

Graffiti

Graffiti is not art, it is a crime.

Graffiti is the marking of another person's property without their consent. Spray cans and felt tipped pens or sharp objects are usually used to mark or etch graffiti on walls, fences or windows.

Graffiti takes two forms. The first, known as a 'tag', is usually a quick scrawl depicting the initials or nickname of the person responsible. The second form, known as a 'piece', may be likened to a mural.

No matter how small or insubstantial the graffiti is it should be removed as quickly as possible. Continual immediate removal is the only truly successful measure. Graffiti management is a war of attrition. The most determined party will eventually win.

Your local council may have a graffiti hotline to assist in cleaning and removal. Contact your local council for more information.

Prevention

Strategies to minimise opportunities for Vandalism and Graffiti. Some suggestions are:

- Remove rocks and any object that can be used to cause damage and clean up debris
- Clean up and remove flammable materials such as leaves and garden cuttings
- Install security cages on external lights and speakers
- Involve students in beautification programs, named gardens, murals, mosaics
- Erect clear and unambiguous warning signs about trespass and potential prosecution
- Replace glazing with damage resistant material such as polycarbonates
- Install movement activated lighting in areas at risk
- Ensure that lighting is target directed e.g. on entrances
- Direct foot traffic where you want it to go with fencing such as pool fencing
- Remove canvases for graffiti by planting shrubs in front of walls
- Consider closed circuit television systems
- Inform members of the local community about vandalism affecting the church grounds
- Develop a close relationship with local police and council
- Report all instances of graffiti to police. A photo of the graffiti should be attached to the report to assist police in apprehending offenders. Documentation of costs incurred to remove graffiti should also be attached to facilitate claiming restitution in court or to make a claim on your insurance
- Make positive use of casual (natural) surveillance, involve neighbours, business communities, community groups
- Remove the canvas, cover graffiti prone walls with student murals or mosaics
- Prompt removal within 24 hours makes graffiti easier to clean off and deters graffiti artists from re 'tagging', reducing kudos by limiting exposure time.