

## **ACCEPTANCE AND USE OF GIFTS, GRANTS AND DONATIONS**

### Gifts

The acceptance of gifts worth \$50 or more by school personnel in a calendar year when the gift is given because of the position they hold, or because of some action the recipient could take or has taken in his or her public role, violates the conflict of interest law. Acceptance of gifts worth less than \$50, while not prohibited by the conflict of interest law, may require a written public disclosure to be made.

In keeping with this policy, no employee of the school district will accept a gift worth \$50 or more that is given because of the employee's public position, or anything that the employee could do or has done in his or her public position. Gifts worth less than \$50 may be accepted, but a written disclosure to the employee's appointing authority must be made if the gift and the circumstances in which it was given could cause a reasonable person to think that the employee could be improperly influenced. The value of personal gifts accepted is aggregated over a calendar year (4 gifts of \$20 value is the same as 1 gift of \$80 if given in the same calendar year).

In general, homemade gifts without retail value are permissible because a reasonable person would not expect an employee would unduly show favor to the giver, so no disclosure is required. Such gifts could include homemade food items (cookies, candy, etc), handpicked flowers, and handmade gifts worth less than \$10 (ten) dollars.

### Class Gifts

There is a specific exception to the prohibition against accepting gifts worth \$50 or more, when the teacher knows only that the gift is from the class, not from specific donors. A single class gift per calendar year valued up to \$150 or several class gifts in a single year with a total value up to \$150 from parents and students in a class may be accepted provided the gift is identified only as being from the class and the names of the givers and the amounts given are not identified to the recipient. The recipient may not accept an individual gift from someone who contributed to the class gift. It is the responsibility of the employee to confirm that the individual offering such gift did not contribute to the class gift.

### Gifts for School Use

Gifts given to a teacher solely for classroom use or to purchase classroom supplies are not considered gifts to an individual employee and are not subject to the \$50 limit. However, an employee who accepts such gifts must keep receipts documenting that money or gift cards were used for classroom supplies.

### Solicitations

In spirit, the School Committee supports the many worthwhile charitable drives that take place in the community and is gratified when school employees give them their support. However, the solicitation of funds from staff members through the use of school personnel and school time is prohibited by the conflict of interest law. Therefore, no solicitations of funds for charitable purposes should be made among staff members. Staff members of course remain free to support charitable causes of their own selection.

## **Faculty and Employee Fundraising**

The School Committee recognizes that easy access to social media has given rise to many opportunities for employees of the school district to raise money for a myriad of worthy causes for our schools and children and the School Committee supports these efforts. The School Committee has concerns, however, that the school district might be portrayed, unintentionally, in a less than positive light, where the money is ultimately flowing through, and whether or not the building principal/Superintendent have approved of the activity. The School Committee, therefore, directs the following:

1. Any employee of the school district, before engaging in any fund-raising activity through the internet, social media, crowd sourcing websites and/or web site access will first fill out the "Permission to Fund-Raise" form, available at each school and on the Natick Public Schools' website, and submit for approval by both the building principal AND the Superintendent of Schools. The activity may proceed only after procurement of BOTH signatures.
2. The employee must list any percentage that the fundraising website takes as part of gross revenues.
3. The employee must write out exactly the wording to be used on the website or social media tool for the fund-raising activity. All monies collected must be accounted for by each building principal.
4. Anything donated to a school or school employee is considered property of Natick Public Schools and must go to School Committee for acceptance.

This policy is meant to provide protection for both the school district and the employee, and refers only to those fund-raising activities that are undertaken by staff in their capacity as an employee of the school district. This policy is in no way meant to limit fund-raising activities that are personal in nature and are not connected to the school system or a particular school.

Legal Ref: M.G.L. 268A:3; 268A:23; 930 CMR 5.00

CROSS REFS.: KHA, Public Solicitations in the Schools  
JP, Student Donations and Gifts  
LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 268A et al