

RAPTOR[®]

TECHNOLOGIES

THE GOLD STANDARD IN SCHOOL SAFETY

CASE STUDY

Newtown (CT) Public Schools Restore Peace of Mind with Raptor[®] Visitor and Emergency Management

NEWTOWN (CT) PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Newtown Public Schools serves 4,500 K-12 students in Fairfield County, Connecticut.

- 7 schools (4 elementary, 1 intermediate, 1 middle school, 1 high school): approximately 4,500 students and 350 teachers
- 1 identified sex offender since Raptor implementation
- 9 custom alerts (primarily custodial/guardianship)

CHALLENGE

In the aftermath of the deadly December 2012 incident at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut, leaders in Newtown Public Schools were determined to move as quickly and comprehensively as possible to strengthen their district's security. One area of improvement they immediately identified was the need for a precise, robust method for managing visitors at every campus. Up to that point, visitors to Newtown schools simply signed into a visitor registry by hand, were issued a handwritten temporary badge, and were then allowed to proceed into the school. In retrospect, this procedure was problematic for several reasons: no official form of identification was requested of the visitor, or if it was, the requirement was inconsistently applied; handwritten visitor logs are often illegible and are notoriously inaccurate; and finally, paper-and-pencil methods make vetting every visitor and keeping accurate, sortable records practically impossible. "The old method with handwritten logs was inadequate, frankly," says the district's Director of Security, Mark Pompano. "We needed a much better, tighter system."

District leaders sought information about automated visitor management solutions that would directly address the shortcomings of pencil-and-paper methods and truly help to boost student and staff safety. After a search, Newtown Public Schools selected the Raptor[®] Visitor Management system for implementation districtwide in 2015.

SOLUTION

The Raptor Visitor Management system requires each school visitor to provide a state-issued form of ID upon arrival at a school. The system scans the ID and screens it against sex offender registries in all fifty states plus any locally customized alert databases for things such as custody or guardianship orders. It enables building administrators and staff to accurately monitor every visitor while he or she is on campus by printing a temporary, easily legible sticker badge including the name and photograph of the visitor—taken directly from the ID—plus the person's destination in the school. The system creates an easily referenced and

sorted record of the person's visit in real time. "Recording the visitor or volunteer instantly in the system is important because, in an emergency situation, we know exactly who is present on campus at that moment," explains Pompano.

Newtown also recognized the need for increased speed and accuracy in the district's parent/student reunification process in the event of an evacuation event. Rapid reunification of students with loved ones following an incident has been demonstrated to minimize traumatic impact for students. Newtown's reunification procedures were heavily paper-dependent, making them slow, cumbersome, and subject to error or inaccuracy. In the spring of 2017, Newtown Public Schools worked with Raptor® to pilot the reunification module of its Emergency Management system, which uses a mobile app to follow the district's procedures but dramatically accelerates the process. Trials have shown that reunification using the Raptor system is accomplished 4 times faster than with traditional methods.

RESULTS

"I manage a team of 20 security officers across all 7 schools," Pompano explains. "Since implementation, the Visitor Management system has made our officers' jobs much easier and more efficient. It's easy to use, and it's been universally well received. There's the assurance of the visible photo ID, the accuracy of the visitor records. It eliminates anxiety over visitor recordkeeping and lets our officers focus on what's happening at that moment.

"It also opened our eyes to just how many visitors we have in a given day, which underscores the need for such a system and helps justify its cost—and the cost is reasonable when you weigh it against the benefits of knowing exactly who is coming into your schools."

Building administrators love the system, as do parents. Pompano points out that only once in literally thousands of parent visits has anyone objected to having an ID scanned. "I think that's because we did a good job of communicating with parents that we were implementing this system for student and staff safety. With that one exception, we've had zero pushback."

Regarding the Emergency Management system's reunification app, Pompano is similarly positive: "We adopted the Raptor system for reunification because we saw how fast and accurate it was. We've now integrated it with our student information system for seamless reunification following any emergency.

"I don't as a rule push any product," Pompano says, "but I told a security director from a neighboring district about our success with the system. They had Raptor on their radar for possible purchase. I told him how well it works, how responsive the Raptor team has been to our needs and suggestions, and that we were fully on board with the system. I think that's a pretty strong recommendation.

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— Mark Pompano, Director of Security,
Newtown (CT) Public Schools

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**PROTECT EVERY CHILD,
EVERY SCHOOL, EVERY DAY.**

877-772-7867

info@raptortech.com

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