



Parent Briefing

Personal Property

There are two issues that parents should be aware of in relation to a student's personal property. The first is what is referred to as 'lost property'; the second, regrettably, is in relation to theft of property.

In many ways, the notion of lost property is a little inaccurate. Yes, there are instances where a student leaves personal property behind and, on realising this, cannot find it. However, each year the school is left with large quantities of items left behind that are never claimed by its owner. All this property is gathered in the South Site Reception and it is always worth checking to see if items have been sent there.

While it may not be possible to find all items, much 'lost property' could be claimed or returned to an individual if it was clearly marked with the student's name. We would encourage all parents to ensure all items, for example clothing, shoes, equipment, PE kit, are clearly marked.

The second area, while not a major problem in our school, is still an issue of theft. With 1,800 plus students, there will always be, as in society at large, a small number who cannot be trusted not to take items which do not belong to them.

Again, if items are clearly marked/named in some way, it is easier to try and trace them, but each student should be aware of the risk and should do all they can to keep their personal belongings safe.

If we find any student stealing, we will take action and that can include encouraging parents to involve the police. We will always notify the local officers but official reports must be made by parents (the school is legally unable to do this).

It is important to note that the school does not hold any form of insurance for a student's personal property. Lost or stolen, parents will only be able to claim insurance from their own policy and it is worth checking what cover you have for such eventualities.

As a school, we will take all the steps we reasonably can to ensure property is safe, but the individual student is ultimately responsible.

So, what can parents do?

- ◆ Ensure all items of property are clearly named.
- ◆ Ensure your child gets a locker where they can leave items.
- ◆ Talk at home about keeping property safe and each student taking responsibility for their items.
- ◆ Consider carefully what actually comes into school. Is it advisable that the expensive 'birthday watch' is used for school?
- ◆ Ask your son or daughter to check lost property.
- ◆ Consider the cover you have on your home insurance to cover items in school.
- ◆ Consider carefully what you allow to be brought from home to school.

Key Times

There are certain times when property gets lost more often than others.

Breaks and lunchtimes are often when students leave their bags unattended while they, for example, play football or simply go off to find their friends. At these times the use of lockers would certainly keep items safer and solve the problem of 'I forgot where I left it'.

PE changing is another key time. Students need to be careful about where to leave their clothes. Valuables of any sort should not just be left in pockets or bags. We have introduced small lockers in changing rooms where valuables can be locked away and the key left in a safe place. However, even this is not 100% perfect and each teacher cannot be responsible for 25 phones, dinner money or watches.

Mobile Phones

There is a specific issue for mobile phones. These are the most 'at risk' items and we work closely with Norfolk Police to try to make students and parents aware of the issues.

Some parents have suggested we totally ban mobile phones in school as some schools do. As parents, you can stop your child bringing their phone into school if that is what you believe. We have, what we believe is a more common sense approach as mobile phones are now a 'fact of life' for many. We believe in sensible use, students taking responsibility for both use and safety and educating about what should be done.

In Summary:

- ◆ We allow students to bring mobile phones to school.
- ◆ If 'out' in lessons they may be confiscated and parents required to collect them.
- ◆ They are **totally** the responsibility of their owner if lost, stolen or damaged. We will aim to try and investigate any losses but cannot let time taken on this detract from our priorities of focusing upon the education of young people.
- ◆ There is no school insurance to cover student mobile phones.
- ◆ If a parent chooses to let their child bring a phone into school we strongly advise this is not an expensive model.
- ◆ In school, we believe the only value of a mobile phone is to allow urgent contact between students and their parents in relation to being late home because of clubs or buses.

Again, we suggest parents think carefully about phones they allow students to bring into school. Expensive phones are likely to be more of a target in school, while students do not need many of the features on these during school time.

If your mobile was lost or stolen would you be able to describe it in detail? Do you know its IMEI number? Every mobile has a unique 14 digit IMEI number. Dial *#06# for your phone's unique number.

The *immobilise.com* scheme recommended by Norfolk Police allows registered users to keep a record of their valuables online and should the worst happen and items get lost or stolen, then having this information to hand will aid police with their enquiries and with your insurance claims.

We suggest you look at *immobilise.com* to register not only your mobile phone but also your tablets, bikes, cameras, televisions, computers and other valuables.

We hope you have found this parent briefing useful. Our overriding message is that a common sense approach from both home and school is all that can be expected.

Items of personal property will become lost, and there is always a small risk of theft. Taking steps to mark, record for identification and think carefully about items coming into school, can all help. Also, talking to your son or daughter about keeping items safe will support what we teach at school.