

SPONSORSHIP POLICY AND GUIDELINES



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Education
and Training

GOVERNANCE: SPONSORSHIP POLICY AND GUIDELINES

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Executive Director/s responsible	Executive Director, Communications
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How to use this policy

This Sponsorship Policy and Guidelines and related templates, applies to **corporate** and **school** sponsorship of Departmental and school initiatives (**incoming**) and sponsorship provided by the Department and schools to other organisations, initiatives or events (**outgoing**).

This Policy is designed for use by corporate staff and schools to help manage and assess possible sponsorship opportunities.

All relevant templates can be found on [Sponsorship page on EduGate](#)/School Policy and Advisory Guide

Introduction and purpose

Sponsorship can provide a mutually beneficial and purposeful relationship between organisations/businesses and Victorian Government schools, the Department and agencies, contributing to strong school and corporate communities. Well-managed sponsorship arrangements can provide an effective way of increasing awareness of messages, policies and initiatives, communicating Department goals and building stakeholder relationships, helping you communicate with specific audiences within the community.

The Department of Education and Training's (the Department) Sponsorship Policy and Guidelines (Policy) provides guidance on sponsorship activities undertaken by the Department, Victorian Government schools, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority.

For the purposes of this policy, any references to the Department or Departmental staff includes Victorian Government schools, staff and any contractors working on their behalf.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

This Policy aligns with the Whole of Victorian Government (WOVG) [Victorian Government Sponsorship Policy: Relevant Legislation and Policies](#) and sets out details of legislation and other policies relevant to Government sponsorship.

The WOVG policy sets the overarching principles of sponsorship management:

1. Ensuring probity.
2. Achieving efficiency and effectiveness.
3. Maintaining transparency and accountability.
4. Implementing effective risk management.

Definition and Interpretation

Sponsorship is the act of supporting an event or organisation financially, through the provision of products, services or activities, in exchange for **rights** (including naming rights) or certain specified **benefits** (such as logo placement or public acknowledgement). The WOVG sponsorship policy includes communication and branding partnerships (such as awards events having a media partnership) at the corporate level.

The individual, group or business that provides the support is known as a **sponsor**, and the rights or benefits typically relate to the sponsor's own reputation management or communication objectives.

Incoming sponsorship is where an external organisation provides financial or in-kind support for a Department or school initiative, event or program.

Outgoing sponsorship is where the Department, or a school, provides financial or in-kind support to an external organisation for their initiative, event or program.

Sponsorship does **not** include:

- **donations** to (or from) schools, agencies or corporate business units of money, goods or services
- **philanthropic** efforts by the Department such as donating money to a charity, or volunteering efforts
- the **sale** of advertising space, editorial comment, or advertorials (refer to [Departmental Advertising Advice](#))
- **grants** discretionary funding provided to external individuals or organisations for a specific purpose directed at achieving goals and objectives consistent with government policy, where the grant recipient is selected on merit against a set of criteria
- **bequests** which impose no obligations on the recipient and offer little or no rights or benefits to the provider
- **joint ventures** or **consultancies**.

School sponsorship

In this Policy, **schools** is taken to mean school-based staff (including the principal of a school in their capacity as executive officer of a school council) implementing sponsorship decisions for a school council.

This is because sponsorship is considered a function undertaken by a school council under Part 2.3 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (ETRA).

Compliance with this policy is mandatory under the Finance Manual for Victorian Government Schools (see section 9.8 – Locally Raised Funds – Sponsorship).

Principles of sponsorship

The Department and schools must only engage in sponsorship activity that meets one or more of the following:

- promotes and improves educational outcomes
- supports corporate and school goals and objectives
- increases effectiveness of Departmental strategic programs
- engages or builds relationships with key stakeholders
- communicates key messages to target audiences.

Determining if sponsorship is appropriate

The Department, including schools, receive many requests for incoming and outgoing sponsorship. Not all approaches to engage in sponsorship arrangement need to be considered. If you decide to consider a sponsorship the information in this policy and guidelines document will help you assess whether the request is appropriate.

1. ENSURING PROBITY

Appropriate activity

The Department and schools must not engage in sponsorship that is inappropriate, either through association or activity, and the following activities/organisations should not be considered for sponsorship:

- activities aimed at delivering or replacing core Departmental, school or agency services
- activities or sponsorship partners whose values, products, purposes or objectives are inconsistent with the Department's policies, values, priorities or objectives.
- political parties, tobacco companies, gaming venues, companies involved in the sale or promotion of alcohol, or involved in the sale/promotion of firearms
- companies that encourage unhealthy food choices by young people
- religious organisations or religious activities
- unregistered charities and not-for-profit organisations, including those not registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
- organisations or companies that are financially unsound or unstable (see section on implementing effective risk management)
- agencies with inspectorial or regulatory powers over the Department
- any activity or organisation seeking for the Department to directly endorse or promote its products and/or services
- any activity in breach of the [Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees](#).

Commercial organisations can be considered for **incoming** sponsorships if the organisation is not associated with an inappropriate activity listed above.

For **outgoing** sponsorships, commercial organisations (excluding media organisations) are not considered suitable candidates for the Department.

Open and effective competition

Open and effective competition is a key principle underpinning Departmental activities, and potential sponsors for the Department, agencies or schools should be given a genuine opportunity to be selected.

If you receive a request for either incoming or outgoing sponsorships, part of your consideration should be evaluating whether there are other organisations in the sector or your local community who should also be given the opportunity.

Ethical behaviour and fair dealing

Participation in sponsorship (including those with advertising) should not place undue pressure on employees, parents, students or school communities to purchase particular goods or services, subscribe to particular beliefs or attitudes, or undertake certain activities or actions.

Everyone involved in making decisions about or managing sponsorships must behave ethically and fairly and:

- declare and avoid conflicts of interest
- refuse gifts, invitations to events and functions, or other favours if offered as part of sponsorship negotiations
- maintain confidentiality with respect to commercial-in-confidence, intellectual property issues, matters under negotiation and any other confidential information
- maintain high standards of transparency and accountability
- names or addresses of Departmental, school or agency employees or school council members or students and their families must not be provided to an organisation or business as a benefit of sponsorship
- comply with the [Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees](#).

2. ACHIEVING EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

Value for money

Value for money is not necessarily about the highest or lowest dollar amount, but rather the best possible outcome that can be achieved using the available resources. For example, a sponsorship proposal may demonstrate good value for money because it helps you reach a key audience or because it offers an extremely low risk activity or association.

Another issue to consider is duplication across the Department and Government. It may not be efficient if two or more divisions within the Department are providing sponsorship to the same organisation. It is best practice to ask sponsors who their current sponsors are (or who else they are sponsoring).

It is useful to know if another school, agency or division is attempting to secure sponsorship from the same organisation as you, which is why all corporate and high-value school sponsorships (see below for thresholds) need to be registered on a sponsorship register, managed by the Department's Communications Division.

3. MAINTAINING ACCOUNTABILITY

Corporate staff

All corporate sponsorship activities must be approved by the Executive Director of the relevant division and then reported to the Communications Division prior to implementation by completing the *Sponsorship Declaration Form*.

Staff need to attach any relevant documentation that assisted them in assessing and approving the proposal – such as a sponsorship prospectus and business case. If the Sponsor requires naming rights of a government asset, event or initiative, ministerial approval must be sought.

Schools

Detailed guidance on process steps, required approval levels and recording requirements is contained within the Schools Sponsorship Procedure document, which must be read and followed in conjunction with this Policy, and:

- schools must maintain and record their own sponsorship register for all sponsorships
- all sponsorships above \$25,000 need to be approved by Regional Director and Executive Director, Communications and submitted to the Strategic Communications branch sponsorship@edumail.vic.gov.au
- if the Sponsor requires the naming rights of a government asset, event or initiative the Communications team must be informed and ministerial approval sought
- schools being approached with requests to advertise state-wide or country-wide corporate sponsorships need to refer these requests to the Communications Division.

4. IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE RISK MANAGEMENT

Weighing up the benefits and risks of sponsorship should be considered when deciding if your school or business unit will proceed with a sponsorship.

Risks

The risks of sponsorship can include:

- perceptions of improper conduct
- the potential to embarrass the Department, agency or school through associating them or their activity with an inappropriate sponsor or one of poor repute. This may be reconsidered if sponsorship is intentionally sought from or by a company seeking to rebuild its reputation. To prevent this risk, appropriate review should be sought when considering sponsorship agreements which may have potential for reputational damage
- in the case of incoming sponsorship, undertaking an activity on the basis of the promise of corporate sponsorship which then does not materialise
- breaching Government accounting requirements (see **Approving and Reporting**)
- in the case of incoming sponsorship, underestimating the value to potential corporate sponsors of sponsoring Department, agency or school activities and initiatives
- that the sponsorship is not cost-effective, in the case of outgoing sponsorship
- financial risks of involvement with a sponsorship partner which may include risk of financial insolvency or lack of adequate insurance.

Managing risk

- **Appropriate association** — to assess the level of risk associated with a proposed sponsorship, you will need to conduct a risk assessment. The *Assessing Sponsorship Checklist* provides a useful set of criteria to follow when doing this.
- **Financial risk** — you need to ensure that potential sponsors pose no financial risk to the Department/school/agency as a result of the sponsorship arrangement. For lower-value sponsorships, this can simply be a declaration from the potential sponsor that confirms:
 - they have sufficient financial resources to deliver the goods or services described in the sponsorship agreement
 - they are not subject to any current or impending legal action that could impact on their capacity to deliver their agreed sponsorship.

Benefits and inclusions

BENEFITS

The benefits of incoming sponsorship include providing resources or services, either directly as cash sponsorship or indirectly as in-kind sponsorship. This may:

- reduce the costs to the Department/school/agency of performing a particular activity or allow for enhanced program delivery and/or expansion
- provide funding for publications, conferences or other special activities that promote a particular program or initiative
- provide the Department/school/agency with an opportunity to develop better working relationships with stakeholders and the wider community
- promote the public profile, increasing community awareness, of a program, initiative or activity to a wider-than-normal audience.

The key benefits of outgoing sponsorship (provided by the Department/school/agency) are to:

- increase the Department's exposure to its key target audiences
- enhance the Department's image
- increase awareness of the Department and its work.

Once a business decision has been made that an outgoing or incoming sponsorship is appropriate, you should:

- request a sponsorship proposal from the **incoming** proposed sponsor, the proposal should have clear objectives, key performance criteria and an evaluation plan
- using the Assessing Sponsorship Checklist, analyse the risks, costs and benefits of the sponsorship
- seek appropriate approval and recording of the sponsorship as per this policy.

APPROPRIATE ACKNOWLEDGMENT

If a business seeking sponsorship is offering a package of benefits, there may be an opportunity for the Department/school/agency to negotiate what is on offer.

The level of acknowledgement provided to sponsors should be consistent with the level of sponsorship. Acknowledgment must be in a form that is associated with positively enhancing education outcomes and the public image of the Department must be considered at all times.

Incoming sponsorships

Acknowledgement should not be seen to endorse the sponsor, their services or products, and can include:

- placement of a plaque or notice in a format that has the prior approval of the sponsor, for the duration of a sponsored activity or for an agreed period of time
- public display at functions of temporary signage acknowledging the sponsorship
- acknowledgement of the sponsorship in newsletters (e.g. advertisement) or speeches
- a letter of appreciation to the sponsor
- inclusion of a by-line, forward or advertisement from the sponsor in a school's prospectus, magazine or other publication
- attendance by the sponsor at school functions and an opportunity to make an address or present an award.

Outgoing sponsorships

A typical package for outgoing sponsorship can include:

- public acknowledgements
- logo placement and signage
- speaking engagements
- social media posts
- advertising.

Other benefits can include:

- naming rights
- access to mailing lists
- placement and promotion of web links
- media and publicity
- opportunities to network
- placement of articles in targeted publications
- competitions.

Assigning a dollar value to each benefit can be difficult and should be done on a case-by-case basis. Much depends on the nature of the sponsored organisation, the relationship between the organisation and the Department/school/agency, and the potential 'value add' of each benefit. For example, there may be unforeseen benefits such as increased awareness of your message through word of mouth or access to social media networks with a significant number of followers.

NAMING RIGHTS

Naming rights refers to, in addition to other rights and benefits of sponsorship, a sponsor has negotiated to have their name added as a prefix to the sponsored activity.

Careful consideration must be given to the potential financial, legal, marketing and branding implications of agreeing to grant naming rights.

The approval of the relevant Minister must be obtained for any sponsorship agreement that gives naming rights for a Governmental asset (such as a school building), event or initiative to an external organisation. The approval of the Secretary must be obtained for any sponsorship agreement that involves the Department obtaining naming rights for an external asset, event or initiative.

Sponsorship arrangements relating to naming rights must have explicit end dates.

Speak to the Communications Division for advice if your sponsorship proposal includes naming rights.

STATE-WIDE SPONSORSHIP OF SCHOOLS

There are a number of state-wide or country-wide corporate sponsorships that affect local schools. For examples, regular promotions run by major supermarket chains and banks.

Schools being approached with requests to advertise these promotions to their school community need to refer the requests to the Communications Division (sponsorship@edumail.vic.gov.au).

In some instances, the Department may enter into an agreement with an entity to apply to all schools.

Approvals and reporting

CORPORATE STAFF

All corporate sponsorship activities must be approved by the Executive Director of the relevant division and then reported to the Communications Division prior to implementation by completing the *Sponsorship Declaration Form*.

Once completed, the declaration form, and any relevant attachments, should be sent via email (sponsorship@edumail.vic.gov.au) to the Strategic Communications Branch, Communications Division who will record the details on the Department's Sponsorship Register.

The following information is recorded by the *Sponsorship Declaration Form*:

- name of sponsorship
- recipient's name
- sponsor's name and organisation
- purpose/intended use of sponsorship
- description and estimated value
- timing and duration of arrangement
- decision regarding sponsorship
- signature of authorised delegate.

SCHOOLS

Detailed guidance on process steps, required approval levels and recording requirements is contained within the Schools Sponsorship Procedure document, which must be read and followed in conjunction with this Policy. Below is a summary of the approvals required at various sponsorship levels.

Incoming sponsorship value	Approved by:	Sponsorship register
Equal to or less than \$25,000	School Council	School register
Greater than \$25,000	School Council Regional Director Executive Director, Communications Division	School register, and Central Department register via Communications Division

Outgoing Sponsorship value	Approved by:	Sponsorship register
Equal to or less than \$25,000	Align with school financial delegation approval limits.	School register
Greater than \$25,000	Align with school financial delegation approval limits.	School register, and Central Department register via Communications Division

FINALISING CONTRACTS AND FINANCIALS

Once the necessary approvals and agreements are all in place, a confirmation letter and contract are required from the Department/School/Agency.

Templates for sponsorship engagement letters and contracts (for under \$25,000 and \$25,000 and over) are available from eduGate/[School Policy and Advisory Guide](#) and should be provided to the sponsoring or sponsored organisation, with a copy held on file.

Financial sponsorships should be treated like any other outgoing financial arrangement and established departmental financial management policies and processes must be followed.

Corporate sponsorships are to be recorded in Oracle against either of the following charge codes*:

- Incoming sponsorships – 79893 (Incoming Sponsorship Revenue)
- Outgoing sponsorships – 84667 (Sponsorship to External Organisations).

For schools:

- record incoming sponsorship funds in Cases21 as 74580 – Other Locally Raised Funds

In addition to formal processes, it is worth keeping in regular contact with your sponsorship partner to assess and maintain the sponsorship relationship.

Tax implications

If the Department or a school receives sponsorship in a form of cash payment, the received funds are subject to GST. The following examples illustrate the types of sponsorships where a GST liability would arise.

- A company gives money for a scholarship and the name of the company is included on all written material about the scholarship — the benefit to the sponsor is a form of advertising.
- An organisation buys rights or benefits from the Department, including naming rights for an event or program. The rights or benefits typically relate to the sponsor's reputation, management or communication objectives and are delivered through associating its name, products, services or activities with the Department.

Evaluation

Schools sponsorships valued greater than \$25,000 and all corporate sponsorships (incoming and outgoing) should be evaluated when concluded and their outcomes documented within three months (and/or within the same financial year).

All evaluation and reporting forms are available at the **Edugate Sponsorship page for corporate and the Sponsorship School Policy and Advisory page for schools**.

Copies of the completed evaluation forms are to be provided to the Communications Division for all **corporate** sponsorships. For more information, contact the Communications Division at sponsorship@edumail.vic.gov.au

Evaluations are used to update guidance and are used to inform future sponsorship decisions. Please note that some details of your evaluation may be shared with others in the Department who may be seeking a sponsorship with the same organisation.

Useful tools and references

A **Corporate Sponsorship Procedure** and **Schools Sponsorship Procedure** document have been created to summarise the policy and guidelines and assist with assessing sponsorships.

In addition to this, a range of links, templates and related documents are available in the Edugate Sponsorship page for corporate and the Sponsorship School Policy and Advisory page for schools. The documents include:

- Assessing sponsorship checklist
- Sponsorship Business Case Template
- Sponsorship Agreement Template
- Incoming Sponsorship Engagement letter
- Outgoing Sponsorship Engagement Letter
- Sponsorship Declaration Form
- Sponsorship Evaluation and Feedback Letter
- Post Sponsorship Evaluation Report
- Incoming Sponsorship Evaluation Form
- Outgoing Sponsorship Evaluation Form

Queries relating to the application of this Policy, and the management and assessment of sponsorship activity, can be directed to sponsorship@edumail.vic.gov.au

Glossary

Advertising	Advertising is an arrangement where a company purchases spaces for an agreed price to advertise their product or service and there are no additional benefits to the advertiser. For example, a company pays a school to buy space in a newsletter or magazine, or a billboard at a sporting event.
Bartering	See 'In-kind' definition
Benefits	Benefits refers to what the Department receives or provides for its sponsorship investment and any additional or potential value.
Bequests	Transfer of personal property—such as cash, securities or other assets—upon the owner's death, as specified in their will.
Consultancies	A consultancy is a particular type of contract that is implemented primarily to perform a discrete task for an entity that facilitates decision making through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision of expert analysis and advice; and/or • development of a written report or other intellectual output.
Donations	A donation is a one-off untied gift that has no requirement for benefits in return. If the donor receive more than 'mere recognition' (i.e. advertising), the donation must be treated as a sponsorship. <p>Examples of donations</p> <p>Examples of donations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department is given \$2000 by a former student's accounting firm with no requirement to provide any goods or services in return. The firm is mentioned on an honour board as having donated the money. • The Department is given timber by the local hardware store to rebuild a stage at the local school. No goods and services are requested in return, no payment is requested for the timber. • The Department raises money for a particular charity (i.e. Red Nose Day, Royal Children's Hospital) and wishes to donate this money. The Department should retain sufficient documentation (charity flyer, charity acknowledgement) to support the payment.

Grants	Discretionary funding provided to external individuals or organisations for a specified purpose directed at achieving goals and objectives consistent with government policy, where the grant recipient is selected on merit against a set of criteria.
In-kind Support (also Bartering)	This kind of sponsorship is where a sponsor provides services or goods instead of cash. Sometimes this is called 'value in kind' or 'contra' sponsorship.
Joint ventures	A joint venture is a business arrangement where two or more parties agree to pool their resources for the purpose of accomplishing a specific task.
Naming rights	Naming rights refers to a form of sponsorship where a sponsor, in addition to other rights and benefits of sponsorship, has negotiated to have their name added as a prefix to the sponsored activity.
Partnership arrangements	For the purpose of this policy, a partnership is defined as a relationship between two or more organisations around communications and branding, for example, awards events having a media partnership at the corporate level. <i>There are a number of different types of partnership and schools and corporate staff may need to seek advice to ensure they are applying the definition of partnership correctly.</i>
Philanthropy	Philanthropy is seen as involving charitable giving to human causes on a large scale. Acts of philanthropy include donating money to a charity, volunteering at a local shelter, or raising money to donate to cancer research.
Sponsorship	The sponsor provides a contribution of money or in-kind support in return for certain specified benefits, such as logo placement, public acknowledgement etc. Sponsorship is therefore not philanthropic and is not a donation. (see section 3. Definition for more detail) Incoming Where an external organisation provides financial or in-kind support for a Department initiative, event or program. Outgoing Where the Department provides financial or in-kind support to an external organisation for their initiative, event or program.