



Personal Possessions

He will regard all utensils and goods of the monastery as sacred vessels of the altar, aware that nothing is to be neglected. He should not be prone to greed, nor be wasteful and extravagant with the goods of the monastery, but should do everything with moderation...B, 31 :10-12

St Benedict's words on the cellarer of the monastery remind us that we should respect material goods, but not be overly attached to them. Unlike monks, pupils in the School do have private possessions, but they should use them in the spirit of the Rule, rather than in the spirit of a world that encourages materialism and consumerism. An undue attachment to, or indulgence in, expensive personal property is inconsistent with the Christian and Benedictine character of Downside.

Pupils are discouraged from bringing any unnecessary clothes or equipment to School. Storage space in rooms is limited, and excessive personal property creates security problems, and may hinder effective cleaning. Expensive objects can create temptations for others. Personal items, especially clothing, should be marked with the owner's name. HsMs have access to security pens with which to mark items with owners' names.

Expensive equipment that is useful for study should be carefully stored. The possession of items such as laptops and mobile phones is always at the owner's own risk. All pupils have a lockable storage area, and it is their responsibility to lock away any expensive items while they are away from them. No pupil should have any but the smallest sums of money (£5 maximum) in their possession; anything above £5 must be given to their HsM for safekeeping.

Pupils should register the details of expensive equipment, including the make and serial number with their HsM. Pupils can also register electronic valuables online, at www.immobilise.com.

Parents are encouraged to obtain personal effects insurance, to cover any losses or damage their children may incur.

Pupils may not set up covert surveillance systems.

The School accepts no responsibility for items lost through undue care, as outlined above.

Theft is taken very seriously at Downside, and may incur the severest penalties of temporary or permanent exclusion.

If personal property is found to be missing, the following procedure takes place whether or not pupils have followed the guidelines given above:

1. The HsM attempts to determine with the pupil whether the item has been lost, borrowed or stolen.

2. The pupil fills in a theft report form (this may, in some circumstances follow the next step).
3. The HsM reports the incident to the House at assembly, and asks for information.
4. Any information given to the HsM is acted upon.
5. The pupil is helped to make a report to the police, if a crime reference number is required. The police will then come in and speak to the pupil.

Any further action will depend on the value of the item, whether due care was taken by the pupil, and the chances of the recovery of the item(s). The School reserves the right to involve the police at any stage.

The School reserves the right to confiscate and hold any items of personal property that are deemed to be, or suspected of being, a threat to the personal safety and welfare of individuals or the community as a whole. Such times would normally be kept and returned to the pupil's parents, if required.

Searches of personal areas and property are conducted under the policy governing searches. (It is recognised that occasionally false reports may be made, such that an item lost or thrown away is reported stolen, for insurance purposes).

It is noted that thieves are usually only discovered when pupils report anything they know regarding the thief to their HsM, and pupils are reminded that they have a duty to protect the community by helping the HsM to discover anyone responsible for theft.

Lost property is kept in the Old House under the care of Reception. Pupils looking for lost property should therefore ask Reception.



Claire Murphy

Director of Pastoral Care

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