



Policy on the Receipt of Gifts and Hospitality

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Cork ETB.

Purpose

This policy outlines the position of Cork ETB in relation to the receipt of gifts and hospitality by employees, and standards and guidelines re: acceptance of same.

Policy Statement

All Cork ETB employees, regardless of work location, job title or grade, should be conscious of their obligations under the Ethics in Public Office Acts 1995 and 2001, and the Cork ETB Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics that they receive at the commencement of their employment (available to view at: <http://cork.etb.ie/about-us/policies/human-resources/working-conditions/codes-conduct/>). These obligations apply in all work-related matters. Under the Ethics in Public Office Acts, Board Members and designated staff must act in accordance with guidelines and with any advice given by the Standards in Public Office Commission. The Acts also require Board Members and designated staff to complete “annual returns”. Further details are available on www.sipo.ie

CETB staff should not receive benefits or rewards of any kind from a third party which might reasonably be seen to compromise their personal judgement or integrity. The actions of staff should, at all times, be above suspicion and not give rise to any actual or potential conflict of interest or the appearance of same and all dealings with commercial and other interests should bear the closest possible scrutiny.

Gifts:

CETB staff should abide by the following guidelines:

- Members of staff should not use their official position (directly or indirectly) to seek to receive, agree to accept or attempt to obtain any payment, reward, benefit, discount, rebate, commission or other inducement in connection with their work for CETB; nor should they accept same where offered.
- Employees should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation, to outside individuals or organisations, which might influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- Where a member of staff has any doubts about the propriety of accepting any gift, reward or benefit for themselves or a member of their family or, if there are special

circumstances, the staff member should consult with their senior line manager as soon as possible.

- CETB staff may accept and retain gifts of modest value. In considering what would be “modest value”, staff need to bear in mind what work colleagues, ETB members, auditors and the general public would consider to be modest value. Staff should not accept a gift, reward or benefit from a third party if it could give rise to a perception that the acceptance of same impacted on the staff member’s decision-making functions.
- Gifts of more significant value should be refused or, if such refusal would cause offence, should be regarded as property of the School/Centre/Department concerned and should be handed over by the staff member to his/her Manager/Principal/Co-ordinator.
- Particular care should be taken in relation to gifts from donors who stand to derive a personal or commercial benefit from the School/Centre/Department concerned.
- Cash, gift cheques or any vouchers that may be exchanged for cash may not be accepted, regardless of the amount.
- CETB staff should not accept special facilities or discounts on private purchases from suppliers with whom they have official dealings.
- Likewise, gifts should not be provided to management or staff of the ETB within the organisation, paid for from school or centre budgets (howsoever funded), for example, on retirement or for attendance at school functions or speaking at award ceremonies etc.

Hospitality

The overriding concern relating to hospitality is that all actions of Cork ETB employees in carrying out their official duties be above suspicion and not give rise to any actual or potential conflict of interest, and that their dealings with commercial or other interest should bear the closest possible scrutiny. It is accepted that employees should not be put in a position where they cannot accept what are regarded as normal courtesies in business relationships. However, in their contacts with outside organisations or persons, every care must be taken by employees to ensure that their acceptance of hospitality does not influence them and they could not reasonably be seen to influence them, in discharging their official functions. The following guidelines should be observed at all times:

- All offers of hospitality from commercial interests which have or might have contractual relations with Cork ETB must be reported by that employee to his or her manager for direction.
- No objection would normally be made to the acceptance of what is regarded as routine hospitality, for example, a business lunch. What may be regarded as “routine” for this purpose will depend on a number of factors such as the value of the hospitality offered, the frequency of offers, whether there is an element of reciprocity and the general circumstances in which it is offered (for example, whether it is offered by a company to all its customers or is directed at specific or potential customers). Certain types of hospitality (for example involving travelling abroad or holiday weekends) should not be regarded as routine and should always be referred to the Chief Executive for direction.

- Members of staff should not accept offers of hospitality which go beyond the routine practices referred to above, except where acceptance of such an offer can be clearly shown to be in the interest of the organisation and has been approved by the employee's manager.

Compliance

Employees are expected to abide by the standards and procedures set out above at all times; failure to abide by the procedures set out above may be dealt with under the agreed disciplinary procedures.

Review

This policy will be subject to review in accordance with organisational needs and/or where it is necessary to do so due to changes in DES regulations, legislation or other such situations.

Signed: 

Date: 10/06/16

Timothy Owens

Chief Executive