

Property Liability Policy

History of policy changes/review

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Statement of intent

Briarwood School understands that pupils, staff, volunteers and contractors may bring their personal items onto the premises and, in some circumstances, these items may become lost, damaged or stolen. Briarwood does not encourage anyone to bring high-value items onto the premises. This should be avoided wherever possible.

The school has developed this policy to:

- Provide a framework for any lost property.
- Clarify responsibility for the liability of personal items.
- Outline the school's policy on any damages incurred to school equipment and facilities.

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:

- Code of Conduct
- Behaviour and Pastoral Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Personal Property loss, damage and theft disclaimer (form)

2. Definitions

The policy defines:

- "Property" item belonging to a person, where that person has possession and control over it.
- "Lost property" item which the owner has lost but wishes to recover.
- "Mislaid property" item which the owner has inadvertently left in a location and wishes to recover.
- "Found property" item not belonging to the finder that has either been lost or mislaid by the owner or can be treated as abandoned property.
- "Returnable item" item where the owner has been identified and can be contacted.
- "Abandoned property" item that the owner has seemingly abandoned and thereby may be deemed to have relinquished ownership of.
- "Non-returned item" item that is unidentifiable, unlawful or dangerous.
- "Damaged property" item that has been defiled so that there is an impairment to its value, usefulness or normal function.
- "Stolen property" 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 Executive Headteacher will be responsible for:

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

The Heads of School will be responsible for:

- Handing in lost property to the site administrator.
- 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.
- Disposing of unclaimed abandoned property.

Site administrators 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.
- Ensuring items are returned to the rightful owner, wherever practical.

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

- The security of their own possessions.
- Handing in lost property to the site administrator when it is found.
- 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.

Parents, volunteers, contractors 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. Items are brought onto the premises at the owners own risk. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Jewellery
- Electronic devices, including mobile phones and tablets
- Keys
- Money
- Musical instruments
- Bicycles, scooters or skateboards
- Work related tools and equipment

Parents, staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors will be held accountable for any damage incurred to school property and facilities due to their negligence.

5. Damage

If an individual intentionally damages school-owned equipment or facilities, they will be charged the price of the repair.

If an individual intentionally damages another person's property, the school will not be held accountable. The school will remain impartial in its judgement, but will assist in any investigations arising, such as providing access to CCTV.

6. High value items

The school strongly discourages parents, volunteers, contractors and staff 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.

The school will provide the following arrangements for individuals to safely store their personal items:

- Lockers on the school site
- Bicycle parking

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 large amounts of money must be brought onto the premises, e.g. to pay for a school trip, parents will ensure that it is handed to the site administrator, as soon as possible. Wherever possible, parents are encouraged to use cheques rather than cash as a safer alternative. Secure card payments via Arbor are preferred to cash or cheques.

Staff, volunteers and contractors are encouraged to hold appropriate damage, loss or theft insurance for their high value items if they bring them on to the school site. Pupil, staff, contractors and volunteer's items are not covered by the school's insurance.

7. Safekeeping of valuables

Staff, contractors and volunteers must not leave bags or other valuables on display.

Items can be locked away in a cupboard in the classroom or in staff lockers.

Staff will lock classroom doors when leaving the room unattended.

Valuables that cannot be stored in the staff room, such as bicycles, should be stored using alternative secure arrangements such as using bicycle locks.

8. Lost property

Lost property must be reported to the site administrator immediately.

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.

If the item has been handed in, it will be returned to the claimant once their identity has been ascertained.

9. Found property

All found property will be handed into the site administrator. Handling and recording found property is the responsibility of the site administrator.

An attempt will be made by the site administrator to notify the owner of returnable items by email, letter or text message. If, by the end of the term following notification, returnable items remain unclaimed, the item will be treated as abandoned property and will be disposed of.

In the case of cash, unclaimed monies may be donated to a charitable project chosen by the Executive Headteacher.

For found items where there is an expiry date and the owner is not identifiable, e.g. concert tickets, the site administrator will endeavour to send an email to all staff, parents and volunteers advertising the found property without divulging details inappropriately. If, after 14 working days following the notification, the item remains unclaimed, it will be treated as abandoned property and disposed of.

Whenever items are disposed of, a lost property record will be updated accordingly and signed by the site administrator.

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.

10. Reclaiming property

Claims for lost/mislaid property will be made to the site administrator in the first instance.

11. Theft

Whilst the school recognises that theft is rare, if a staff member believes an item has been stolen, this must be reported immediately. The Head of School should be informed of the incident and investigate it further.

If it is evident that a staff member has stolen an item, appropriate disciplinary measures will be actioned in accordance with the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

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