

Policy on the Acceptance of Donations

Highgate School is very grateful to the alumni, former parents and current parents who make donations to the School. However, when a donation (of any size) is offered to the School, it is essential that the School is satisfied that the donation is acceptable. In particular, the donation must not be one that risks bringing the School into disrepute or breaching the law.

This policy has been written in consultation with guidance published by the Institute of Fundraising and by the Charity Commission.

Key principles

Highgate School will only accept donations that are consistent with the objects of Sir Roger Cholmeley's School at Highgate (a registered charity no. 312765):

- the advancement of education by the provision of a school in or near Highgate, the provision of incidental or ancillary educational activities, and the undertaking of associated activities for the benefit of the public;
- in so far as the Governors think fit (and so long as they in their discretion consider that the first object is being properly provided for) the relief of the poor.

Final responsibility for the acceptance or rejection of donations lies with the Governors of the School (who are its charity trustees). However, the Governors have delegated authority to make certain decisions about donations in line with the arrangements described below.

A decision to accept or reject a donation will be taken on the basis of whether it is in the best interests of the School. There is no obligation on Highgate School to accept a donation offered to it in circumstances where the Governors or their delegates consider that it is in the best interests of the School to reject it.

Highgate School may refuse the donation of a physical gift (for example, a work of art) if a realistic and informed estimate of the ongoing costs of caring for the object outweigh the benefits of its possession (in particular, if imposed conditions inhibit the realisation of any future commercial return). Highgate School encourages all supporters to discuss at an early stage their intentions to donate, especially if they wish to attach restrictions to their gift. The Head advises supporters about their intentions.

Highgate School will not accept a donation if the Governors or their delegates know or suspect that the donor has obtained the money or property that is the subject of the gift through involvement in an activity that is criminal under UK law. Highgate School will undertake such due diligence as seems appropriate to ensure that any donation is acceptable in line with this policy.

Highgate School:

- will always comply, to the best of its ability, with all legal regulations related to the acceptance of donations (in particular, anti-money laundering regulations);
- will refuse a donation, no matter how generous, if the provenance of the funds appears to be unacceptable or unclear and satisfactory replies to enquiries are not received (examples of gifts that might give rise to enquiries include large donations in cash, donations subject to unusual or inappropriate conditions or donations that are to be returned to the donor in some way);
- will adopt a risk-based approach to any enquiries made of donors and will not refer to any suspicions about the gift or the donor in the course of the enquiries;
- will consider the likely reaction by a range of stakeholders to the announcement of the source of a donation, in particular: current and former pupils, current and former parents, Governors, teaching staff, support staff, the school's partners (such as other schools in Haringey), the local community in and around Highgate village;
- will refuse a donation, no matter how generous, if the donor expects to gain an unacceptable personal benefit or to be able to exert undue influence over the decisions of the school, or if acceptance is dependent on the fulfilment of unacceptable conditions.

Donor recognition

Highgate School understands that some donors may wish to be recognised publicly for their support. This is always discussed with donors at an early stage of their relationship with the school, so that their wishes are known and are clear. Donors can be recognised in a number of ways, and they are asked to record their wishes on the document "Thanking Supporters" at the time when it is appropriate to do so. Highgate School is committed to respecting donors' recorded wishes, including the wish for absolute anonymity in perpetuity.

Major donors may wish to name the outcome of their donation (for example, a bursary or a building). This is welcomed.

- It is expected that the donor will be recognised through the attachment of his or her name, or that of a relative or close friend (c.f. The Irene and Henry Retford Fund), rather than with a name that does not have any comprehensible link to the donor.
- A donor is expected to give all or substantially all of the total cost if the outcome is to be named exclusively in recognition of him or her. For a large capital project, there may be naming opportunities for rooms or floors, or for the provision of a significant quantity of resources to support the purpose of the building (for example, books for a library), if a donor wishes to make a smaller gift.

- It is understood that a pledged gift may be received by the school over a period of time. In such circumstances at least 70% of a gift is to have been received before the donor's naming request will be confirmed in public.

Authority to accept a donation

The Development Director and Campaign Director have authorisation to accept gifts up to £5,000; the Head is authorised to accept gifts with a value more than £5,000 up to £20,000.

Any decision about whether to reject a gift (regardless of value) and any gift with a value in excess of £20,000 must be submitted for approval to the Donation Review Committee, the members of which are at least two Governors (including the Chairman) and the Head. The Development or Campaign Director will prepare a short explanation of the provenance and the context of the gift, and draw attention to any perceived risks associated with it. The Donation Review Committee may take up to a month to report back on any decision.

Decisions of the Donation Review Committee are minuted at meetings of the Development and Charity Executive Committee.

Please see also Highgate's Anti-Money Laundering Policy

*This policy was drafted May 2010
This policy was revised June 2019*