



Lost Property and Liability Procedure

School Responsibility	Mr L Gilhooly
Headteacher	Mr L Gilhooly
Governor	Mrs Charlotte Monkman
Adopted	February 2023
Review	February 2026

ETHOS STATEMENT

The School was founded by and is part of the Catholic Church. The School is to be conducted as a Catholic School in accordance with the canon law and teachings of the Catholic Church and in accordance with the Trust Deed of the Diocese of Leeds in particular:

1. Religious education is to be in accordance with the teachings, doctrines, discipline and general and particular norms of the Catholic Church;
2. Religious worship is to be in accordance with the teachings, doctrines, discipline and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church;
3. And at all times the school is to serve as witness to the Catholic faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

MISSION STATEMENT

St Joseph is our patron saint and he inspires and guides us in our school mission:

- *Each one of us is part of God's family and we are all special*
- As God's children and family we love one another, pray together, play together and walk hand in hand with God
- God is our teacher and we are his gifts. He helps us learn together, work hard and do our best to make our world a better place
 - With fun, laughter and friendship we celebrate God's love
 - We respect and care for everyone and for God's wonderful world

Statement of Intent

St Joseph's Otley 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.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following: Theft Act 1968 and Occupiers' Liability Act 1957

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Policy

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.

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.

Damage

- If an individual damages school-owned equipment or facilities, they will be charged the price of the repair or replacement. For example, for reading books, there is a standard £5.00 fee.

- Where a pupil causes damage, and the damage was inflicted due to negligence or misbehaviour, the school's Behavioural Policy will be followed, and the appropriate disciplinary measures adhered to.
- 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.
- If an individual intentionally damages another person's property, the school will not be held accountable, and it will remain impartial.
- Should 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

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

Safekeeping of Valuables

Pupils

- Pupils should hand their valuables to their class teacher. Mobile phones will be stored in a box in the classroom which is kept out of reach of children. All other valuables should be taken to the office and stored in the locked container.
- Pupils can collect their item at the end of the school day.
- Items that cannot be handed into the school office, such as bicycles, should be stored using alternative secure arrangements, such as bicycle locks, which must be provided by the parent/carer.

Staff

- Staff should not leave bags or other valuables on display in the classroom – these items should be locked in a cupboard in the classroom.
- Any items of significant value will be placed in a secure area, such as the school office.
- Items that cannot be handed into the school office, such as bicycles, should be stored using alternative secure arrangements, such as bicycle locks, which must be provided by the member of staff.

Lost Property

Clothing and water bottles can usually be found in the classroom or cloakroom. Children are supervised in looking for their property. In the event that the items cannot be found, school cannot be held responsible. Parents/Carers must ensure all items are clearly labelled with the child's name.

Lost property (valuable items) will be reported to the school office immediately and recorded in the Lost Property Record. When a claimant comes to the school office, the office staff will refer to the Lost Property Record. Cash or items containing cash that are handed in will be placed in a sealed envelope and stored in a locked container. The School has a duty to immediately notify the police of any nonreturnable items.

Found Property

At the end of each school term, 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. In the case of cash, unclaimed monies may be donated to a charitable project chosen by the governing board.

Reclaiming Property

- Claims for lost/mislaid property will be made to the school office in the first instance.
- Claimants must produce valid identification before property is released to them
- 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.

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.

- An up-to-date written record of incidents involving theft will be held by the School Office.
- The headteacher will be informed of the incident and will investigate it further.
- 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.

Monitoring

The effectiveness of this procedure will be monitored in line with the school's monitoring and reviewing of school policy/procedures.

Any questions regarding this procedure should be directed to Mrs Harvey and Mr Gilhooly who are the school's lead teachers on this issue.