

Gifts Policy

Background

The giving and receiving of gifts are common place in schools. For example, gifts are given by students to teachers, gifts are bought for staff achievement milestones or to mark a bereavement. The giving and receiving of gifts results in positive experiences that enhance the school and its relationships with others. However, it needs to be managed sensitively with no conflict of interest or improper influence.

Huntingdale Primary School Staff and School Councillors as part of their role in the Victorian educational community must maintain high standards of accountability, integrity and impartiality. They must not accept or make offers of gifts, benefits or hospitality that influence, or give the impression to influence any decision unfairly. They are to perform their duties without favouritism, bias or for personal gain. They must act fairly and objectively and maintain public trust by being honest, open and transparent. They also need to be confident in using public resources responsibly when making offers of gifts, benefits or hospitality in the course of their work.

Purpose

To ensure:

- The giving and receiving of gifts follows the Department of Education (DOE) procedures and protocols as set out in the *Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy Framework for the Victorian Public Sector* (March 2010 revised February 2017) and taxation laws.
- That the school establishes a process for ensuring that all staff and school council members are aware of the policy requirements.
- That a gift register is maintained to keep records of accepted gifts, benefits and hospitality of more than nominal value.
- Follow DOE's Values of Accountability, Human Rights, Impartiality, Integrity, Leadership, Respect and Responsiveness.

Implementation

- The Principal has the overall responsibility of implementing this policy, but may delegate certain roles to suitably qualified staff.

Receiving Gifts

- Acceptance of token gifts e.g. from families to teachers or benefits is acceptable and does not need to be formally registered.
- Similarly, gifts, benefits or hospitality provided by other government departments or governments does not need to be recorded.
- The school may also accept gifts or donations. These may be used by students in classroom activities or as prizes for school fundraising events.



- Gifts or donations are not to be linked to expectations of favourable service by the school and are not to be linked to products, services or associations that would bring the school's good name into disrepute.
- Staff and School Councillors should:
 - Not solicit gifts, benefits or hospitality.
 - Refuse all offers of gifts, benefits or hospitality from people or organisations about which they are likely to make decision, i.e. tender processes, procurement, licensing or regulation, etc.
 - Refuse all offers of money or items easily converted to money, such as shares.
 - Refuse bribes and report bribery attempts to their Manager/Principal
 - Seek advice from their Manager/Principal or other appropriate delegate if unsure about how to respond to an offer of a gift, benefit or hospitality of more than nominal value.

Keeping Gifts

- Employees, or school councillors may keep such gifts as a box of chocolates, for the work they have done. This is considered a Token Offer.
- In limited circumstances, employees or school councillors may be able to keep a Non-Token gift less than \$500, **subject to the documented approval** of the School Council. The Principal may also consider offering the employees or school councillors the option of purchasing the gift at market value.
- Gifts worth \$500 or more must be surrendered to the State or school **under all circumstances**. Employees and school councillors may purchase a gift worth more than \$500 from the State or school, with the Secretary's or school council's written approval, provided that no other public entity (e.g. Museums Victoria) has expressed interest in retaining the gift.

Giving Gifts

- Gifts given by the school are generally of little monetary value and usually consist of small school mementoes, or other inexpensive items of sentimental value.
- On occasions, the school may wish to recognise significant staff/school achievements and provide token gifts as part of a reward and recognition event e.g. celebrating length of service milestones and/or retirements or sending a card and/or flowers to family members to acknowledge an employees' contribution to the workplace in the event of their death, gifts to sister schools visiting Huntingdale.
- The school is required to seek approval from the School Council when issuing gifts to staff (regardless of value) which is funded by public monies.
- Gifts given in celebrations of events such as birthdays, marriages or the birth of children should not be funded using public monies, but through donations of staff on a voluntary basis.

Recording

- For school-based employees and school councillors, offers (whether accepted or declined) of a gift, benefit or hospitality worth more than **\$100 (Non-Token value) must** be registered on the School's Gift Declaration Register and will be reported to School Council.
- The Register will be monitored by the Principal and annually reviewed by the School Council.
- Any Fringe Benefits Tax implications of any gift or donation must be fully explored and reported to the Australian Taxation Office.



- Additional information about gifts and DOE Policy can be found at:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/Pages/gifts.aspx>

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually or as needed to comply with DOE policy changes.

Document Status

Reviewed	School Council Ratification	Next Review
March – Finance Subcommittee	12 March 2024	10 March 2025
March – Finance Subcommittee	18 March 2025	17 March 2026