
Electronic Registration and Arrangements for Emergency Evacuation of School Buildings

1. From time to time we are asked for advice on ways of accounting for pupils during the evacuation of buildings in an emergency by schools who are using electronic registration.
 2. The issue is that, when using electronic registration, schools do not have paper registers to take out to the playground for checking that all pupils are accounted for.
 3. The procedure that best suits a school will depend on many factors such as whether the school uses Attendance or Lesson Monitor, uses OMRs or manual entry, uses networked or offline working, as well as the speed and availability of hardware, and other in-school procedures. Capita ES cannot recommend a single 'best procedure'. It is for school management to decide which procedure best suits their own school. To assist decision making this paper shares and comments on solutions adopted by some schools.
 4. Many schools who record attendance using OMR Registration Sheets take these sheets out to the playground and use them as registers. This seems a good, simple solution in these circumstances.
 5. Some schools have invested in a high speed printer and in an emergency they run the 'Today's Register' report in Attendance for Windows which prints each registration group on a separate sheet, and lists all the pupils with their registration marks for today (morning and afternoon marks).
 6. Some schools who are using Lesson Monitor have equipped every teacher with a laptop or tablet. If these are connected to the server by radio LAN, they can be used to check pupils directly from the screen. This has the advantage that the latest information can be used, and pupils can be checked by lesson groups rather than by registration groups. However checking that every pupil is accounted for by lessons depends on every pupil having a full timetable; any pupils on private study would need to be checked too; the signing in/out book would still need to be cross-referenced to lesson registers.
 7. A general problem with using data from the server in an emergency is that it would not cover a situation where the emergency crashed the server or the network.
 8. Teachers with laptops could take them outside and use Lesson Monitor in offline mode. However the module would need to be closed down correctly while still connected to the network, before being disconnected and opened up again in offline mode. The local (workstation) database would only hold data for the classes that had been registered on this machine. It would not hold data for the class next door, whose teacher did not have a laptop.
 9. A general problem with using laptops or handheld devices outdoors is that they may not be guaranteed to keep working in pouring rain; also they may be difficult to read in bright sunshine.
 10. The system recommended by some advisers is based on what the school used to do when paper registers were in use. In many schools the only paper registers were those taken at the start of every half-day session. Therefore pupils would have lined up by registration group, and their form teacher would have checked them off. Any further absentees could then be checked against the signing in/out book to see if every pupil was accounted for. This familiar system may still be the best basis for the process. It would require a register to be printed off twice daily for the whole school, showing each registration group on a separate sheet, and listing all the pupils with their registration marks for today. The 'Today's Register' report in Attendance for Windows is just such a printout.
 11. In schools where children stay with the same teacher all day, those teachers know which children are present or absent, and a permanent class list is all that is required as an aide memoire. Their teacher will know the reason for pupils who were absent at the start of the session, and it will be obvious if any pupils are unaccounted for. This system is comparable to workplace arrangements where each team has a fire marshal who maintains a list of employees who normally work in that area.
 12. The legal basis for recording attendance on computer is the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, which say:

 '**16.—**(1) Nothing in these Regulations shall be taken to prevent the keeping of an admission register or an attendance register by means of a computer...'
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