

GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY POLICY

EDITION NO.	REVIEW DATE:	APPROVAL DATE:
		February 2018
V0.1	Dec 2018	Dec 2018
	June 2020	22/06/2020

Policy agreed	February 2018
To be reviewed	Every two years
Owner	Lisa Hughes
Designation	CFO

A. BACKGROUND

1. Gifts, hospitality and other favours offered to individual staff, whether accepted or not, in the course of their work for the Trust are a form of income and should be reported. They may sometimes also be offered to those associated with staff, including family and relations and should also be reported. Records should be kept for audit purposes. They may also be provided to third parties and subject to requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
2. This procedure aims to ensure there is no improper conduct and that gifts and hospitality do not influence decisions, judgements and integrity. The procedure stands alongside the Trust's Financial Regulations, Policy against Bribery and Fraud, Conflicts of Interest Policy and the annual Declaration of Interests, and forms part of the Trust's ethical framework which is underpinned by the Trust's Code of Conduct. Charitable and philanthropic donations received by the Trust are subject to separate procedures.
3. This procedure applies to all Sovereign Trust staff, irrespective of location of employment, and applies to activity anywhere across the Trust.

B. PROCEDURE: ACCEPTING GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

4. It is accepted that, in the course of normal duties, staff will sometimes receive conventional hospitality including working meals and refreshments taken during meetings or training and invitations to formal functions, networking or training events to attend on behalf of the Trust. Offers of hospitality that appear to exceed the norm or convention within the Trust and the education sector should be considered especially carefully before a decision is made to accept them or not. Where in doubt, staff should seek advice from the Company Secretary. They should also consult the Trust's Policy on Fraud and Bribery.
5. Gifts and hospitality are sometimes offered to The Sovereign Trust staff in the course of carrying out their official duties to promote good working relationships but should only be accepted if the staff member to whom the offer is made is satisfied that:
 - The offer has been made for a proper purpose associated with official Trust business;
 - Acceptance is consistent with the ethical framework in which the Trust operates, as detailed in the Code of Conduct;
 - The offer is appropriate and its value is reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances;
 - Acceptance accords with all applicable Trust policies, legislation and guidance applicable to academy trusts;
 - Acceptance does not constitute an actual or perceived conflict of interest;
 - Acceptance does not create a specific or general obligation which the Trust is required to fulfil; and
 - Acceptance does not constitute an actual or perceived inducement in respect of a decision the Trust is due to take.
6. If acceptance creates an actual or perceived conflict of interest in respect of a decision the Trust must make, whether immediately or some time after acceptance, the person should absent themselves from the decision-making process.

7. A non-exhaustive list of parties who may offer gifts and hospitality includes:
 - suppliers or their agents, current or potential, direct and subcontractors;
 - pupils (including current, prospective and former), and their relatives;
 - other academy trusts or third-party organisations;
 - potential or current employees, donors or their relatives.

8. No money or monetary token of any value should be accepted. If you are offered money you should immediately inform your line manager and record the refusal.

9. Acceptance by individuals of gifts or hospitality with a value of between £20 and £50 (whether known or estimated by the recipient) may be recorded by the recipient themselves. Gifts under £20 need not be recorded (see 11 below). Gifts or hospitality with a known or estimated value over £50 should be disclosed (see section C) to the Chief Executive Officer, as well as recorded locally (see Section C).

10. Staff should seek to obtain approval from the Chief Executive Officer in advance of accepting gifts or hospitality over £50. Gifts or hospitality for the Chief Executive Officer shall be approved by the Chair of Finance & Risk Committee. Where it is not possible to do so in advance, retrospective approval shall be sought and reporting and recording proceed according to section C below.

11. Acceptance of gifts or hospitality with a known or estimated value below £20 need not be declared or recorded, unless:
 - i. they amount cumulatively over time to more than £20, in which case they should be approved and recorded as outlined in this procedure; or
 - ii. they occur with a frequency of more than once a year, in which case they should be approved and recorded as outlined in this procedure; or
 - iii. the intended recipient chooses to do so if s/he feels it appropriate and/or s/he is more comfortable doing so than not. Where there are any concerns or reservations, or the gift or hospitality seems unusual, approval should be sought from the Chief Executive Officer.

12. It is expressly prohibited for a member of staff to accept gifts or hospitality from an organisation that they know to be actively involved in a tender process with the Trust, except where hospitality is provided as part of a fact-finding visit or meeting. If an individual accepts hospitality which could be construed as giving them a conflict of interest in respect of procurement or other decision that they make in the course of their work, they should declare it and exclude themselves from the decision-making process.

C. REPORTING AND RECORD-KEEPING

13. Registers of gifts and hospitality offered (whether accepted or not) shall be kept locally (but see paragraph 14 below for special registers). This is to ensure local responsibility and oversight. Each local register shall have a nominated person who is responsible for it. The responsible person shall:
 - i. ensure that a register is kept in their school and that staff are made aware of it;
 - ii. ensure that the register is completed as fully and accurately as possible;
 - iii. monitor entries routinely and regularly (e.g. monthly) and bring any concerns to the attention of the Chief Financial Officer as soon as possible;

iv. review and sign off the register annually, at the end of the school year in July;

iv. bring any concerns arising from the annual review to the attention of the Chief Financial Officer by the end of September each year.

14. A separate register shall be held for the Trust Central Office, owing to their profile and/or responsibility for high-level purchases, and the responsible person shall normally be the PA or similar post-holder:

- The Chief Executive
- The Chief Financial Officer

15. The Company Secretary shall hold a list of the registers and the responsible person for each. They shall also be responsible for reviewing and updating the register annually for audit purposes.

16. A template Gifts and Hospitality Form and Gifts and Hospitality register are set out in Schedules 1 and 2. They are also available via SharePoint. The School or Trust Central Office shall record details on the register, and individuals may use the form to submit entries to the register, according to what works best in practice in each area.

17. Each member of staff to whom an offer of gifts or hospitality above the £20 threshold is made is responsible for declaring the offer on their local register (or central office register – see paragraph 14). It is the responsibility of the person who holds the local register to ensure that it is completed on each occasion.

18. Registers shall be reviewed annually by the responsible person as described in paragraph 14 above. They should be provided if requested for review by auditors.

19. Registers should be kept for six years beyond the end of the year to which they relate.

D. FURTHER INFORMATION

20. Further guidance and information may be sought from the Company Secretary.

SCHEDULE 1

PRO FORMA FOR THE DECLARATION OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

Before completing this form, staff should ensure that they have read the Sovereign Trust Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

This form is to be completed by any individual member of staff who has been offered gifts or hospitality (whether accepted or not) over the value of £20 (see paragraphs 10-12 of the Procedure) during the course of their duties.

Please complete as many fields as possible.

It shall be signed by the individual member of staff and the person responsible for the local register.

Name of intended recipient (i.e. person completing form) and any other beneficiaries	
School or Department	
Brief description of gift or hospitality	
Reason for gift or hospitality offered (e.g. relationship management; thank-you; recognition of achievement, collaboration etc)	
Total value (known or estimated)	
Provider/giver's organization (e.g. ABC Limited)	
Provider/giver's name (e.g. A Smith)	
Nature of business relationship	
Date of offer	
Date of receipt (if accepted)	
Date of rejection (if actively declined)	
For gifts: what has been done with them?	

Signed (intended recipient): _____

Date: _____

Signed (holder of register, if different): _____

Name and position (print): _____

Date: _____

SCHEDULE 2

REGISTER FOR THE DECLARATION OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

Please complete as many fields as possible

School/ Department:	
Financial Year:	

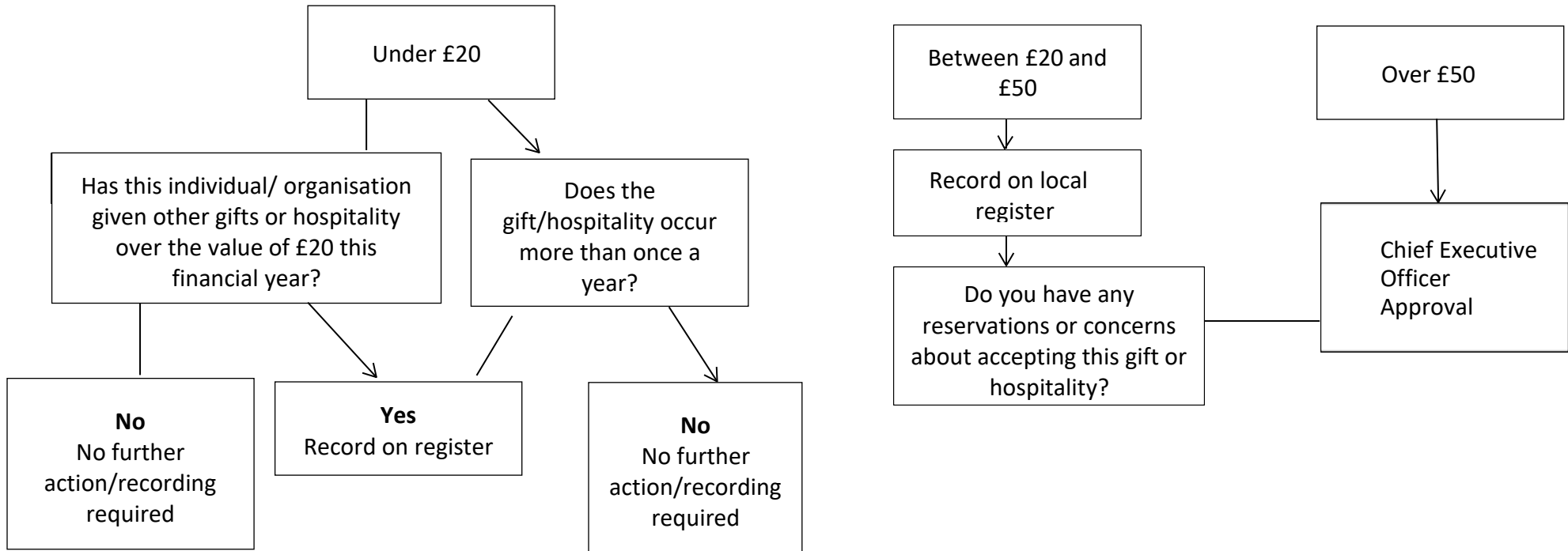
Name of intended recipient and any other beneficiaries	Brief description of gift or hospitality	Reason for gift or hospitality offered ¹	Total value (known or estimated)	Provider/giver's organisation	Provider/giver's name	Nature of business relationship	Date of offer	Date of receipt (if accepted)	Date of rejection (if actively declined)	Declared to Chief Executive Officer (if over £50) y/n	For gifts: what done with the gift

¹ e.g. relationship management; thank-you; recognition of achievement, collaboration etc

SCHEDULE 3

Acceptable and Unacceptable Gifts and Hospitality		
Gifts	Acceptable/appropriate	Unacceptable/ not appropriate
	<p>Small thank you gifts from pupils/parents Small token items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Box of Chocolates • Flowers • Bottle of Wine • Stationery items such as pens • Diary or calendar • Book • Mug <p><i>Ticket/s for events should be considered carefully as the value of tickets can vary greatly. For example, sporting events, opera, theatre.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal gifts of money • Gift vouchers • Gifts of high value • Holidays (UK or abroad) or holiday travel • Goods or services at trade/discount prices • Frequent gifts from the same source. <p>Gifts from a company during the procurement process.</p> <p>All money that is offered to the Trust must be directed through The Sovereign Trust finance department.</p>
Hospitality	Acceptable	Unacceptable
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refreshments (tea/coffee). • Working lunches. • Drinks receptions/book launches. • Dinners at conferences. • Modest entertainment from an existing supplier. • Work related travel and accommodation such as when speaking at an academic/ sector conference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at lavish/extravagant social functions. • Travel and accommodation not related directly to work related activities such as attendance at conference/required for role. • Frequent invitations from the same individual or organisation. • Entertainment from a company during a procurement process.

SCHEDULE 4 – process flowchart



SCHEDULE 5 - FAQs

How do I estimate the value of this item?

It may be difficult to estimate the value of an item that you have been given. To give a rough idea you could search the internet to find the value of a similar item. It might be useful to think about whether you believe the value of the item falls over the thresholds of £20, £50 and include an estimation of the value. If you would like another opinion please seek advice from the Company Secretary.

What if a supplier offers me training?

Offers of hospitality from suppliers can sometimes be dressed up as networking, training, a seminar, event, product launch etc, often at high-profile venues. Staff should seek guidance from their line manager before responding to such invitations.

I am connected to more than one unit? Whose authorisation should I seek?

It doesn't matter which area you report to if you have line managers in different units. It makes sense to report to the one most closely linked to the circumstances in which the offer was made, but the important thing is that approval is sought where necessary and the offer is recorded in a register somewhere in the Trust.

What is the Trust's policy on bribery?

The Trust has a Policy against Bribery and Fraud which can be found on the Policies and Procedures pages of the Trust website.

I was unable to seek authorisation before accepting a gift or hospitality above the £250 threshold. Does this matter?

Paragraph 11 is written in recognition that it is by no means always practicable or possible to seek authorisation in advance of accepting gifts or hospitality. But you must inform the Chief Executive Officer as soon as practicable afterwards and ensure that it is recorded.

I have been offered a "prize"; can I accept it?

Ask yourself why, with reference to paragraph 6. If in doubt, consult your line manager or relevant approver

Do I have to pay tax on gifts and hospitality?

Accepting a gift may give may incur a personal tax liability Finance Dept can advise on specific cases. Guidance can also be found at [HMRC's on Non Taxable gifts and hospitality](#)