

**INFORMATION FOR SCHOOL COMMUNITIES**

## Changes to Gifts Benefits and Hospitality Policy: Vouchers and Gifts of Appreciation

14 November 2018

Teachers, Principals and members of School Councils sometimes receive offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality from suppliers and members of the school community. By declaring such offers, school staff support integrity, protect their reputation and build public confidence in schools.

**CHANGES TO THE DEPARTMENT'S GIFTS BENEFITS AND HOSPITALITY POLICY**

As you are aware, the Department of Education (DET) launched a revised Gifts Benefits and Hospitality (GBH) Policy on 15 May 2018 that aligns with the Victorian Public Sector Commission's (VPSC) whole of Victorian Government Policy.

This Policy prohibits the acceptance of offers that are money, items used in a similar way to money, or items easily converted to money, including gift vouchers.

Following DET consultation with VPSC, the Policy now permits members of the Teaching Service (only) to accept non-cash vouchers (e.g. a retailer gift card), as gifts of appreciation (GoA) from student(s), parent(s) or carer(s) to thank them for their contribution to the education of a student or students. This change recognises that vouchers are a common type of gift given to teachers as appreciation for their efforts, and that gifts of appreciation generally represent a low integrity and conflict of interest risk.

The acceptance of cash vouchers (e.g. a bank \$50 debit card) remains prohibited.

As requested by VPSC, DET has also amended its Policy to restrict the acceptance and retention of GoA valued at \$500 and more to those made by a group of students/parents/carers. Offers valued at \$500 and more from a single source are required to be declined or transferred to the Department or school's ownership.

**THE NEW GBH POLICY PROVISIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

- Cash Vouchers are any vouchers that can be 'universally' used in the same way as cash can. A financial institution issued debit card, e.g. a bank \$50 debit card, is a 'cash' voucher. The acceptance of Cash Vouchers remains prohibited under this Policy
- Non-Cash Vouchers are vouchers that must be used at specific retailers and cannot be converted to cash. Non-Cash Vouchers are prohibited under this Policy, except when offered as Gifts of Appreciation to members of the Teaching Service
- Gifts of Appreciation offers valued at \$500 or more and offered by an individual student/parent/carer must be either declined or transferred to the Department or school
- Retention of Gifts of Appreciation valued at \$500 or more and offered by a group of students/parents/carers remains at the Authorised Delegate's discretion.

These changes take effect as at 14 November 2018. The GBH Policy, associated guidance documents and on-line Registry System have been updated to reflect the changes.

For more information, see: [Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy](#).