

Anti-theft policy

Mission statement

We believe in taking responsibility for our own property. We believe in demonstrating respect for anything that belongs to others and therefore never interfering in any way with, or taking, their possessions. We understand this constitutes theft.

Aims

- To ensure there is a just policy and equitable practice relating to missing items and theft at Sha Tin College.
- To embed respect for others, and their property, across all areas of the curriculum and the co-curricular life of the College.
- To encourage the involvement of the whole school community in crime prevention.
- To provide clear and consistent guidelines to manage issues arising from dealing with theft.

Student entitlement

Students at Sha Tin College are entitled to-

- A safe and crime free environment.
- A curriculum which reinforces the individual rights and respect for all.
- Firm action to sanction anyone who steals.

Proactive prevention of crime in school includes:

- Security guards monitoring the gate which is the only means of access after 8.20 am.
- Visitor labels worn by all visitors who are required to sign and report in.
- The school gate being opened only by the guard when access is cleared.
- Car park stickers identifying only bona fide car park users.
- Posters around the school campus reminding everyone to secure valuables, take responsibility for their belongings and treat others with dignity.
- Assemblies which reinforce these messages led by the Heads and Deputy Heads of Year
- Student access to a 'Drop Box', located adjacent to the circulation desk in the Library, if issues need actioning and reporting them in person is too sensitive.
- Sign in/out/reason sheet in all classrooms so we can monitor movement around the campus.
- Use of a 'Valuables Box' for student items during lessons, and other procedures, by the PE department.
- Security cameras in some strategic places on the campus.
- Labelled equipment.
- Supervision by teachers, Heads/Deputies of Year and Student Leaders to ensure students feel secure.

Role of parents in the Anti-Theft Policy:

- Parents should INSIST that children LOCK UP ALL VALUABLE ITEMS in LOCKERS ALLOCATED by the COLLEGE.
- Money brought to school should be monitored and limited.
- Cheques for school expenses are preferred
- If students bring valuables, parents must be aware that the school cannot be held responsible if they disappear or are stolen.



Procedures for the prevention of theft

Students should:

- Not bring large amounts of money to school
- Leave valuable items at home or in the care of a Tutor
- Be given firm and constant reminders to safeguard their property by using lockers
- Have a key operated padlock on their locker
- Use the PE facilities for the safekeeping of valuables during PE lessons
- **NEVER leave money or valuables unattended in bags in the corridor, classrooms, the Sports Hall or the College Hall**
- Take all bags into classrooms, including science labs and the Drama Studio

In the event of theft, the Teacher/Tutor should:

- Judge the seriousness and nature of the theft.
- Report the theft to the Head of Year/ Deputy Head of Year. If serious, see the Assistant Principal (Guidance and Achievement).
- Ensure the student write a report of the incident (see Tutor File for sheet)
- Inform the Tutor (if subject teacher)

If the Tutor/teacher considers it is *NOT serious*, she/he should:

- Deal with it then report the incident to the Tutor
- Write a brief report
- Discuss the incident with the class if it is an in-class incident.

If the student provides a teacher with information:

- Teachers should pass on information and suspicions to the Head/Deputy of Year.
- Teachers should not interview the named person. The student must be given every chance to state suspicions without her/his name being disclosed.
- Teacher should encourage the student to write details in a signed statement.
- Student should be questioned discreetly – not in front of a class
- Teachers should assure students that informing teachers is positive and community spirited.

If the *victim* is a member of *staff*, she/he should:

- Decide whether to call the police to begin a criminal investigation.
- Enact the appropriate procedures.
- Write down the circumstances of the theft before visiting the police.
- Request immediate cover for lessons, if necessary.



Head/Deputy Head of Year procedures for dealing with theft:

- The Assistant Principal/Head of Year/Principal will decide whether the suspected crime demands police presence.
- Victim's parents also have the right to take that decision.
- The Tutor will be informed immediately.
- The Head of Year/Deputy head of Year will sensitively question the victim to establish the pattern of events.
- This student's written report must be signed and dated.

The investigation then may progress in the following manner:

- Students named as involved will be questioned individually and immediately.
- Their written statements must be signed and dated.
- Groups of students (from a few in the vicinity to whole year group) may be called immediately and an appeal for help may be issued.
- Informants will be guaranteed confidentiality as far as possible
- Teachers may be asked to supply name/s of those out of class during a particular time.
- Caretaker's team may be asked to do an immediate, extensive search of the school.
- The Signing Out Book and Reception should be checked for anyone leaving school at, or immediately after, the time of the event and the student questioned at the next opportunity.
- The security guard on the gate will be immediately informed to prevent anyone leaving the premises.
- If necessary, the Head of Year involved should be given Cover to investigate the situation immediately.
- If no progress is made within a day or two, a full assembly may be called to address the seriousness of the situation in the context of the school community. The Principal may conduct this assembly.
- If a student suspects a thief and does not want to inform a teacher, she/he may see the social worker, the counsellor or a member of the non teaching staff. The Drop Box may be utilised, however; anonymous accusations will be ignored.

In the case of suspicion Head of Year/Deputy Head of Year will:

- Carefully question the student and request a written, signed statement.
- Keep students separated and question them individually if more than one student is involved.
- Inform the Tutor.
- Speak with other students and teachers, where necessary, to check statement/s.
- Undertake a search, if applicable, of the student locker and/or school bag away from other students
- Respect student wishes regarding informing parents at this stage unless suspicion is very strong and then parents should be informed.
- Consult with the Principal/Assistant Principal (Guidance and Achievement) to decide if the police need to be informed.

If guilt is established the Head of Year/Deputy Head of Year should:

- Ensure the written statement/s are detailed, signed and dated.
- Immediately inform the parents.
- Consult with the Assistant Principal (Guidance and Achievement) and the Principal and the parents/guardian of the victim to decide whether police should be informed. The police will then determine whether criminal proceedings are necessary.
- Discuss punishment with the Assistant Principal and the Principal



If the crime is serious, the parents may be asked to withdraw the student/s or she/he will be suspended immediately into the care of parents. Suspension may be wholly in school or partly at home *and* at school. The Principal and Assistant Principal will interview parents and students before re-entry into school. Subject teachers and the Tutor will be fully apprised of the situation.

Search Rights Procedures:

(See also ESF Drugs Policy)

Sha Tin College staff aim to reserve student rights to privacy. No students should feel rights are being infringed.

What constitutes reasonable suspicion?

- Being caught in the act
- Being seen at, or near, the scene of the incident at the appropriate time and being unable to supply a reasonable explanation.
- Having been suspected of being involved in other thieving incidents over a period of time and being unable to account for actions or whereabouts.
- Being absent from class during the time of the incident.
- Information received from other students or a teacher. This should be handled discreetly. A student interview may be warranted.

Who has search rights?

- The Principal/Assistant Principal (Guidance and Achievement) has the right to decide to search a student bag and/or locker. More than one member of staff will be present during the entire procedure.
- Tutors will be informed of the situation.
- Parents *may* need to be informed at some stage during the procedure.

Conduct of the search:

- Searches are conducted quietly in a private room in the presence of a witness.
- Manual body searches are inappropriate.
- If the student is unwilling to empty pockets or bags the Principal should be informed and parents contacted immediately.
- Locker searches should be carried out in private and discreetly without the knowledge of the other students in the tutor group.

When can a search take place?

- If an individual is under suspicion.
- If suspicion falls on someone in a year group but there is no evidence to suspect a particular individual then a class, or a year group, can be asked to open lockers or empty bags by the Principal, Assistant Principal or the Head of Year.
- The Head of Year/Deputy Head of Year will be present at the search and tutors will conduct the search in the tutor rooms.
- Searches may take place in the changing rooms with permission of any member of the SMT and in the presence of the Head of Department and one other teacher in the department.
- If a student refuses to open her/his locker or bag then the parents will be informed immediately and asked to come into school.

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Sha Tin College Anti -Theft Policy

This is a collegial, harmonious and
honest community



We trust one another here

