The Free School Norwich

Lost/Damaged Property and Liability Policy

Contents:

Statement of intent

1. Legal framework
2. Definitions
3. Roles and responsibilities
4. Liability
5. Damage
6. High value items
7. Safekeeping of valuables
8. Theft
9. Monitoring and review

Statement of intent

The Free School Norwich understands that pupils and staff may bring their personal items onto the premises and, in some circumstances, these items may become lost, damaged or stolen. Whilst the school strongly discourages bringing high-value items onto the premises, it is inevitable that some staff members and pupils may wish to do so.

In addition, there are times when pupils may accidentally or deliberately destroy, damage or mishandle school property, ie books, computer equipment, furniture, building or any other property of the school. Some of these repairs and/or replacements could be very expensive.

The school has developed this policy to:

- Clarify the pupils' and staff members' responsibility for the liability of their own items.
- Outline the school's policy on any damages incurred to school equipment and facilities and set out the parameters in which the parent/carer will be asked to pay for damage caused by pupils.
- Provide a framework for any lost property.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Theft Act 1968
- Occupiers' Liability Act 1957

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Complaints Procedures Policy

2. Definitions

The policy defines:

- **"Property"** as any item belonging to a person, where that person has possession and control over it.
- **"Lost property"** as an item which the owner has lost but wishes to recover.
- **"Mislaid property"** as an item which the owner has inadvertently left in a location and wishes to recover.
- **"Found property"** as an item not belonging to the finder that has either been lost or mislaid by the owner or can be treated as abandoned property.
- **"Abandoned property"** as an item that the owner has seemingly abandoned and thereby may be deemed to have relinquished ownership of.
- **"Non-returned item"** as an item that is unidentifiable, unlawful or dangerous.
- **"Damaged property"** as an item that has been defiled so that there is an impairment to its value, usefulness or normal function.
- **"Stolen property"** as an item that has been taken without the owner's knowledge or consent by a person who does not own the item.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The Trust Board will be responsible for:

- Undertaking security risk assessments to protect people and their valuables.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of this policy as required.
- Delegating the day-to-day implementation of this policy to the Principal.

The Principal will be responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that this policy is communicated to all staff members, volunteers, parents and pupils.
- Enforcing sanctions on any individual found to be stealing or damaging property. Disposing of unclaimed abandoned property.

All staff will be responsible for:

- Handing in lost property to the school office.
- Ensuring the school site is secure to avoid theft of, or damage to, school and individuals' property.
- Ensuring any lost or abandoned property is appropriately stored and removed from the vicinity of access and exit points.
- Ensuring items are returned to the rightful owner.

The School Secretary will be responsible for:

- The administration of lost property.
- Ensuring lost property is held in a secure location for collection.
- Informing individuals of found property if it is known to be theirs.

All staff, pupils, parents and visitors will be responsible for:

- The security of their own possessions.
- Labelling possessions where possible to avoid loss or theft.
- Checking lost property when they have lost an item.

4. Liability

The school will not take responsibility for items lost or handed in to us; however, we will endeavour to return items to their owner as quickly as possible.

Pupils, parents and staff members are responsible for their personal property and possessions whilst on the school premises, or when partaking in school activities such as trips and school events.

The school will not be held responsible for any loss, damage or theft of personal property. Pupils, parents and staff members bring items onto the premises at their own risk – this includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Jewellery
- Electronic devices, including mobile phones and tablets
- Keys
- Money
- Bicycles, scooters, skateboards or other

Pupils, parents, staff members and visitors will be held accountable for any damage incurred to school property and facilities due to their negligence.

5. Damage

Our Behaviour Policy asks pupils to respect others property and school property.

If an individual intentionally damages school-owned equipment, books, facilities or property, the parent/carer will be charged the price of the repair. If the item cannot be repaired, the parent/carer will be charged the price of a replacement item.

Where a pupil causes damage, and the damage was inflicted due to negligence or misbehaviour, the school's Behaviour Policy will be followed, and the appropriate disciplinary measures adhered to.

If a pupil causes damage to school property or facilities, the Principal will send a notification letter to the pupil's parents, which includes a payment notice.

If an individual intentionally damages another person's property, the school will not be held accountable, and it will remain impartial.

Should an individual receive a demand for payment and disagree with the charge, they will follow the school's Complaints Procedures Policy, which can be found on the school's website.

6. High value items

The school strongly discourages pupils, parents and staff members from bringing high value items, such as electronic devices, jewellery and bicycles, onto the school premises.

If high value property is brought onto the premises, it is the owner's responsibility to ensure that the property is safe and secure.

If large amounts of money must be brought onto the premises, e.g. to pay for a school trip, parents or pupils will ensure that it is handed to the relevant member of staff.

Wherever possible, parents are encouraged to pay online rather than via cash as a safer alternative.

Pupils and staff are encouraged to implement appropriate insurance arrangements for their high value items, should they become damaged, lost or stolen.

Pupils' and staffs' items are not covered by the school's insurance.

7. Safekeeping of valuables

Pupils

Pupils will take their item to the school office where it will be stored for the day.

Pupils can collect their item at the end of the school day.

Staff

Staff will not leave bags or other valuables on display in the classroom – these items will be locked in a cupboard in the classroom, or in the staff room.

Any items of significant value will be placed in a secure area, such as the staff room.

8. Theft

Whilst the school recognises that theft is rare, if a pupil believes an item has been stolen, they will report this immediately to a member of staff, who will investigate the incident and endeavour to recover the item.

The Principal will be informed of the incident and will investigate it further if appropriate.

If it is evident that a pupil or staff member has stolen an item, appropriate disciplinary measures will be actioned in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The school will not accept liability for any items that are stolen, regardless of whether staff members assist with attempting to recover the item.

9. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all staff, parents and pupils.

Approval Level: Principal

Approved Date: October 2026

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