



THE NORTON
KNATCHBULL
SCHOOL

Anti-bribery, Fraud and Gifts & Hospitality Policy

Reviewed by	Val Martin, CFO Ben Greene, HT
Equality Impact Assessment*	Ben Greene, HT
Approved by the Finance & General Purposes Committee	26 th January 2024
Date of Review	January 2026

**The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is to ensure that policies, functions, plans or decisions do not create unnecessary barriers for people protected under the Equality Act 2010. Where negative impacts are identified these should be eliminated or minimised, and opportunities for positive impact should be maximised.*

EIA assessment will be completed for policies reviewed on or after 30th October 2023 and is appended to the policy

Summary

This policy and procedure defines the expected conduct of all staff engaged at the School , whether in paid or voluntary employment, in relation to deterring and/or detecting fraud and corruption, and who to report it to.

It includes clear guidelines on what is acceptable in terms of gifts and hospitality and how these matters are declared.

Also, reference is made to other School policies where appropriate.

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 The Norton Knatchbull School is committed to ensuring that it acts with integrity and has high standards of personal conduct. Everyone involved in the School has a responsibility in respect of preventing and detecting fraud. All staff and governors have a role to play. The School also recognises the role of others in alerting them to areas where there is suspicion of fraud.
- 1.2 Recognising a potential fraud and being able to report it is just as important as the measures to prevent and detect.
- 1.3 It is the duty of all employees, trustees and governors at the School to take reasonable steps to limit the possibility of corrupt practices, and it is the responsibility of the Internal Auditors and External Auditors to review the adequacy of the measures taken by the Academy Trust to test compliance and to draw attention to any weaknesses or omissions.
- 1.4 Any investigation carried out in relation to alleged irregularities is linked to the School's Disciplinary & Dismissals procedure.

2. Definitions:

- 2.1 **Fraud**
Fraud is a general term covering theft, deliberate misuse or misappropriation of assets or anything that leads to a financial advantage to the perpetrator or others upon whose behalf he or she acts, even if these "others" are in ignorance of the fraud. Fraud is in fact intentional deceit and for this reason it cannot include negligence.

Fraud incorporates theft, larceny, embezzlement, fraudulent conversion, false pretences, forgery, corrupt practices and falsification of accounts.
- 2.2 **Corruption**
The term 'corrupt practices' is defined for the purpose of this code as the offering, giving, soliciting or acceptance of an inducement or reward which may influence the actions taken by the School, its staff, trustees or governors.
- 2.3 **Gifts and Hospitality**
Any gifts, rewards and benefits that are disproportionately generous (over £50) or that could be seen as an inducement to affect a business decision should be declared.

The acceptance of gifts and hospitality is a sensitive area where actions can easily be misconstrued. Therefore, employees' actions should be such that they would not be embarrassed to explain them to anyone.

2.4 Irregularities fall within the following broad categories, the first three of which are criminal offences –

- **Theft** - the dishonest taking of property belonging to another person with the intention of depriving the owner permanently of its possession;
- **Fraud** - the intentional distortion of financial statements or other records by persons internal and external to the Academy Trust, which is carried out to conceal the misappropriation of assets or otherwise for gain;
- **Bribery and corruption (Gifts & Hospitality – see Point 6)** involves the offering or the acceptance of a reward, for performing an act, or for failing to perform an act, which leads to gain for the person offering the inducement;
- **Failure to observe**, or breaches of, Scheme of Delegation and Financial Regulations; Academy Trust's Procedures which in some circumstances can constitute an irregularity, with potentially significant financial consequences.

2.5 Examples of what could constitute fraud and corruption are -

- theft of cash;
- non-receipt of income;
- substitution of personal cheques for cash;
- travelling and subsistence claims for non-existent journeys/events;
- travelling and subsistence claims inflated;
- manipulating documentation to increase salaries/wages received, e.g. false overtime claims;
- payment of invoices for goods received by an individual rather than the Academy;
- failure to observe, or breaches of, regulations and/or other associated legislation laid down by the Academy;
- unauthorised borrowing of equipment;
- breaches of confidentiality regarding information;
- failure to declare a direct pecuniary or otherwise conflicting interest;
- concealing a generous gift or reward;
- unfairly influencing the award of a contract;
- creation of false documents;
- deception;
- using position for personal reward.

The above list is not exhaustive and fraud and corruption can take many different paths. If in any doubt about whether a matter is an irregularity or not, clarification must be sought from the CFO.

3. Policy Statement:

- 3.1 This policy and procedure defines Anti-Fraud & Corruption and Gifts & Hospitality and offers guidance for all staff in the School .
- 3.2 The School aims to be an honest and ethical institution. As such, it is opposed to fraud and seeks to eliminate fraud by the way it conducts its business. This document sets out the School's policy and procedures for dealing with the risk of significant fraud or corruption. In order to minimise the risk and impact of fraud, the School's objectives are, firstly, to create a culture which deters fraudulent activity, encourages its prevention and promotes its detection and reporting and, secondly, to identify and document its response to cases of fraud and corrupt practices.
- 3.3 This policy, in line with the School's values of integrity, consistency, impartiality, fairness and best practice, provides both staff and management with mutually understood guidelines for the administration of this procedure.
- 3.4 The scope of this procedure extends to all School employees, temporary, permanent, voluntary and fixed term.
- 3.5 Time limits specified in this document may be extended by mutual agreement.
- 3.6 If there is concern or doubt about any aspect of a matter which involves an irregularity, or an ongoing investigation into a suspected irregularity, the best approach is to seek advice from the Headteacher or if it relates to them the Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.
- 3.7 If requested, employees may be accompanied by a recognised trade union representative or work colleague, not involved in any part of the process, at any interviews.

4. Gifts & Hospitality:

- 4.1 These guidelines will help you to judge what sort of gift, and what level of hospitality is acceptable.
- 4.2 The following general rules apply and must guide decisions on receipt of gifts and hospitality as an employee of the School
 - To accept gifts should be the exception. You may accept small 'thank you' gifts of token value, not over £50 in value. You should notify the CFO of any gift or hospitality over this value for entry in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality.
 - Always say "no" if you think the giver has an ulterior motive. Be sensitive to the possibility that the giver may think that even small gifts or simple hospitality will elicit a more prompt service or preferential treatment.
 - Never accept a gift or hospitality from anyone who is, or may be in the foreseeable future, tendering for any contract with the School, seeking employment with the School or is in dispute with the School, even if you are not directly involved in that service area.
 - Where items purchased for the School include a 'free gift', such a gift should either be used for School business or handed to the CFO to be used for charity raffles.
 - If you are in doubt about the acceptability of any gift or offer of hospitality it is your responsibility to consult the CFO or HT.
- 4.3 A gauge of what is acceptable in terms of hospitality is whether the School would offer a similar level of hospitality in similar circumstances.

- Occasional working lunches with customers, providers or partners are generally acceptable as a way of doing business provided they are not to an unreasonable level or cost.
- Invitations to corporate hospitality events must each be judged on their merit. Provided the general rules have been taken into account, it may be acceptable to join other company/organisation guests at:
 - a. sponsored cultural and sporting events, or other public performances, as a representative of the School;
 - b. special events or celebrations.

But, consider the number of these events, and always take into consideration what public perception is likely to be if they knew you were attending.

- Acceptability depends on the appropriateness of the invitations, in terms of the level of hospitality, the frequency and the status of the invited employee. In all such cases the CFO/HT be consulted.
- Paid holidays or concessionary travel rates are not acceptable. Neither are offers of hotel accommodation nor the use of company villas/apartments.
- If you are visiting a company to view equipment that the school is considering buying, you should ensure that expenses of the trip are paid by the School. Acceptance of refreshments and/or a working lunch may be acceptable, but care must be taken to ensure that the school's purchasing and/or tender procedures are not compromised.
- Acceptance of sponsored hospitality that is built into the official programme of conferences and seminars related to your work are acceptable.
- Offers to speak at corporate dinners and social gatherings, or events organised by, for example, a professional body, where there is a genuine need to impart information or represent the School must be agreed in advance with a Headteacher. Where your spouse or partner is included in the invitation, and approval has been given for you to attend, it will be acceptable for your spouse or partner to attend as well, but if expenses are incurred, these will be met personally.
- Any invitation you accept should be made to you in your professional/working capacity as a representative of the School.

5. Roles and Responsibilities:

5.1 Staff, Members and Governors

The School has adopted the following measures to demonstrate its commitment to anti-fraud and corruption:

- Education and Finance & General Purposes Committees meet regularly;
- A requirement for all staff and governors to declare prejudicial interests and not contribute to business related to that interest;
- A requirement for staff and governors to disclose personal interests;
- All staff and governors are made aware of the understanding on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality;
- Clear recruitment policies and procedures.

Staff and governors also have a duty to report another member of staff or governor whose conduct is reasonably believed to represent a failure to comply with the above.

5.2 Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

The CFO has a responsibility for ensuring that effective systems of internal controls are maintained and will safeguard the resources of School.

In respect of fraud it is therefore the responsibility of the CFO to ensure internal controls prevent and detect any frauds promptly. This includes:

- Proper procedures and financial systems;
- Effective management of financial records;
- Management of the MAT's financial position;
- Anti-fraud awareness training

5.3 Internal Audit

The Internal Auditor has specific responsibility for overseeing the financial arrangements on behalf of the Governors.

The main duties of the Internal Audit are to provide the Governors with on-going independent assurance that:

- The financial responsibilities of the trustees are being properly discharged;
- The resources are being managed in an efficient, economical and effective manner;
- Sound systems of financial control are being maintained; and
- Financial considerations are fully taken into account in reaching decisions.

5.3 External Audit

The School's Annual Report and Financial Statements include an Independent Auditors' Report. This report includes a view as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view and whether proper accounting records have been kept by the School throughout the financial year. In addition, it reports on compliance with the accounting requirements of the relevant Companies Act and confirms compliance with the financial reporting and annual accounting requirements issued by the Dept of Education.

6. Reporting a Suspected Fraud:

- 6.1 All allegations of suspected fraud and irregularities are to be brought to the attention of the CFO and also referred to the HT , unless this individual is involved in the irregularity in which case the Chair of Governors should be informed.

Please refer to the school's Whistleblowing Policy for further guidance.

7. Response to Allegations

- 7.1 The HT will have initial responsibility for co-ordinating the initial response. In doing this they will consult with the Human Resource advisors regarding potential employment issues. The HT may also seek legal advice from the school's solicitors on both employment and litigation issues before taking any further action.
- 7.2 The CFO and HT will ascertain whether or not the suspicions aroused have substance. In every case, and as soon as possible after the initial investigation, they will pass the matter on to the Chair of Governors. Even if there is no evidence to support the allegation, the matter must be reported.
- 7.3 The Chair of Governors will liaise with the HT to coordinate the management of the investigation.
- They will, if appropriate, appoint a member of the Audit Committee, to conduct a preliminary investigation to gather factual information and reach an initial view as to whether further action is required.
 - They will determine whether the findings, conclusions and any recommendations arising from the preliminary investigation should be reported to the HT and Chair of Governors.
 - If further investigations are required, they will determine which outside agencies should be involved (police, auditors).
- 7.4 The HT is required to notify the Board of Governors of any serious financial irregularities. This action will be taken at the first opportunity following the completion of the initial investigations and will involve keeping the Chair of Governors fully informed between meetings of any developments relating to serious control weaknesses, fraud or major accounting breakdowns.
- 7.5 If evidence of fraud is forthcoming then the Board of Governors will inform the Education & Skills Funding Agency as required by the Academies Trust Handbook and will consider whether or not to refer the matter to the police.

The Board of Governors must notify the ESFA, as soon as possible, of all instances of fraud, theft and/or irregularity exceeding £5,000 individually, or £5,000 cumulatively in any financial year. Unusual or systematic fraud, regardless of value, must also be reported. The following information is required:

- Full details of the event(s) with dates
- The financial value of the loss
- Measures taken to prevent recurrence
- Whether it was referred to the police (and if not why)
- Whether insurance or the RPA have offset any loss

8. Confidentiality and Safeguards

- 8.1 The School recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the alleged malpractice. The School will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will do what it lawfully can to protect an individual when a concern is raised in good faith.
- 8.2 This does not mean that if the person raising the concern is already the subject of a disciplinary, redundancy or other procedure, that those procedures will be halted as a result of the concern being reported.
- 8.3 There is a need to ensure that the process is not misused. For further guidance refer to School's Discipline and Conduct policy and Grievance Policy.

9. Links with other Policies:

- 9.1 The Board of Governors is committed to preventing fraud and corruption. To help achieve this objective there is a clear network of systems and procedures in place for the prevention, detection and investigation of fraud and corruption. This Corruption policy attempts to consolidate those in one document and should be read in conjunction with the Whistle-Blowing Policy and Disciplinary Policy

NKS – Equality Impact Assessment



THE NORTON
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POLICY STATUS	
New Policy amalgamating Fraud, Anti Bribery & Gifts and hospitality policies	
THIS POLICY WILL AFFECT	
Staff	
Students	
Teachers	
Parents	

EIA completed by:	Ben Greene, Headteachers
Contributors to EIA:	None
Date completed:	19 th January 2024

Impact analysis

GROUP	POSITIVE IMPACT	NEUTRAL IMPACT	NEGATIVE IMPACT	WHY WILL THE POLICY HAVE THIS EFFECT?
Sex		✓		
Race		✓ ▪		
Religion or belief		✓ ▪		

Sexual orientation		✓ ▪		
Gender reassignment		✓ ▪		
Pregnancy or maternity		✓ ▪		
Age		✓ ▪		
Disability		✓ ▪		
Marriage or civil partnership		✓ ▪		
You could also add non-protected characteristics that have a specific impact in your school, e.g.:		n.a.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English as an additional language • Looked-after children • Families with separated parents 				

INTERSECTIONAL IMPACT

This policy will have no intersectional Impact

Outcomes

CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

FINAL DECISION ON POLICY

The policy does not require revision as a result of the EIA

Monitoring arrangements

MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

The EIA policy will be monitored on review of the policy

DATE OF NEXT POLICY REVIEW

Bi Annually