



St. Mary's Grammar School, Belfast

HOSPITALITY
GUIDELINES

September 2017



HOSPITALITY GUIDELINES FOR ST. MARY'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL, BELFAST

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 St Mary's Grammar School Belfast works to ensure that effective management systems, including financial monitoring and control procedures exist for the propriety and regularity of the use of all resources for educational and related purposes, and to ensure that value for money is obtained from these resources.
- 1.2 These guidelines are provided specifically for hospitality and related areas (e.g. floral tributes, small gifts) and other tokens of appreciation. Such expenditure must be in connection with necessary official school business and other activities that promote the school to the public, be appropriate to the occasion, represent effective use of school funds, be of a reasonable amount, comply with government standards on propriety and be consistent with the mission of the school.
- 1.3 The Board of Governors wish to ensure that there are robust management control arrangements in place and that satisfactory systems are operating within the school in order to safeguard public funds.

2.0 GUIDELINES ON ALLOWABLE EXPENSES AND OCCASIONS

- 2.1 Expenditure on hospitality and related areas must be directly related to, or associated with, the active conduct of official school business. When the school spends public money on hospitality or related areas, the occasion must, in the best judgement of the Governors, produce a clear benefit for the school with no personal benefit for Staff or Governors.
- 2.2 When determining whether such expenditure will produce a benefit for the school, the Governors must evaluate the importance of the event in terms of the costs involved, the availability of funds and any alternatives that would effectively serve the same purpose.
- 2.3 Hospitality in this context includes meals, snacks, refreshments and beverages such as tea or coffee. Staff should not be provided with hospitality except when work sessions extend over meal times or beyond normal working hours. The Principal's discretion and due regard for economy will be the guide on such occasions and in ensuring that hospitality is not offered to close colleagues working together on a regular basis.
- 2.4 Tea/coffee and biscuits may be provided at meetings with visitors to the school e.g. parents, staff from other schools, inspectors, and other officials.
- 2.5 Public funds may not be used to provide hospitality, floral tributes, small gifts or other tokens of appreciation for events such as birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, retirement or farewell gatherings, except where specific approval from the Department is obtained.
- 2.6 In exceptional circumstances a school may wish to mark long service or exemplary performance. Hospitality may be provided to the main guest, the official host (Principal or Chairperson of the Board of Governors), to Governors and visiting dignitaries. Hospitality at such events shall not be extravagant and should normally be provided on school premises, using the in-house services whenever possible. If in-house facilities are not appropriate, then, as a general rule, expenditure per head should not exceed the current rates of Civil Service

subsistence¹. Other than the principal guest, parents, spouses or partners should not be provided with hospitality. Public funds may not be used to provide floral tributes, gifts or other tokens of appreciation at such events.

- 2.7** The school may choose to use non-public funds rather than public monies for hospitality. The Governors must ensure that in the case of non-public funds, such use is permissible having regard to the purposes for which the funds were provided to the school.

¹**Civil Service Subsistence** – Current applicable rates are available from the Department's School Finance Team (Phone 028 9127 9627).