

POLICY REGARDING VANDALISM AND THEFT

AIM

This policy is aimed at:

- promoting ownership of the school in the school community
- providing clarity on the procedure to be followed in cases where vandalism occurs at the school

DEFINITION

Vandalism in the context of educational buildings of can be described as the intentional, senseless and illegal damaging of private property.

This includes theft and burglary at and the intentional destruction of property owned or rented by the school.

PROCEDURE THAT SHOULD BE FOLLOWED WHEN THE SCHOOL HAS BEEN VANDALISED

- Report the damage immediately to the local branch of the South African Police Service (SAPS) and obtain a criminal case number.
- Provide support to the police in their investigation and supply all possible information – also with the identification of possible suspects.
- If learners are involved, first inform the parent(s) or guardian(s), OR take them to their parents' home, OR in the case of the parent(s) not being available, request the local social worker to act on their behalf.
- If it has been determined that learners were involved, the school Management (SGB) can consider handling the case according to the stipulations of the school's code of conduct for learners.

WAYS TO LIMIT VANDALISM

The school management should ensure that the following happens:

- training and support of the cleaning staff and caretakers in order for them to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to maintain the school buildings effectively

- repairing minor damage from the norms and standards allocation, for instance replacement of window catches, outer doors, broken windows, door handles and damaged toilets
- regularly fixing the school's fences
- installation of barred gates, burglar bars, barbed wire, etc. at the high risk areas of the school buildings
- using cost-effective security lighting
- reporting vagrants on the school grounds to the SAPS
- updating sufficient records of all maintenance projects with an indication of whether it is as a result of vandalism or normal wear and tear
- following the correct protocol, i.e. reporting of cases of vandalism to the SAPS and after that to the SGB.

Theft

Theft is the removal, without permission, of goods that belong to someone else. It can be relatively minor, such as the removal of a pencil, or major, such as stealing a school's computers. Theft may be perpetrated by people who are connected to the school, or by outsiders. The property in a school usually falls into one of three categories of ownership:

- ownership by the school itself
- private ownership (goods belong to the learners or to members of staff).

All need careful protection from theft.

Immediate action

When a theft of property is discovered, actual ownership (private or school property) should be established. If property was stolen the theft must be reported to the police and a reference number must be obtained. When school-owned property has been stolen the school authorities, in consultation with the school management, have the option to decide what action to take.

In most cases, the same action should be taken (that is, a case should be opened). In certain cases, the school management may constitute a board of enquiry.

No insurance claim will be successful without the theft having been reported to the police. Dealing effectively with the theft of private property is equally important, as this is so destructive to the fabric of the school community.



If a suspect is identified and a search contemplated or if it is suggested that a trap be set for a thief, remember that people have the Constitutional right to dignity and privacy and there have to be very substantial reasons for overriding these rights. Preventative action Sensible and reasonable precautions should be taken to minimise the risk of the theft of all property at a school.

These could include, if finances permit . . .

- the installation of burglar guards, security gates, improved lighting and sound perimeter fencing
- the installation of an alarm system
- keeping valuable goods under lock and key
- ensuring that keys are properly controlled at all times and not left lying about
- physically attaching certain items to walls and floors so that they are not easily removed
- limiting the number of people who have access to valuable goods and equipment
- ensuring that valuable items are signed for when they are borrowed
- insuring valuable items
- marking all stock prominently and having regular stock checks.

If there is a high incidence of petty theft, seemingly carried out by local people, a longer-term measure is to tackle local attitudes, especially with a view to establishing ownership of the school, so that stealing from the school would be similar to stealing from one's own home.

This policy was adopted by the School Management on

This policy has been made available to school personnel and is readily accessible to parents and learners on request.

This policy will be reviewed and updated every year.

Signed _____
School Management

Date: _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date: _____

Signed _____

Date: _____



Educator Representative

