recorded, even if you don't accept.

What should I do if I am in doubt?

If in doubt, always speak to your Headteacher. It is your responsibility to follow the academy's guidance on gifts and hospitality and for justifying why you chose to accept a gift or hospitality offered to you.

What would happen to me if I didn't follow the guidance?

The academy could take disciplinary action against you if you failed to follow the guidance. It is also a criminal offence to demand or accept a gift or reward in return for allowing yourself to be influenced in carrying out your duties at work. This means you could be prosecuted by the Police.

THE DOs AND DON'Ts

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Read and follow the guidance on gifts and hospitality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Accept any gifts or hospitality which are more than just a token without the approval of your Headteacher
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Seek advice from your Headteacher if you are in doubt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Accept gifts or hospitality in the immediate period before tenders are invited or during the tender process. Lunches during day long site visits are only acceptable if they are proportionate and are not extravagant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Record all offers of gifts and hospitality which are more than just a token, whether accepted or not 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Accept cash or monetary gifts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Treat with caution any gifts or hospitality offered to you and think very carefully before accepting anything 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Accept gifts or hospitality connected to your work, even if the hospitality is taken in your own time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consider whether the offer is proportionate in deciding whether or not to accept hospitality from an outside body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Accept a gift or hospitality which you or a member of the public would think is lavish, extravagant or excessive, even if the hospitality is taken in your own time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Err on the side of caution when deciding whether to accept a gift or hospitality. If the thought of the acceptance makes you uncomfortable, do not accept 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Accept gifts or hospitality offered to your husband, wife, partner, family member or friend
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consider paying for yourself if offered any hospitality by a supplier or third party 	

RECORD OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY (*accepted/*refused)

*Delete as appropriate

This form must be completed by any employee of Aylesford School and Sixth Form College receiving or declining a gift or hospitality which is more than a token up to the value of £40 provided by a company or organisation, the employee conducts or is likely to conduct business with. The Headteacher must authorise or reject staff accepting or refusing the gift or hospitality in accordance with the guidance.

Name

Company or organisation offering gift or hospitality

Date, time and venue

Gift/Hospitality

Accepted/Declined

Nature and approximate cost of gift/hospitality

If accepted, has the gift been retained for personal use or for business use?

If accepted, reason for accepting gift/hospitality

Signed: Date:

Approved by:
(Headteacher/Chair of Governors)

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO:
THE HEADTEACHER'S PA, MISS A TIMSON