

# Lost Property & Liability Policy



Love, Learn and Shine Together with Jesus.

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Leader: Mrs C Sime

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## **Statement of intent**

St. Matthew's Catholic Primary School 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.

The school has developed this policy to:

- Provide a framework for any lost property
- 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.

## 1. Legal framework

- 1.1. 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
- 1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:
  - Positive Behaviour Policy
  - Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
  - Complaints Procedures Policy
  - CCTV Policy

## 2. Definitions

- 2.1. 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. Liability

- 3.1. 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.
- 3.2. 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.
- 3.3. 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

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

## **4. Damage**

- 4.1. If an individual damages school-owned equipment or facilities, they may be charged the price of the repair.
- 4.2. Where a pupil causes damage, and the damage was inflicted due to negligence or misbehaviour, the school's Positive Behaviour Policy will be followed, and the appropriate disciplinary measures adhered to.
- 4.3. If a pupil causes damage to school property or facilities, the headteacher will send a notification letter to the pupil's parents, which includes a payment notice.
- 4.4. If an individual intentionally damages another person's property, the school will not be held accountable, and it will remain impartial.
- 4.5. 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.
- 4.6. The school will have CCTV in place, to be used as evidence, as well as a protective measure. The school's CCTV Policy will be adhered to at all times.

## **5. High-value items**

- 5.1. The school strongly discourages pupils, parents and staff members from bringing high-value items, such as electronic devices and jewellery, onto the school premises.
- 5.2. If high-value property is brought onto the premises, it is the owner's responsibility to ensure that the property is safe and secure.
- 5.3. The school will provide the following arrangements for individuals to safely store their personal items:
  - Lockers within the staff room
- 5.4. Whilst the school provides secure arrangements for individuals to store their personal items, the school is not liable for any loss, damage or theft of any item once stored.
- 5.5. 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 teacher, or the school office, as soon as possible. This should be a rare occurrence as the school operates an online payment system.
- 5.6. Pupils and staff are encouraged to implement appropriate insurance arrangements for their high-value items, should they become damaged, lost or stolen.
- 5.7. Pupils' and staffs' items are not covered by the school's insurance.

## **6. Safe-keeping of valuables**

### **Pupils**

- 6.1. Pupils will take their item to the school office.
- 6.2. Pupils can collect their item at the end of the school day.

- 6.3. The item will be written in the Valuable Item Log, which includes the date, the pupil's name and class.
- 6.4. When collecting the item, pupils will sign the Valuable Item Log to indicate the item has been returned to them.

#### **Staff**

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

### **7. Lost property**

- 7.1. Lost property will be reported to the school office immediately and recorded in the Lost Property Book.
- 7.2. When a claimant comes to the school office, the office staff will refer to the Lost Property Book.
- 7.3. Additional details may be sought where necessary to ascertain whether the item is the claimants, e.g. checking knowledge of a screensaver on a mobile phone.
- 7.4. If the item has been handed in, it will be returned to the claimant once their identity has been ascertained and their name and address has been recorded in the Lost Property Book.
- 7.5. Returnable items of personal identification and non-returnable items will not be retained on the premises for any longer than five working days.
- 7.6. Cash or items containing cash that are handed in will be placed in a sealed envelope and recorded in the Lost Property Book.

### **8. Found property**

- 8.1. All found property will be handed into the school office and recorded in the Lost Property Book.
- 8.2. Property not reclaimed within five working days will be treated as abandoned property.
- 8.3. Handling and recording found property is the responsibility of school office staff.
- 8.4. A separate record of abandoned property will be held within the school office.
- 8.5. An attempt will be made by school office staff to notify the owner of returnable items of personal identification and returnable high/low-value items either by email, letter or text message.
- 8.6. If, by the end of the term following notification, returnable high/low-value items remain unclaimed, the item will be treated as abandoned property and will be disposed of.
- 8.7. In the case of cash, unclaimed monies may be donated to the next charitable project that the school supports.
- 8.8. For unidentifiable returnable high/low-value items where there is an expiry date, e.g. concert tickets, the school office staff will endeavour to send an email to all staff and pupils advertising the found property without divulging details.

- 8.9. If, after 14 working days following the notification, the item remains unclaimed, it will be treated as abandoned property and disposed of.
- 8.10. Whenever items are disposed of, the Lost Property Book will be updated accordingly and signed by a member of the school office staff.
- 8.11. Abandoned property will be handed over to a charity, placed in the general waste, recycled, or securely disposed of, depending on the nature of the item.

## **9. Reclaiming property**

- 9.1. Claims for lost/mislaid property will be made to the school office in the first instance.
- 9.2. Claimants will produce valid identification and sign the Lost Property Book before property is released to them.
- 9.3. For cash or items containing cash to be released, the sealed envelope will be opened by the claimant and witnessed by a member of school office staff and one other person.

## **10. Theft**

- 10.1. 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.
- 10.2. An up-to-date written record of incidents involving theft will be held by the SBM.
- 10.3. The headteacher will be informed of the incident and will investigate it further.
- 10.4. If it is evident that a pupil or staff member has stolen an item, appropriate disciplinary measures will be actioned in accordance with the Positive Behaviour Policy and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- 10.5. The school will not accept liability for any items that are stolen, regardless of whether staff members assist with attempting to recover the item.

## **11. Monitoring and review**

- 11.1. This policy will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis by the SBM.
- 11.2. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2023.
- 11.3. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all staff, parents and pupils.





## Lost Property Book

Item number	Description of item	Date handed in	Identifiable features	Date returned	Name of owner	Signature
<u>001</u>	<u>Silver necklace</u>	<u>8/11/2018</u>	<u>Butterfly pendant</u>	<u>12/11/2018</u>	<u>Jane Bloggs</u>	

If, after **14 working days**, the items have not been returned, complete the following table.

Item number	Description of item	Date handed in	Identifiable features	Date disposed	Office staff name	Signature
<u>001</u>	<u>Silver necklace</u>	<u>8/11/2018</u>	<u>Butterfly pendant</u>	<u>28/11/2018</u>	<u>Miss Jones</u>	