

## Statement of Policy

### Gift Declaration - Working Honestly and with Integrity

*[Reviewed and agreed at Full Governing Body Committee held on 28 March 2007 and 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2010]*

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The money and resources of local people must be used with absolute honesty. It may be a criminal offence for employees to give, get or ask for any gift, reward or advantage for work done in their official capacity and employees must be careful not to show that their behaviour may be influenced by offers of such. The College has strict rules and procedures regarding offers of gifts and hospitality, which employees must follow to ensure that they are beyond reproach. Failure to comply with these rules will be treated seriously and could lead to disciplinary action and ultimately dismissal and/or criminal proceedings, where the employee will need to prove that the gift or hospitality was not obtained improperly.

#### 2.0 Gifts

- 2.1 Under no circumstances should members of the public be led to believe that they will receive a better service from the College if they offer employees a gift, or a worse service if they do not. Therefore, employees must not accept or seek money, gifts or other reward for the work that they do for the College, apart from what they receive in wages or token gifts as described in 2.6 below.
- 2.2 Likewise, employees must not accept or seek money, gifts or other reward for their work on behalf of, or for, their relatives or friends.
- 2.3 Employees should also be careful not to put themselves in debt to someone where this could influence the work that they do.
- 2.4 Employees must report any offer of a gift to the Principal so that a record of the offer can be made on the appropriate register (see section 4 below).
- 2.5 The offer of gifts by contractors, organisations or individuals must, as a general rule, be declined or, if received, returned to the sender.
- 2.6 Token gifts, often in the form of trade advertisements or gifts from students, e.g. notepads, diaries, calendars or pens, may be accepted provided that:
- the offer is made without the employee asking for the gift; **AND**
  - the offer/acceptance has been reported to the PA to the Principal; **AND**
  - the offer cannot be seen to exert undue influence on the employee.
- 2.7 If there is any doubt, the gift should be refused or handed over to the appropriate line manager or Principal who will decide whether it should be returned.
- 2.8 Anything other than a token gift must always be declined, e.g. trade discounts or legacies from people who have received College services. Employees must politely decline such offers and declare them immediately to their line manager, on the Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality form, so that they can be recorded on the appropriate Code of Conduct Register, which is held and maintained by the PA to the Principal on behalf of the Principal.

#### 3.0 Hospitality

- 3.1 It is important that there is no possibility of offers of hospitality being interpreted as bribes or inducements. Therefore, offers of hospitality where any suggestion of improper motive is possible must not be accepted without the PRIOR approval of the Vice Principals or Principal.

- 3.2 Employees must not accept without prior approval, unreasonable or undue hospitality, e.g.
- tickets for (or payment for) the theatre, sporting events or any other entertainment
  - holiday accommodation; or
  - payment for travel, and/or overnight accommodation to attend a meeting, unless approval is given by the line manager. (The College has a [travel and subsistence scheme](#) to cover these expenses.)
- 3.3 Employees may accept reasonable hospitality whilst they are working, e.g. a cup of tea or coffee, or other light refreshment when visiting sites, offices or people's homes. A working lunch of a modest standard is also acceptable if it allows those present to continue to discuss business.
- 3.4 Employees should be made aware of the difference between attending in their official capacity at a function organised by a public authority and accepting hospitality from a private individual or organisation who stands to benefit financially from the College. For example:
- if the invitation comes from an organisation likely to benefit from the goodwill of the College, then the offer must be declined;
  - if the invitation comes from an organisation not likely to benefit from the goodwill of the College, then the offer may be accepted;
  - if a visit is instructive, e.g. a demonstration of new equipment, it may be accepted; and
  - if a visit is for social purposes only it must be declined.
- 3.5 Employees may attend relevant conferences and courses where:
- it is clear that the hospitality is corporate rather than personal; AND
  - the line manager has given prior authorisation; AND
  - the line manager is satisfied that purchasing/contracting decisions cannot be compromised.
- 3.6 Whether accepted or declined, employees must declare all offers of hospitality to their line manager, so that the details can be noted in the appropriate register (see section 4 below).

#### **4.0 Declarations of Gifts and Hospitality**

- 4.1 A Code of Conduct Register will be maintained for each Department by the PA to the Principal (on behalf of Principal and Chair of Governors). This register will include declarations made by all employees, up to and including the Principal, of offers of hospitality and gifts made to them during the course of their employment.
- 4.2 Declarations will be made on the appropriate form, which records the following information:
- the person/organisation making the offer;
  - the employee to whom the offer was made;
  - the gift or hospitality offered;
  - the circumstances in which the offer was made;
  - the action taken by the employee concerned;
  - the action taken by the line manager and Principal; and
  - whether the offer was accepted (prior to, or after authorisation being given) or declined.
- 4.3 In general the register will record offers made and declined; acceptances will be the exception.
- 4.4 An index sheet will be maintained at the front of each register for audit/monitoring purposes. The Principal (or delegated representative) will inspect and review the register every 6 months to ensure that it is being properly maintained.

- 4.5 An employee is entitled to see what is recorded in the register against his/her own name. Other persons allowed access to registers across the College are the Principal, the Chair of Governors (as Monitoring Officer), District Auditors and members of the Internal Audit Section.
- 4.6 Failure to declare offers/receipt and refusals/acceptance of gifts and/or hospitality may lead to disciplinary action being taken.