

My Canine Companion (MCC) Fundraising Policy

The purpose of this policy is to enable My Canine Companion (hereafter referred to as MCC) to have a clear and consistent ethical policy in relation to fundraising.

Irrespective of any internal delegation procedures within MCC, the ultimate responsibility in respect of fundraising practices rests with the legally appointed Board of Directors.

The first part of the policy statement will deal with the general governance and ethical position of MCC in relation to fundraising and specifically acceptance/refusal of donations while the second part will deal with our relationship with business, the most common area where ethical issues arise.

The Charities Act 2009 provides guidance in relation to this. However, there are other relevant legal principles that the Board and their advisors should ensure are met when deciding whether or not to accept donations.

The law requires trustees, in deciding whether to accept or refuse a particular donation, to consider which course will, taking an overall view, be in the charity's best interests. The law allows practical and ethical factors to be taken into account as long as they are ones that are likely to affect the interests of the charity.

Given the difficulties of predicting all the various scenarios that may arise, this policy seeks to provide some general guidance.

The overriding principles are that MCC will;

- conduct all fundraising within the law
- and not damage MCC's good name in the pursuit of raising money
- fundraising methods will never be allowed to exploit our clients or staff or to compromise their situation or reputation.

A. Establishing a policy on the acceptance/refusal of donations

A clear policy on the acceptance/refusal of donations is important for all charitable organisations. Such a policy, acceptable to all those associated with MCC and agreed formally by the Board of Directors will:

- Ensure compliance with legal regulations where appropriate
- Clarify the legal obligations with regard to the acceptance/refusal of donations
- Avoid confusion as to who has the authority to take decisions in differing circumstances
- Help to ensure that decisions are not made on an ad hoc basis but are grounded in the mission and agreed objectives of the organisation
- Provide a clear objective standard against which external regulatory bodies can judge the actions of the charity in cases of potential or actual dispute
- Provide a clear, unambiguous policy statement making decisions intelligible, easier to justify and credible to the public at large
- Protect the reputation of the charity against adverse public reaction from existing or potential supporters

POLICY FOR THE ACCEPTANCE/REFUSAL OF DONATIONS

- 1 Responsibility for all decision's rests with the legally appointed Board of Directors of MCC.
- 2 The Board will at all times endeavour to take all decisions relating to the acceptance/refusal of donations "in the best interests of MCC".
- 3 The Board will aim to demonstrate that they have acted "in the best interests of MCC" irrespective of any individual or collective personal interest or predilection, in each and every case.
- 4 The Board will be particularly careful when refusing donations based solely on the grounds of expediency, as judged by themselves.
- 5 The Board will derive no personal benefit (individually or collectively) from donations, loans or other material support offered to MCC. Where material personal benefit is tied to support, the support, the benefit, or both will be declined.
- 6 Where it is clear that the activities of a donor are directly inimical to the objectives of MCC, the agreed policies of MCC, or to the beneficiaries of MCC, the Board may decide to refuse a donation.
- 7 Where it can be clearly shown that the cost to MCC of accepting a donation will be greater than the value of the donation itself, the Board may decide to refuse the donation.
- 8 Where the offer of support is dependent upon the fulfilment of certain conditions placed upon MCC, the Board have the right and may decide to refuse that support.
Such cases might exist where.
 - any condition linked to the support is, in itself, contrary to the objectives of MCC
 - any condition linked to the support which is regarded as unreasonable in relation to the nature of the support in terms of its size or impact on the work of MCC
 - where conditions linked to the support will divert MCC from pursuing its current objectives, policies or work priorities as a necessary result of the fulfilment of the conditions alone
 - where the conditions linked to the support tie the funds and/or property offered to a specific activity, that activity must itself be;
 - a) charitable in nature
 - b) within the scope of legitimate action permitted by the charitable objects of MCC and the powers granted to achieve those objects and
 - c) be practically achievable by MCC

- 9 Where an offer of support is itself dependent upon MCC first spending its own money or resources in order to facilitate the execution of the original offer of support, great care will be taken by the Board to avoid placing charitable assets under undue and inappropriate risk.
- 10 Practical considerations might mean that an otherwise acceptable donation must be refused.

Such cases might exist:

- Where support is tied to a particular project or activity which whilst reflecting the charitable objectives of MCC, is nevertheless impractical, given the current standing of the organisation.
 - Where the support is presented in an unconventional manner and the cost of processing the donation exceeds the value of the donation.
 - Where the support consists of goods, services or property which MCC cannot lawfully use, convert, exchange or sell in direct support of its charitable objects.
- 11 Where a change in the donor's circumstances prompts a request for the return of all or part of the donation, great care will be exercised by the Board.

B. RELATIONSHIP WITH BUSINESS & CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

“Corporate Partnership” means a public, active and on-going association with a business, which has been solicited either by MCC or the business and has been established for the mutual benefit of the business and MCC.

The purpose of this section is to enable the staff and management within MCC to make clear and consistent decisions regarding the formation of partnerships with the corporate sector.

The fundraising strategy for MCC includes the formation of partnerships with the corporate sector. All our relationships with the corporate sector will need to be guided by our commitment to achieving our charitable purpose through the provision of service dogs to families of children and young adults with autism.

The ultimate responsibility in respect of corporate partnerships and all activities arising from them rests with the legally appointed Board.

Establishing a policy on the formation of corporate partnerships.

A clear policy on the formation of corporate partnerships is important for all charitable organisations.

Such a policy, acceptable to all those associated with MCC and agreed formally by the Board will;

- clarify the considerations which the Board see as determining MCC's relations with the private sector
- ensure compliance with legal regulations where appropriate
- clarify the Boards obligations with regard to corporate partnerships
- avoid confusion within MCC as to who has the authority to take decisions in differing circumstances
- help to ensure that decisions are not made on an ad hoc basis but are grounded in the mission and agreed policy objectives of MCC
- provide a clear objective standard against which external regulatory bodies can judge the actions of the charity in cases of potential or actual dispute
- provide a clear, unambiguous policy statement making decisions intelligible, easier to justify and credible to the public at large
- protect the image and reputation of MCC against adverse public reaction from existing or potential supporters

While the policy cannot anticipate every situation, it can be used as a reference point, against which decisions can be made in the best interests of MCC.

POLICY FOR THE FORMATION OF CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

- 1 The formation of corporate partnerships is an important element of the fundraising strategy of MCC. Partnerships may be formed as a result of proactive targeting of specific companies or as a result of companies approaching MCC.
- 2 A corporate partnership is defined as a public, active and on-going association with a business, which has been solicited either by MCC or the business and has been established for the mutual benefit of the business and MCC.
- 3 Responsibility in respect of corporate partnerships and all activities arising from them rests with the legally appointed Board of Directors of MCC.
- 4 All significant new partnerships must be notified and approved by the Board.
- 5 Partnerships with corporate partners may encompass a range of activities such as;
 - Cause related marketing
 - Employee Fundraising
 - Promotion of MCC brand on or with its products
 - Joint or sponsored events
 - Research projects
 - Sponsorship of aspects of MCC's services
 - Sponsorship of MCC publications
 - Gifts in kind, such as equipment, vehicles and the use of premises
- 6 Before forming a partnership with a company an assessment will be made by the CEO and fundraising manager of the potential benefit and the risks attached to the association. This assessment will take account of the following;
 - The financial stability of the company. This may involve scrutiny of the company accounts and an assessment of its financial stability.
 - The reputation of the company. If there are any concerns regarding the public image of the company, they will be considered with regard to any negative effect this could have on the image of MCC – whether or not a negative public image may be justified.

Donor Charter

As a charity seeking donations from the public My Canine Companion (MCC) aim to comply with the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising.

Our pledge is to treat our donors with respect, honesty and openness.

We commit to being accountable and transparent so that donors and prospective donors can have full confidence in MCC.

We promise we will effectively apply your donations to us for their intended purposes.

We commit that you, our donors and prospective donors will:

- Be informed of the organisations mission, and of the way the organisation intends to use donated resources.
- Be informed of the identity of those serving on the organisations governing board, and that the board will exercise prudent judgment in its stewardship responsibilities.
- Have access to the organisation most recent financial statements.
- Be assured you donations will be used for the purposes for which they were given.
- Receive appropriate acknowledgment and recognition.
- Be assured that information about your donation is handled with respect and with confidentiality to the extent provide by law.
- Expect that all relationships with the individuals representing the charity will be dealt with professionally.
- Have easily available the agreed procedures for making and responding to complaints.
- Have the opportunity for any names to be deleted from mailing lists.
- Receive prompt, truthful and forthright answers to questions you might have of the organisation.

What to do if you have feedback

If you do have a comment about any respect of our work, you can contact MCC in writing or by telephone or email. In the first instance, your comment will be dealt with by our CEO. Please give us as much information as possible and let us know how you would like us to respond providing relevant contact details.

Write to: CEO, My Canine Companion Unit 1 Breffni Court, Watercourse Road, Cork.

Tel: 0214530536

Email: info@mycaninecompanion.ie

The Responsibility of those Managing Fundraising Activities

Fundraisers and Fundraising charities, such as MCC, commit themselves to the highest standards of good practice and to ensuring that all their fundraising activities are respectful, honest, open and legal. Any information obtained in confidence as part of the fundraising process must not be disclosed without express prior consent.

Those responsible (or their designate, whether voluntary or paid) must:

1. Be responsible for ensuring that fundraisers are aware of and can generally communicate the purpose of the organisation and of the specific fundraising efforts they are involved in;
2. Be responsible for ensuring that fundraisers are aware that they must disclose if they are employees of the organisation or third party agents;
3. Provide, where possible, clear and adequate, written or verbal, information to the public about any relevant follow up including telephone procedure;
4. Have procedures to ensure that, wherever possible, particular caution is exercised when soliciting from people who may be considered vulnerable;
5. Where events organised in the charities names are not known by the charity until after the fact, the charity will work with that fundraiser to ensure they are aware of the standards expected and that the fundraiser will apply them to any further events they hold for the charity;
6. Where donations are raised through electronic means, example through charities websites, the level of security applied to such websites shall be of a sufficient standard to protect the confidentiality of donors credit card and other personal details;
7. Ensure all public collections have a Garda permit, or where no permit is necessary, permission from the relevant authority
8. Be responsible for ensuring that paid fundraisers are remunerated within the minimum wage regulation;
9. Ensure that the recruitment process screens potential recruits to indicate suitability (subject to data protection regulations)
10. Where remunerated, ensure fundraisers are legally entitled to work in the jurisdiction;
11. Be responsible for ensuring that, where paid, all fundraisers and third party agents are given appropriate contracts, to include a clause stipulating their compliance with the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising and with any legal requirements that apply;
12. Ensure that appropriate training, education and information is available to fundraisers to enable them perform their roles effectively;
13. Comply with MCC policy on handling cash and non cash donations;
14. Be generally responsible to explain to the public how fundraising is organised and to help educate the public about the realities of resourcing charitable organisations. Where specific questions are received these should be answered openly and honestly. The principle of informing the charity in advance and adhering to these standards will be highlighted as much as possible by the organisation.

Client Fundraising:

My Canine Companion clients and prospective families may be invited to fundraise for the charity. All fundraising completed by clients will be in line with our fundraising policy.

It is communicated to families that funds raised by them will be utilised in the overall operations of the charity and they will be given a copy of our fundraising policy. All clients are provided with a copy of our fundraising policy as part of our application pack.