

K-12 PANIC NOTIFICATION SOLUTIONS

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IMAGE: EI/STOCK.ADOBE.COM

Daily violence in K-12 schools is declining, according to the Institute for Education Science. On the surface, that's good news. But the big picture around school safety is much more complicated.

Even one incident of school violence is one too many, and the numbers alone shouldn't slow the push to prevent threats before they happen. Until the day comes when this discussion is no longer necessary, K-12 schools need to deploy more effective and efficient means to alert administrators, security personnel and first responders of imminent threats as soon as possible.

Fortunately, new advancements in panic notification solutions are available to better protect children, staff and visitors to K-12 schools.

ALYSSA'S LAW

Following the first passage of Alyssa's Law in New Jersey in 2019, more states have adopted or considered legislation requiring silent panic alarm systems in schools. With acts of violence emanating from both internal and external threats, they can be hard to predict and prevent but panic buttons provide a fast and effective means to report them once detected by a staff member or administrator.

This dramatically reduces emergency response times during threatening situations, reducing potential harm to students, teachers, and all individuals on premises.

Wired panic buttons have been in use for a long time, first made popular by banks to alert the police of a robbery in progress. Mounted in fixed locations at teller stations, employees simply needed to press the button to trigger silent alarms and call the police. The drawback is that employees must be physically near the panic button to activate it.

Modern wireless, wearable panic buttons have changed the playing field, driving a whole new spectrum of applications across many diverse types of facilities including schools, hospitals, hotels, and corporate and industrial facilities. Perhaps the most impactful application is in K-12 schools where wireless duress notification solutions transform every teacher, administrator, and staff worker into a mobile sentry with the ability to instantaneously report incidents or potentially harmful events the instant that trouble is detected.

But not every K-12 school is built the



same and educational facilities with different building materials and layouts may require more advanced technology to be built into these wireless panic devices. This is especially true with older buildings constructed of heavy stone and materials that can interfere with signal transmission.

To be effective across a wide spectrum of possible performance challenges, new wireless panic and duress devices now offer a host of new capabilities, including:

- Advanced multi-channel signaling over different frequencies and long distances without interference to ensure that the alarm gets through to the appropriate head-end instantaneously.
- Location services to show where an alarm has been activated within the school, making it faster and easier for first responders to pinpoint where the event is in progress.
- The ability to activate multiple types of alarm conditions (e.g., violent incident, medical emergency, fire, or intruder) enabling first responders to respond quickly and appropriately given the nature of the alarm.
- Response affirmation signs such as LEDs and/or vibration to confirm that an alarm has been sent and alert the wearer to possible accidental activations.



- Waterproof casings that allow devices to be worn in a variety of environments where they may be exposed to water or moisture, which would otherwise incapacitate such electronic devices.
- Long battery life to ensure continuous operation at times when it's needed most.

That is a lot of advanced technology to pack into a wearable panic device, which leads to the next important criterion to ensure the effectiveness of wearable duress solutions: user comfort.

THE BALANCE OF FORM AND FUNCTION

Legacy wearable panic buttons are typically bulky and uncomfortable for users to wear throughout the day. This presents a fundamental problem as wearable panic devices are only effective if they are worn. The less intrusive the device is, the greater the probability that users will wear them throughout the entire school day. Modern duress cards address this challenge with a sleek and lightweight design that is both comfortable and unobtrusive. Beyond aesthetic appeal, this is important for several reasons.

For it to be an effective deterrent and notification

solution, K-12 staff need to always wear a duress notification device when on school premises. Installing a panic button in a fixed location or leaving a portable device on one's desk increases the likelihood that it will be out of immediate reach when/if an event occurs.

This is especially relevant when school personnel may be actively involved in a physical conflict or if an accident or weather event occurs that requires immediate attention.

New sleek, lightweight duress cards are also more discreet, reducing stress on impressionable young children. By providing a quiet, discreet, and reliable layer of security, K-12 staff can also take comfort knowing that help is available at the push of a button wherever they are on school grounds – inside classrooms, outdoor play areas, hallways or sports fields.

When evaluating panic notification solutions for your K-12 school, look for solutions that combine the latest wireless technologies, notification capabilities, and design characteristics to ensure user comfort. Modern solutions like Inovonics' recently introduced mobile Duress Card help ensure that K-12 schools can better protect students, teachers, staff and visitors with both discretion and confidence. 🛡️

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