

Handling visitors

What does the school do when a person turns up at the school office saying that he/she has come to repair the photocopier, look at the boiler or take away a couple of computers that are faulty?

The enormous variety of people who can walk through a school's front door makes this a very real issue. In addition to parents and photocopier repair people, school visitors include other relatives, technical staff working on computers, visiting music teachers, specialists for children who speak little English, and so on.

All of them enter the school, and all of them can potentially come into contact with children and with the school's equipment and resources.

Indeed, it is not until one has actually had the experience of the person who enters saying "I've come to fix the computers in the ICT room" and who later walks out carrying equipment never to be seen again, that the question of controlling who enters the school really becomes important.

Now, however, many schools are addressing the issue through the installation of computerised visitor systems controlled through the school office. Not only does such a change reduce the risk of theft and of unchecked people walking around the school and coming into contact with children, but it also has two other benefits.

Firstly, it improves the efficiency of the school office in handling visitors. Everyone attending by appointment is pre-booked and so the office has a computerised record prepared in advance for each individual who comes to the school. This, in turn, means that anyone with access to the school network (and the appropriate password, of course) can access the list of visitors at a moment's notice. This is particularly valuable in schools and colleges with multiple sites.

Secondly, this advance awareness of visitors attending, plus the ability to produce photo ID badges, gives the clear impression to parents that this is a school in control of its environment – something that is very reassuring to parents.

We're grateful to SG World for information on this topic. The SG World iReception is already being used in many schools and more details are available from www.theeducationcatalogue.co.uk Alternatively, telephone SG World Customer Service Department on **01270 588 211** for more information or to arrange an appointment with your local sales representative.