

# ARE YOUR STUDENTS SAFE?

## 10 Ways To Improve Your School's Security Solution



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Connected And Protected

Maintaining a community atmosphere and a secure environment is a challenging balance for any school – from private K-12 and charter schools to college campuses. From facilitating daily learning to hosting nightly athletics and holding public events on weekends, schools are often the hub of any community, and this makes them an incredibly difficult environment to secure. Yet, it's possible to tighten up school security and improve site management in a number of ways.

The excitement between regular and extracurricular activities creates a traffic flow of students and guests leaving and entering a facility, or facilities, at the same time. You need the ability to properly monitor school space by managing access and knowing – within a moment's notice – who is in your building or on campus at any given time.

### **1. Conduct an on-site safety assessment.**

Develop a better security plan by performing a site walkthrough and identifying all exit and entry points. Are all exits clearly labeled? Is material (for example, stones, pebbles, door stoppers, etc.) blocking doors? Consider exactly who enters and leaves the school before and after hours. Understanding the flow of traffic as well as who has access to certain spaces helps you protect assets and guard the premises.

### **2. Go beyond securing the front door.**

Today, there's much more to access control than locks and alarms on primary and perimeter doors. Access control features have been expanded to include lockdown mechanisms and wireless locks on entry portals and classroom doors. The better and more integrated the technology, the tighter the visitor management. For example, visitors picking up students may be pre-registered in a searchable database before entering the building and then given a visitor pass with a time limit to restrict access to certain areas.

### **3. Leave paper recordkeeping in the past.**

Exchange your old methods of manual data entry and recording student attendance by hand for IP-based tools that increase efficiency and accuracy. For example, time



and attendance management software creates immediate and customizable reports by class, student, time of arrival and other details. Leverage new and emerging school security technology, like GPS tracking and RFID chips, to know where students are at all times.

#### **4. Embrace the Big Brother attitude of constant surveillance.**

To promote a safe school, you need to have eyes on everything at all times. Security cameras should have clear lines of sight inside stairwells and throughout hallways to prevent and capture potential incidents, while the exterior of the building requires constant monitoring to guard against graffiti, accidents and vandalism to school property.

#### **5. Dust off and brush up on your security policy.**

All visitors attempting to enter a school should be promptly greeted and identified before being permitted inside. Do a select few occupants have access to areas where high-value items are stored, like laptops and Smart Boards? All staff and administration – including substitute teachers – should be familiar with standard operating procedures and know how to carry out emergency drills for the protection of themselves and others.



## **6. Train up your security staff.**

In some cases, your security may not be limited by your technology, but rather through a lack of operational knowledge and an inability to leverage the functionality of current features. If you don't have the training you need for the systems you have, you're limiting the depth of your building's security. Your staff needs to know the ins and outs of security procedures and use technology to tighten up these procedures.

## **7. Ditch outdated systems.**

How do you know when your security technology is outdated? Are you replacing locks regularly due to corrosion? Are intercoms available to enhance security team communication between floors and buildings? Are you able to admit

students and visitors remotely? Are you remotely monitoring high traffic areas? Outdated security systems are usually incomplete in design and restrictive in use, while the latest technology enhances your school security capabilities by serving multiple purposes at once.

## **8. Multiply your security force with offsite support.**

Security guards are charged with developing and maintaining a positive relationship with students and staff. Sometimes it's necessary to back them up during certain hours of increased activity, or limit the amount of security staff after hours. Managed services, like remote video monitoring and visitor management, have the potential to cut costs and increase security.

## **9. Introduce your security system integrators to your IT team.**

When installing the latest security technology, involving your information technology team at the outset is essential for ensuring uncompromised data and network security. Integrators and IT have various responsibilities in implementing a fully functional system, and work should be delegated accordingly.

## 10. Make seamless integration a priority.

Disparate systems that don't talk to each other create gaps in your security. When installing new technology alongside an old system, seamless integration is essential for using the new technology as intended. A seamless integration between access control and intercoms enhances communication and allows you to pre-screen visitors before providing them access from the secured vestibule and into the school.

Each school is different. Campus-based private schools consisting of a blend between historic and modern buildings require different integration efforts than a single-building public kindergarten. A value-engineered partner brings the expertise in technology and design to address your unique school security needs.

Before investing in new security technology for your school, you must assess the weaknesses in your current security plan and setup. Only then are you ready to match the technology to the gaps discovered through your assessment.



**If you're looking for more ways to improve school security, contact a Security Specialist to have your security system effectiveness and potential risks assessed.**

**Assess Your Security Risks**

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