



St Hilda's College Fundraising Policy

1. Introduction

St Hilda's College is a registered charity (charity number 1137537), which undertakes fundraising in support of its charitable purposes.

This policy outlines the principles and procedures that will guide our fundraising activities, adhering to the [Charity Commission guidance](#) and the Fundraising Regulator's [Code of Fundraising Practice](#).

2. Fundraising Principles

St Hilda's College is committed to the principle that it solicits gifts from those adult individuals who have an active relationship with the College — alumni or friends, or those individuals or organisations which have been carefully identified as having a potential interest in supporting the College more generally or a specific initiative.

College is committed to ensuring that all fundraising activity carried out by or on its behalf is:

- Lawful and ethical, and aligned with the College's charitable objectives;
- Open and transparent, so that donors understand who is making the request and how their gift will be used;
- Honest and proportionate, avoiding exaggeration, misleading statements or undue pressure;
- Respectful of individual circumstances, including communication preferences and the needs of people in vulnerable situations;
- Responsible and accountable, with appropriate governance and oversight.

Fundraising at St Hilda's is relationship-based and stewardship-led, reflecting the College's commitment to long-term engagement with alumni, friends and supporters.

3. Governance and Oversight

3.1 The Governing Body retains overall responsibility for ensuring that fundraising is conducted in accordance with charity law and the Fundraising Code.

3.2 The Development Advisory Committee provides oversight of fundraising strategy, risk and compliance, reporting to the Governing Body.

3.3 Significant or potentially sensitive gifts may be referred to the Governing Body, and, where appropriate, to the University of Oxford's Committee to Review Donations and Research Funding (CRDRF) for consideration.

3.4 The College ensures that restricted funds are used as closely as possible for the purposes for which they were given.

4. Means of Solicitation

St Hilda's College uses a range of appropriate and proportionate methods to communicate with alumnae, friends and other supporters about opportunities to give. All fundraising activity is conducted in accordance with the Code of Fundraising Practice and the [College's Data Protection Policy](#).

The College may use the following methods:

4.1 Direct mail and email

Supporters may receive written communications about giving and current priorities. Communication preferences are recorded and respected. Individuals who have opted out of fundraising communications, or who are registered with the Telephone Preference Service (where applicable), will not be contacted for that purpose.

4.2 Face-to-face meetings

Members of the Development Office may meet current or prospective donors to discuss support for the College. Where a meeting includes discussion of a potential gift, this will usually be made clear in advance. Fundraisers will not exert undue pressure and will respect a decision not to give.

4.3 Telephone campaigns (telethons)

The College may conduct periodic telephone campaigns to provide updates and share College news and priorities, solicit donations and thank donors for their support. Such campaigns typically involve trained and supervised students or recent graduates. Individuals are given advance notice and the opportunity to opt out. Calls are conducted courteously and without pressure. A member of the Development team oversees the calling and call notes and conducts all appropriate follow-ups. Callers are paid an hourly rate and are not remunerated according to funds raised.

4.4 Fundraising events

The College may hold events at which fundraising takes place. Whenever applicable, promotional materials clearly indicate the purpose for which funds are sought. Appropriate consideration is given to accessibility, safety and compliance requirements.

4.5 Legacies

The College may provide information about leaving a gift in a will. Communications make clear that the College does not provide legal advice and that individuals should seek independent professional advice.

Legacy gifts are applied in accordance with the donor's wishes or, where unrestricted, in furtherance of the College's charitable purposes. The College recognises that there may be circumstances in which a legacy's specified purpose can no longer be fulfilled in line with current

College practice or legal requirements. In such circumstances, the College will seek to apply the gift in a manner that remains as close as possible to the donor's original intentions, in accordance with charity law and relevant guidance.

4.6 Volunteers

Volunteers may, on occasion, assist with fundraising activity within their peer networks. The College retains oversight of communications and ensures that donations are made directly to the College. Volunteers are not provided with personal data for independent use without a signed volunteer agreement and appropriate safeguards.

4.7 Digital and indirect methods

Information about giving may be included in publications, event materials, e-newsletters and on the College website. All materials are prepared with care to ensure accuracy and clarity, and are not designed to cause distress, embarrassment or undue pressure.

4.8 Working with third parties

Where the College engages third-party organisations to support fundraising activity, written agreements are put in place. The College takes reasonable steps to ensure that third parties comply with the Fundraising Code and relevant legal requirements. The College retains oversight of fundraising conducted in its name.

5. Gift Acceptance

The College welcomes philanthropic support in furtherance of its charitable purposes. Each proposed gift is considered on its merits and in the context of the College's values, legal obligations and reputation.

The College would not refuse or return a donation unless there are exceptional circumstances. The College reserves the right to decline or return a donation where acceptance would:

- Be unlawful;
- Compromise the College's independence, integrity or reputation;
- Conflict with its charitable objectives; or
- Be inconsistent with its ethical standards.

The Charity Commission guidance emphasises the importance to a charity of knowing its donors; responsibility for being familiar with the College's major donors when they are approached is within the remit of the Principal and Director of Development. Should there be any concerns about a prospective donation, on a case-by-case basis, the matter can be referred by the College to the University's Committee to Review Donations and Research Funding (CRDRF) and/or background checks undertaken by the College itself.

The College maintains appropriate written records of material fundraising decisions, including the rationale for accepting or declining significant gifts, any conflicts of interest identified and recorded on the database, due diligence undertaken and relevant professional advice received.

Records are retained in accordance with College policies and are available for review as part of governance oversight.

The College does not attempt to claim Gift Aid on any donations which do not meet HMRC guidance, but it is committed to reclaiming Gift Aid on all gifts made by UK taxpayers where a valid declaration has been made. The College works with the University to provide tax-efficient means of making a gift through the China Office in Hong Kong and to issue tax receipts to Canadian donors.

The College has a close relationship to the American Friends of St Hilda's Foundation, registered in Boston, MA. It provides a tax-efficient vehicle for US donors and a dedicated resource for channelling philanthropy in support of College priorities. It operates in compliance with US regulations, and its public records can be found [here](#).

The College will not accept any donation where there is an expectation, whether expressed or implied, that a gift will influence the award of a student place, employment opportunity or any other form of preferential treatment. Equally, admissions decisions and appointments will never be made in recognition of philanthropic support. Selection for study and employment at St Hilda's is based solely on academic achievement, professional merit and the relevant selection criteria. Individuals involved in admissions and recruitment processes will not have access to information relating to the giving history of applicants or their immediate family members.

6. Safeguarding and People in Vulnerable Circumstances

St Hilda's College recognises that individuals may at times be in vulnerable circumstances, whether due to ill health, bereavement, financial hardship, cognitive impairment, or other factors affecting their ability to make a free and informed decision.

Those fundraising on behalf of the College are expected to respond sensitively to the needs of each individual supporter and to remain alert to signs that a person may be unable to make an informed decision about a donation.

Where a fundraiser has reasonable grounds to believe that an individual lacks the capacity to make a decision to donate, no solicitation will be made, and any offer of a donation will not be accepted.

If the College receives credible evidence that a donor lacked capacity at the time a donation was made, the matter will be reviewed promptly and, where appropriate, the donation will be returned in accordance with relevant guidance and the College's legal obligations.

If a fundraiser believes that an individual may be in vulnerable circumstances, they should act with care and may pause or end the interaction in a manner that avoids distress. Fundraisers may also confirm the individual's communication preferences, where appropriate.

Where a third party contacts the College on behalf of a donor in relation to financial matters, the College will take reasonable steps to satisfy itself that the individual is properly authorised to act on the donor's behalf.

The College will not knowingly exploit vulnerability or exert undue pressure on any individual to make a donation.

Information relating to vulnerability will be handled sensitively and in accordance with data protection legislation.

7. Safeguarding Fundraisers and Code of Conduct

St Hilda's College is committed to ensuring that those engaged in fundraising on its behalf — including staff, students and volunteers — are treated with dignity and respect.

The College takes reasonable steps to safeguard fundraisers from harassment, intimidation or inappropriate behaviour in the course of their work. Fundraisers are expected to conduct themselves professionally and courteously, and the College will not tolerate abusive or threatening conduct towards those acting on its behalf.

All interactions are undertaken in accordance with the University of [Oxford Alumni, Supporter and Friends Code of Conduct](#), and with the College's general [Safeguarding and Harassment Policies](#). The Development Risk Assessment is reviewed annually.

Where concerns arise regarding the behaviour of a supporter or member of the public towards a fundraiser, they should be reported directly to the Director of Development.

8. Fundraising Complaints Procedure

At St Hilda's, we believe that philanthropy should be an enjoyable experience. We work hard to ensure that all our interactions with current and potential donors are of the highest quality. We are registered with the [Fundraising Regulator](#), and have signed up to the [Fundraising Promise](#) demonstrating our commitment to best practice.

However, despite our best efforts, we recognise that there may be occasions when a donor wishes to register their complaint. We take all feedback and complaints seriously and seek to address them quickly and appropriately.

A fundraising complaint

Fundraising complaints should pertain to an action or area which is within the remit of the St Hilda's College Development Office. If you believe that we have not complied with the [Fundraising Promise](#), and therefore may be in breach of the [Code of Fundraising Practice](#) as outlined on the Fundraising Regulator's website, please raise your concerns following the steps below.

How to complain — Tell us.

You may register your complaint with us in any of the following ways:

1. development.office@st-hildas.ox.ac.uk (Email)
2. Post: St Hilda's College, Cowley Place, Oxford, OX4 1DY
3. Please include your name and contact details in your email or letter so that we can contact you easily.

Throughout the complaint process, we will treat you fairly and with respect, keep you informed of progress, respond promptly, and let you know how to escalate a complaint if you wish to pursue it further.

We will respond

We aim to acknowledge all complaints in writing within 5 working days (with the exception of the Christmas period when the office may be closed for up to 10 calendar days).

Your complaint will be fully investigated, and the outcome of our investigation will be communicated to you within 20 working days of the receipt of your complaint. If it is not possible to give a response within that timescale, we will contact you to explain why and to provide an indication of when a full response can be expected.

If you are not satisfied

If you are not satisfied with our response, please let us know, and your complaint will be looked into by a senior manager. The senior manager will write to you setting out the outcome of their review and the rationale for their decision.

An acknowledgement will be sent in writing within 5 days of receiving your response, and we will aim to complete the review within 25 working days.

What to do next

If you are still not satisfied and would like to make a complaint to the Fundraising Regulator regarding the University of Oxford, please contact them via the [online complaint form](#).

9. Acknowledgement, Recognition and Stewardship

St Hilda's College is committed to the public and private recognition of its donors where it is desired. Each donor can expect to receive a formal and personalised email or letter from the College acknowledging their generous donation.

The names of all donors are recorded in the annual donor roll unless they have requested anonymity. The roll does not list the value of individual gifts.

When donors are listed as members of a donor circle, the amount of their donation is not listed, but they are, with their permission, listed within the circle donation bracket.

From time to time, other forms of recognition are offered in line with the value of the gifts, such as a plaque or a donor board in an area of College relevant to their gift, invitation to a stewardship event, a written report or publication, complimentary stay in College accommodation, or a piece of College memorabilia. Any benefits linked to donations are transparent, appropriate and proportionate to the size and frequency of the donation.

To safeguard the integrity of admissions and student-related decision-making processes, donations received from current students, or from their parents, partners, spouses or children, will ordinarily remain anonymous for the duration of the student's educational association with the College. During the period in which anonymity applies, donors will not receive formal recognition, donor benefits or bespoke stewardship arrangements.

Where an existing donor, or their spouse, partner, or child, submits an application to the College or is admitted as a student, stewardship activity may continue at a level consistent with the donor's established relationship with the College. However, no enhanced recognition, additional stewardship or public acknowledgement will be provided while the applicant is under consideration, or for the duration of any subsequent period of study. Any gifts made during this time will be treated as anonymous.

Where a gift is received from an alumna or other member of the College community who has not previously been a significant donor, and whose child is either applying to or currently studying at the College, the gift will not be subject to formal recognition, acknowledgement or stewardship until the applicant's relationship with the College has concluded or, where admission is successful, until the student has completed their studies.

The College may exercise discretion in relation to gifts made through collective fundraising initiatives, including Giving Days, challenge events or similar community-based campaigns. In such cases, the anonymity requirements set out above may be relaxed where individual contributions do not exceed £10,000.

10. Reviewing Policies

The College's fundraising policy will be reviewed by the Development Director bi-annually or sooner if there are changes to the Fundraising Code or relevant legislation. Any review will be approved by the Development Advisory Committee, and an updated version will be displayed on the College website.

v2, October 2026