



Securing a Boarding School: Aiphone at Mary Hare





Securing UK's Largest School for the Deaf

Mary Hare School is the largest residential school for deaf children in the UK. Located on a 136-acre campus in Newbury, Berkshire, the school is home to Arlington Manor, its landmark building, as well as Primary, Secondary, and Sixth Form boarding houses. The grounds also feature sports facilities, woodlands, and recreational spaces.

Serving both boarding and day students, Mary Hare educates more than 150 students and employs a staff of 300. Through a focus on spoken and written English, teachers provide students with access to the national curriculum, helping prepare them for success beyond school. To help ensure the safety of this dynamic learning environment, Aiphone was proud to provide IX|IXG Series video intercoms for the school's gates.



CHALLENGES

Before choosing Aiphone, Mary Hare staff did not have an efficient way to support and control guest access. Entrances and exits went unmonitored. “We didn’t know who was here at any one time,” said school head of operations, Ian Wright. “GPS directions would take people through the middle of the school. From a safeguarding and security perspective, it wasn’t clever.”

When the decision was made to introduce intercoms, in addition to better securing the estate, the goal was to manage through traffic and accommodate the communication needs of guests and faculty. “We’ve got deaf members of staff and other deaf people coming to visit the site, which is what led us to try and find a two-way video solution that would enable lip reading and the use of sign language.”



IXG-DM7
Video Entrance Station



IX-MV7-HB
Video Answering Station

SOLUTION

Mary Hare introduced Aiphone's IXG-DM7 at the school's entrances, which border three different roads. Equipped with two-way video communication and hands-free audio, the video intercoms became an essential addition to the school's new, optimized security system.

"Aiphone's given us the control we wanted. We get a visitor, a receptionist asks for registration, and the barrier goes up. It all happens seamlessly and gives people a good impression of the site," says Ian Wright, head of operations at Mary Hare.

Optimal Fire & Security Ltd carried out the consultation, design, integration, installation, and commissioning of the overall system. They completed all associated infrastructure, control equipment, and integration processes, ensuring the various elements operated as a single, cohesive solution.

Now, taxis, delivery drivers, guests, staff, and incoming students enter the estate in a controlled and secure manner. The setup refines the arrival process while reducing the potential for confusion and miscommunication.

BENEFITS



Visual and Hands-Free Communication

As Mary Hare supports individuals with severe to profound hearing loss, the ability to communicate through lip reading and sign language is essential. The IXG-DM7's two-way video communication supports these needs by allowing visitors and reception staff to see one another during calls. This capability was a key factor in the school's decision to select Aiphone after evaluating several alternative intercom manufacturers, as no other provider could offer a display large enough to adequately support visual communication. Combined with a seven-inch touchscreen directory, motion-activated display, and hands-free operation, the system provides an effortless user experience. As visitors approach, the screen automatically activates, enabling them to identify themselves, ask questions, and receive directions with ease.



Mary Hare easily customized the welcome screen to showcase their brand.



Professional Visitor Experience

As a well-known educational institution, Mary Hare strives to create a welcoming experience for families, staff, and community members visiting throughout the year. The IX|IXG intercoms help support this goal by introducing a modern and professional point of contact at entrances. From the responsive touchscreen interface to the video communication capabilities, the system reflects the school's commitment to accessibility and inclusion. The customizable touchscreen also allows the school to showcase its branding, while enabling visitors to contact the department or boarding house they are seeking directly from the touchscreen menu. This helps create a positive impression from the moment visitors arrive.



Absolute Durability

Mary Hare's expansive, rural grounds require security hardware that can endure year-round exposure to weather while maintaining reliable function. As the IXG|IXG intercoms are located outside, the stainless-steel construction, IP65-rated protection against water and dust, and IK10-rated impact-resistant touchscreen help protect the system from rain, debris, vandalism, and everyday wear. This resilience supports unfailing communication, reducing the need for constant maintenance and helping ensure that the three entry points remain operational.

RESULTS

Protecting students and faculty while supporting individual communication needs has become an integral part of daily operations at Mary Hare. The IX|IXG Series intercoms enable clear, accessible communication through two-way video, allowing lip reading and sign language to be used with ease.

The modern design and straightforward functionality reinforce the school's commitment to both safety and inclusion, creating a welcoming experience for everyone who enters the estate. Installed at all three entrances, the systems are built to withstand changing weather conditions and the demands of daily use, helping to maintain reliable operation without disruption.

By combining accessibility, durability, and security, Aiphone's solution supports Mary Hare's mission of providing a safe and inclusive environment for students, staff, and visitors alike.

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Ian Wright, Head of Operations at Mary Hare



CASE STUDY:
Mary Hare School
selects IX|IXG Series
IP Video Intercom



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