The GORSE Academies Trust

Golden Hello Scheme Policy

Designated Person:	Director of Human Resources
Reviewed by:	Governors Policy Committee
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Contents

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Golden Hello Scheme Policy

The following amendments have been made to this version of the policy:

Section	Changes
Policy structure	Expanded structure (scope, values, roles & responsibilities, linked policies)
Administration process	Introduction of a formal Golden Hello Payment Schedule
Offer process	Mandatory issue and return of signed payment schedule with offer letter
Roles & responsibilities	Clear definition of responsibilities (CEO/DCEO, HR, Recruiting Managers)
Policy scope	Explicitly limited to external candidates
Wording and clarity	Full refresh to align with GORSE style and improve clarity

Introduction

There may be times when certain roles within The GORSE Academies Trust (GORSE) prove particularly challenging to attract candidates of the right calibre and with the high standards and commitment required by the trust. These roles are referred to as 'potentially hard to fill' roles.

There are several reasons for this, including skills shortages in the local, regional and national labour market. In order to maintain outstanding standards and ensure that the trust is able to appoint highly skilled and committed individuals, a Golden Hello payment may be considered.

A Golden Hello payment is a non-contractual incentive payment designed to increase the pool of high quality and suitably experienced external candidates. Each application for a Golden Hello payment will be considered and approved on a case-by-case basis.

This policy outlines the terms and conditions associated with the approval, payment and recovery of Golden Hello payments.

Scope of policy

Golden Hello payments may apply only to external candidates appointed to roles identified as potentially hard to fill, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

GORSE values

At the centre of our work are our GORSE values which underpin everything we do within the trust; diligence, integrity, rectitude and kindness. These values are important and we expect all professionals to exemplify those values through their behaviour and to act as ambassadors for those values on a day-to-day basis.

- **Diligence** – we expect all professionals, through the thoroughness of their work, to minimise the opportunity for errors at all levels of the organisation. We view being diligent as an essential characteristic of all professionals as it reduces the burden of

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work on others and ensures that the trust further develops its reputation as an employer renowned for the accuracy and quality of its work.

- **Integrity** - we seek to ensure that all professionals operate to the highest level of integrity. Great organisations are built upon people who are honest and uphold strong moral principles.
- **Rectitude -** the quality of rectitude links carefully to the importance of integrity and emphasises qualities around probity, decency and the trait of thinking and behaving in a correct and honest way. We expect all our colleagues to do the right thing, even when there would be no obvious personal consequence of not doing so.
- **Kindness** - as a trust we seek to be considerate and generous of spirit in all that we do and recognise that when we lack diligence, integrity and rectitude we often cause an increase in workload or anxiety for others. Our kindness works on a personal level and includes looking to be supportive and appropriately challenging in an honest and transparent manner, rather than speaking about people behind their backs. Our language is also a key indicator of our kindness; it is sacred to us as a trust to talk to and about every member of our community, and those outside our community with whom we engage, with appropriate compassion, sensitivity and empathy. We never speak about any individual in an unkind or disparaging manner.

Links to other policies and legislative/ national guidance

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following trust (GORSE) policies:

- GORSE Teacher Pay Policy
- Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy
- HMRC guidance on taxable benefits

Roles and responsibilities

Policy Committee

- Approves this policy and any subsequent amendments

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/Deputy Chief Executive Officer (DCEO)

- Approves Golden Hello payments through the Authority to Recruit (ATR) process.
- Approves any variation to standard payment limits.

Director of Human Resources

- Oversees implementation and compliance with this policy.
- Ensures Golden Hello payments are processed correctly and in line with payroll requirements.

Recruiting Managers

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- Submit a robust business case for a Golden Hello payment through the Authority to Recruit (ATR) process.
- Ensure that, once approval is granted, the trust-approved Golden Hello Payment Schedule is fully completed.
- Ensure the Golden Hello Payment Schedule is issued as an attachment to the offer letter and returned signed alongside the signed offer letter.
- Work with the central HR team to ensure all documentation is completed and authorised prior to any Golden Hello payment being processed.

1. The Golden Hello Scheme

1.1 General principles

A Golden Hello payment has a maximum level of 10% of actual salary. Actual salary refers to the amount of salary for the role and will be pro-rata if the role is less than full-time, all year round.

The Golden Hello is a non-consolidated, one-off bonus payment. It is non-pensionable and will be subject to income tax and National Insurance deductions.

1.2 Approval

Approval to advertise a Golden Hello payment for a potentially hard to fill role must be sought through the Authority to Recruit (ATR) process.

All Golden Hello payments must be approved by the CEO/DCEO. Where approval is not granted, there is no right of appeal.

The use of the Golden Hello scheme is vulnerable to criticisms of conflicts of interest connected to cronyism and nepotism. That being the case considerations about its use should be particularly cognisant of external perception. It is essential that any professional working within the trust plays no part whatsoever in the use of Golden Hello payments involving members of their own family, close friends or former colleagues.

1.3 Payment guidelines

Golden Hello payments will be determined in line with Table 1.

Table 1: Payment guidelines

Category	Category Description	Payment Amount
Local skills shortage	Roles attracting candidates from the local community (e.g. up to a 30-minute commute).	Up to 5% of actual salary
Regional skills shortage	Roles attracting candidates from the wider region (commute typically over 30 minutes).	Up to 7.5% of actual salary
National skills shortage	Roles attracting candidates nationally or internationally, often involving relocation.	Up to 10% of actual salary

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Any variation to the payment amount is at the absolute discretion of the CEO/DCEO, with approval from the Chair of the Board or a Remuneration Committee member, following consideration of a robust business case.

1.4 Payment dates

Golden Hello payments (pro-rata for part-time staff) will be paid in three instalments as detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Payment dates

Payment Type	Percentage of Total Golden Hello	When paid
Payment 1	25%	In the salary paid in the month following appointment
Payment 2	50%	Following completion of 6 months' service, subject to the employee not being in a capability process
Payment 3	25%	Following completion of 12 months' service

Where an employee is subject to a capability process (including probation extensions), payment will be delayed until the process concludes.

1.5 Fixed-term contracts

Where a role is offered on a fixed-term contract of between 6 months and 2 years, the Golden Hello payment will be up to 50% of the permanent equivalent amount.

Golden Hello payments do not apply to fixed-term contracts of less than 6 months.

1.6 Administration of Golden Hello payments

Once a colleague has been appointed to a role attracting a Golden Hello payment, the hiring manager must complete the trust-approved Golden Hello Payment Schedule. This schedule will confirm the total payment value, instalment amounts, payment dates and any applicable repayment obligations.

The completed Golden Hello Payment Schedule must be retained as part of the employee's personnel record. Golden Hello payments will not be processed without a fully completed and authorised payment schedule.

1.7 Offer letter and employee acknowledgement

Where a Golden Hello payment is approved, the details of the payment will be confirmed in writing within the employee's offer letter.

The Golden Hello Payment Schedule must be issued as an attachment to the offer letter and returned signed alongside the signed offer letter. By signing the offer letter and payment

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schedule, the employee confirms their understanding of, and agreement to, the Golden Hello payment terms and any repayment obligations set out in this policy.

2. Leavers and repayment of Golden Hello

2.1 Voluntary resignations

Where an employee voluntarily leaves trust employment within three years of commencing employment, they will be required to repay a percentage of the Golden Hello payment in line with Table 3 below.

2.2 Dismissals

Where an employee is dismissed for reasons of misconduct or capability within three years of commencing employment, they will be required to repay a percentage of the Golden Hello payment in line with Table 3 below.

Table 3: Re-Payment Obligations

Length of Service at Leaving	Reimbursement	Example (based on £2,000 Golden Hello)
Up to 6 months	100% of payment received to date	£500 (Represents 100% of the 25% of the £2000, paid in month 1)
6–12 months	80% of payment received to date	£1,125 (Represents 80% or 75% of the £2000 paid in month 1 and at 6 months)
1–2 years	60% of full payment	£1200 (Represents 60% of full £2000 paid in first 12 months of employment)
2–3 years	40% of full payment	£800 (Represents 40% of full £2000 paid in first 12 months of employment)
Over 3 years	None	No repayment due

No repayment will apply where employment ends due to redundancy or permanent ill health. Other extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

2.3 Repayment arrangements

Repayment will normally be made through deductions from salary prior to the employee's leaving date.

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3. Eligibility restrictions

3.1 Existing employees

Golden Hello payments do not normally apply to employees transferring roles within GORSE. This will be made clear in the recruitment advertisement.

3.2 Employment agency introductions

This policy does not apply to individuals appointed via an employment agency, whether initially engaged on a temporary basis or introduced by an agency for permanent appointment.

3.3 Ex-employees

Former trust employees will only be eligible for a Golden Hello payment where there has been a break in service of at least 12 months between leaving and rejoining GORSE.

Changes to the policy

The GORSE Academies Trust reserves the right to amend the details of this policy as required at its absolute discretion.

The GORSE Academies Trust reserves the right to withdraw this policy at its absolute discretion.
Document control:

Reason for version change:	Cycle review	Version number:	2.0
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