

Gifts and Hospitality Policy

Responsibility for Review: Accounting Officer
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Gifts and Hospitality policy: document provenance

Approver	School and college trust leaders
Date of approval	5 March 2025
Policy owner	Accounting officer
Policy authors	Head of governance, head of finance and senior financial controller
Date of next review	January 2028
Summary of changes in this review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All references to the word 'governors' have changed to ambassadors• All references to the chair of governors have been removed• The process of claiming expenses has been updated in line with current practice• Additional paragraph on gifts from students and parents• Additional paragraph on providing gifts
Related policies and documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gifts and hospitality register

Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, the policy will be reviewed as by the review cycle. Should no substantive change be required at this point, the policy will move to the next review cycle.



Contents

Section		Page
1.0	Policy statement	4
2.0	Scope and purpose	4
3.0	Receiving gifts	4
4.0	Gifts from students and parents	4
5.0	Providing gifts	4
6.0	Hospitality	4
7.0	Acceptable hospitality	5
8.0	Sponsorship	5
9.0	Gifts and hospitality register	5
10.0	Expense claims	5
11.0	Policy review	5

1.0 Policy statement

- 1.1 Dixons Academies Trust (the trust) aims to provide the highest standard of service to all of its students and parents and to care for the wellbeing of its employees. In return, students, parents and the public are entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all of our trust's trustees, members, ambassadors and employees with reference to propriety and regularity in the use of public funds.

2.0 Scope and purpose

- 2.1 This policy aims to lay down guidelines which will enable staff to meet the aims and core values of the academy and to protect from misunderstanding and criticism. Inevitably some issues will affect trustees, ambassadors and senior post holders more than others and some breaches of the policy may be regarded more seriously for those in such positions.
- 2.2 The principle of integrity requires that trustees, ambassadors and staff 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 may be subject to clear restrictions.

3.0 Receiving gifts

- You must not accept any cash gift, or personal gift with a significant monetary value, under any circumstances. Items of nominal value (£25.00 or below) such as a box of chocolates, free promotional pens, calendars and similar items, may be accepted.
- Personal gifts may not be solicited under any circumstances. Examples of gifts that should be refused are gifts of free membership or subscriptions, free goods or services that are normally provided at cost, large gifts from parents.
- When you have to decline a gift, you should be courteous but firm, and draw attention of the person making the offer to the existence of this policy.
- All gift offers beyond those outlined in item 3.0 must be recorded in the gifts register.
- 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.
- Academies may, at the principal's discretion, use funds responsibly for the purpose of staff wellbeing and recognition, eg thank you cards for recognition or flowers to recognise a bereavement. The value should be reasonable and not exceed £25.00. It may be appropriate to consider a charitable donation through voluntary contributions instead. Alcohol must never be purchased under any circumstances.

4.0 Gifts from students and parents

- 4.1 Gifts of a low value presented from students and parents can be accepted providing it is given in good faith and is not seen to be an attempt to gain advantage.

5.0 Providing gifts

- 5.1 Our trust and its schools will not normally give gifts to other individuals or organisations. If gifts are given, they must be recorded on the gifts and hospitality register and must have regard for the appropriate and regulatory of the use of public funds.

This does not apply to:

- Gifts and prizes related to student achievement
- Recognition awards for staff

Where gifts are given, they should be appropriate, not contain alcohol and not call into question the ethical standards of our trust. Gifts must be recorded in the gifts and hospitality register.

6.0 Hospitality

- 6.1 You should never accept lavish hospitality that could be interpreted as a way of exerting an improper influence over the way you carry out your duties. Nor should you offer such hospitality to others on behalf of the academy / trust. The timing of hospitality in relation to procurement or purchasing decisions that the academy may be taking is especially sensitive. Above all, you must never solicit hospitality. As a general rule, you should not accept hospitality that the academy would not reciprocate in similar circumstances.



6.2 When you have to decline hospitality, you should be courteous but firm, and draw attention of the person making the offer to the existence of this policy. If necessary, you should pay your share of any costs, and claim these in the ordinary way.

7.0 Acceptable hospitality

7.1 You may accept modest working meals and light refreshments without making any declaration.

Other hospitality may be accepted, for instance where:

- There is a genuine need to impart information or represent the academy in the community
- An event is clearly part of the life of the community or where the academy 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

7.2 Before accepting any hospitality, approval should be sought from the chair in respect of trustees or the principal in respect of employees. In exceptional circumstances retrospective approval may be obtained. All hospitality received must be recorded in the corporate hospitality register with the exception of working meals, receptions for visiting staff or business colleagues etc.

7.3 It may be appropriate for our trust or academy to provide a celebratory meal or business event in keeping with the ethos of our trust to celebrate achievements and / or hard work. In approving such events, the chief executive will give due consideration to both rules on personal taxation from HMRC and the requirements to properly utilise public funds. For example, staff events should be available to all staff in a location and in aggregate should not breach the HMRC regulations of £150 per person per annum. Event budgets should not exceed £50 per head. These do not need to be added to the register but will be monitored by the finance director / principal to ensure they are at a reasonable level.

7.4 Any hospitality provided should not be extravagant or excessive in nature.

8.0 Sponsorship

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

9.0 Gifts and hospitality register

9.1 The head of governance will maintain a register and it will be the responsibility of individuals to notify the head of governance of all gifts and hospitality given or received in line with this policy. Employees should also register gifts and hospitality offered by declined as a matter of good practice.

10.0 Expense claims

10.1 Claims for reimbursement of expenses should be made on the relevant expense via TopDesk. Receipts must always be enclosed. The principles of this policy apply in the same way.

10.2 Alternatively authorised invoices from the suppliers can be paid in accordance with the normal procedures.

11.0 Policy Review

11.1 This policy is reviewed every three years by school and college trust leaders. If there are any legislation changes, in the meantime, the policy will be reviewed at that time.

