

Incident Alert, Policy & Procedure for Schools.

Objective

To implement an effective method, where by it is possible, to rapidly communicate and respond to an emergency situation throughout the school community without causing distress to students and staff.

One of the quickest and easiest methods of a school implementing a warning system is by utilising the school's existing bell or speaker system.

A pre determined bell ring or speaker sound could be activated thus communicating such an event.

Each school should have its own policy in place to respond to such a warning alert, tailored to their own requirements.

It may be prudent however to formulate a policy in conjunction with other schools especially in the surrounding geographic area. In this way, misunderstanding of procedure could be minimised, particularly for relieving staff and newly enrolled students.

Scenario example

A situation has arisen within the school buildings or grounds. The lunch bell is about to be activated by the alarm company or automatic time clock. The students will very shortly be exiting their classes and possibly walking into an unsafe situation.

Fortunately this school has an emergency situation policy in place, where in the event of an incident the warning signal is activated. The Staff know that on such an alert they are to keep their students in class and key staff are to contact the office for a situation update, and respond accordingly. A potentially dangerous situation has been averted by the implementation of their policy.

Implementation

This may sound a very simple and straight forward procedure to implement. However a few technical issues may need to be addressed.

Many schools have a semi automatic bell ringing system in place.

These methods in the most part relieve staff from the distracting interruptions of operating a manual school bell system for the timely notification of class changes; excluding parent interviews, wet day schedules, holidays, sports days, exams and the like

The methods utilised for automating school bells have been in use for over 20 years and are typically of two types.

1. The electronic 7 day timer
2. Alarm company activation via a phone line.

Neither of these methods is sufficiently flexible or sophisticated enough to enable an effective implementation of a Situation Alert.

What is required is a device that interfaces with or is an integral part of the normal day to day bell automation controller which can override the pre- programmed settings and immediately implement an emergency alert on command.

The device should ideally retain the entire standard daily, weekly, monthly school bell timetable ring schedules, and automatically re-establish these seamlessly once the emergency is over.

An additional consideration should be for the office staff themselves.

An incident policy may contain several levels of escalation.

For example a situation has arisen, the alert is activated by the office staff but for their own safety it is advisable that they themselves evacuate their position and retreat to a predetermined location.

A contingency arrangement should be considered for such an event .In this scenario it would be necessary that the alert activation devise **run unattended continuously** until cancelled or for a specific time period.

A comprehensive policy would require schools to identify possible scenarios and address each in turn.

Techenz Ltd manufacture a device called **BellMinder™** which incorporates an **incident emergency alert** along with the full automation of existing school bells, without the limitations of conventional methods; it enables schools to tailor their bell ring schedules for an entire year in advance and make changes in seconds.

For more information and contact details go to www.Techenz.com

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