



**The Public Schools of Brookline**  
Brookline Town Hall  
333 Washington Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Brookline, Massachusetts 02445

### **Guidance for Parents or Guardians Regarding Gifts to Teachers/School Staff**

- Gifts to teachers or other school staff are not required or expected. While appreciated, there is no expectation that a parent or guardian give a gift to a teacher or staff member.
- The guidance below has been developed to assist those who wish to make a gift, so that the gift is consistent with regulations set forth by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Ethics Commission.

*If you decide you would like to give a gift to a teacher or school staff member, please carefully review the information below.*

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The **Commonwealth of Massachusetts State Ethics Commission** provides the following parameters for gifts to public employees:

#### *Personal Gifts*

- In general, a public employee (teacher, paraprofessional and other staff) may not accept any gift worth \$50 or more that is given because of the position they hold.
- Public employees may accept gifts that are worth less than \$50, but they are required to disclose in writing that they have done so if, based on the specific circumstances, a reasonable person would think that the public employee might unduly show favor to the giver or the giver's child, or be influenced by the giver.

#### *Gifts to the Classroom or School*

- The law regulates gifts to public employees, not gifts to public agencies. Therefore, parents and/or students may give gifts to a particular public school, or a particular classroom, and the \$50 limit does not apply.

#### *Class Gifts*

- The Ethics Commission created an exemption to permit "class gifts" to teachers. A teacher may accept a gift or gifts from public school students and/or their parents and guardians, with an aggregate value of up to \$150, if the gift is identified only as being from the class and the identity of the givers and the individual amounts given are not identified to the recipient.
- Given that the donor(s) are unknown to the public employee, gifts received pursuant to this exemption are not required to be disclosed.
- A teacher may accept a class gift and also individual gifts from persons who did not contribute to the class gift, but any individual, personal gift is still subject to disclosure requirements outlined above.
- No family is required to participate in a class gift; donations to a class gift are entirely voluntary.

We encourage you to review the Ethics Commission rules regarding "Gifts to Public School Teachers and Staff" available here: <http://www.mass.gov/ethics/gifts-to-public-school-teachers-and-staff.html>

Families who wish to acknowledge a teacher or other staff person with a gift should consider making a donation toward a class gift or making a gift to the PTO in the name of the staff member(s).