

Kris Kringle guidelines

A starting point for Australian workplaces. Replace the bracketed parts and delete anything that does not fit how you run yours.

Organisation: [your organisation]

Applies to: [everyone at the Christmas gathering]

Organiser: [name, contact]

Dates: names drawn [date] · gifts exchanged [date]

1. Taking part is optional

Nobody has to join in. You do not need to give a reason, and you will not be asked for one. Tell the organiser by [date] and that is the end of it.

Your decision will not be shared with anyone else, and it will not affect anything at work.

Not everyone marks Christmas, and money is tighter for some people than others. Both are perfectly good reasons and neither is anyone else's business.

If you would rather join in without spending anything, [describe your alternative, for example a shared morning tea or a handwritten card].

2. What to spend

Spend between [\$10] and [\$30]. There is a lower limit as well as an upper one, so nobody feels shown up by a much more expensive gift.

Please do not go over the limit to be generous. It puts pressure on everyone else.

3. Drawing names

Names are drawn at random and only you will know who you have. The organiser does not see the full list either, so they can take part properly.

If there is someone you cannot buy for, tell the organiser before the draw and they will set it up so you are not matched.

4. What makes a good gift

- Something the person could actually use, eat or drink
- Something that would be fine to open in front of the whole team
- Something that would be fine if their family saw it that evening

If you are not sure, that hesitation is usually the answer.

5. What is not on

The same standards of behaviour that apply at work apply here. In particular, do not give:

- Anything sexual, or anything that is a joke about sex
- Anything about somebody's body, weight, age, or how they look
- Anything that plays on someone's gender, sexuality, race, religion or disability
- Anything aimed at how someone does their job, however lightly it is meant
- Anything you would not put your own name to

A gift that is meant kindly can still land badly. What matters is not just what you meant, but how it lands.

6. Alcohol

[Delete this section if alcohol is fine in your workplace.]

Please do not give alcohol. Some people do not drink, for reasons they may not want to explain, and some are under 18. A gift nobody has to decline is easier for everyone.

7. If something goes wrong

If a gift makes you uncomfortable, or you see one that makes someone else uncomfortable, speak to [name, role] or [alternative contact]. You can raise it privately and you will be taken seriously.

You do not have to have been the target of it to say something.

Notes for whoever adapts this

This is a plain-language template, not legal advice. Check it against your own conduct, bullying and harassment policies before you send it, and have someone qualified look at it if you are unsure.

Two things are worth keeping whatever else you change. Say in writing that your usual standards of behaviour apply at the event and how far they extend, because it removes any later argument about whether they did. And make opting out genuinely free, rather than something people have to justify.

If your organisation pays for the gifts rather than staff buying for each other, there are fringe benefits tax rules worth checking with your accountant. If people buy for each other out of their own pockets, that does not arise.

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