



ST. HUGH'S COLLEGE, OXFORD

LOST PROPERTY POLICY

Date Policy Ratified by Governing Body: 11 March 2026

Author/Responsible Officer: Lodge Manager

Committee Responsible: Finance and General Purposes Committee

Date to be reviewed by: 11 March 2028

Lost Property Policy

1. Purpose

The College is committed to handling lost property in a secure, lawful, and fair manner, while safeguarding students, staff, and visitors and complying with UK data protection legislation.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all students, staff, visitors, contractors, and volunteers and covers personal property found on college premises or during college-led activities.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy operates in line with:

- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- College Safeguarding Policy
- College Data Protection Policy

4. Found Property Procedures

- All found property must be handed in **as soon as reasonably practicable** to the Porters' lodge
- Items must not be searched unnecessarily. Bags or wallets should only be opened to identify ownership where appropriate and proportionate.

Logging

The following information will be recorded:

- Date and time found
- Location found
- General description of the item
- Name of staff member receiving the item

No excessive personal data will be recorded.

5. Storage and Security

- Lost property will be stored securely with access restricted to authorised staff (Lodge Manager, Porters, and senior managers).
- **High-value items** will be held in Lodge Manager's office.
- **College ID cards** will be retained by the Academic Office and managed in accordance with ID and access control procedures.

- **Perishable, unsafe, or unhygienic items** (e.g. food, drink containers) will be disposed of immediately for health and safety reasons, but logged on lost property sheet as disposed of

6. Claiming Lost Property

- Claimants must provide an accurate description and, where appropriate, reasonable proof of ownership.
- Items will only be returned to:
 - The owner, or
 - A nominated representative with written or verified consent
- The College reserves the right to refuse release where ownership cannot be reasonably established.

7. Retention Period

- Lost property will be retained for **60 calendar days** from the date it is logged.
- After this period, unclaimed items may be:
 - Donated to charity
 - Recycled
 - Securely disposed of
- Disposal of high-value items (>£250 replacement cost) must be approved by the Head of Operations or Bursar
- Cash will be handled in line with the College's financial procedures.
- Official documents (e.g. passports, driving licences) may be returned to the issuing authority or securely destroyed.
- This also includes parcels or stored items that have been left after students have finished their time in College

8. Data Protection and GDPR

- Any personal data contained within lost property will be processed lawfully, fairly, and transparently.
- Access to personal data will be limited to staff with a legitimate operational need.
- The College will not publicly display personal data when advertising found items.
- Personal data will not be retained for longer than necessary and will be securely destroyed in line with retention schedules.

9. Safeguarding Considerations

- Where lost property raises **safeguarding concerns** (e.g. items belonging to a child or vulnerable adult, concerning content, or potential risk indicators), staff must:
 - Not investigate independently
 - Report concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with the College Safeguarding Policy
- Lost property processes must not involve unsupervised contact between staff and students outside normal professional boundaries.

10. Liability

- The College does not accept liability for loss, theft, or damage to personal property brought onto college premises, except where required by law.
- Items are stored at the owner's risk.

11. Misuse of Lost Property

- Staff or students must not remove, use, or personally retain lost property.
- Misuse may result in disciplinary action under staff disciplinary procedures or the student code of conduct.

12. Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure continued compliance with legislation and best practice in the FE / HE sector.