

# School Safety Solutions

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Evaluation Kit

**RAVE**  
MOBILE SAFETY

# Overview

In the wake of school shootings across the country, more and more school safety solutions have emerged making it hard for school administrators to differentiate public safety grade solutions from flashy new products with high marketing budgets. Not all school safety solutions are created equal. Though there are a plethora of choices that promise to help keep students and staff safe, only some of these solutions account for the complete picture of emergency incidents at schools.

Because each solution is different, it is not always initially clear what impact it will have on your school emergencies. When weighing your options, consider if and how the features and capabilities of each solution will affect students, school staff, 9-1-1, and emergency responders.

In order to help you evaluate the school safety solutions market, we recommend cross-referencing each solution against the benefits, requirements and mitigations.

**Benefits** – *What does the solution do and how does it help?*

**Requirements** – *What is needed for implementation? What kind of training is necessary? What needs to be put into place in order to gain the benefits of the system?*

**Mitigation** – *Does it incorporate into your school safety plans and procedures? Are there any shortcomings that you'll need to bridge?*

# School Safety Solutions Comparison Chart

	Benefits	Requirements	Mitigations
<p><b>Wearable panic button</b></p> <p><i>Item such as a lanyard or keychain that can be used to report an emergency</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can be worn by staff, so ability to report emergency isn't limited by staff member's location</li> <li>- Very little training required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Requires extensive indoor infrastructure buildout of antennas and receiving devices</li> <li>- Requires user to keep device charged</li> <li>- Must establish other channels to communicate to staff the nature of emergency and next steps</li> <li>- Strategy needed for identifying emergency location</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use is limited by strength of signal, so a contingency plan is needed for locations out of reach</li> <li>- Expensive hardware means you may have to pick and choose who receives a wearable panic button</li> <li>- Must use other channel for staff communication</li> <li>- May bypass 9-1-1 to third party</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hard-wired panic button</b></p> <p><i>Devices installed on the school building itself like a pullable fire alarm</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Very quick to activate</li> <li>- Is generally accessible to anyone in the building, not just staff</li> <li>- Can sometimes be connected to other hardwired systems, such as security cameras or fire alarm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Must establish other channel to communicate to staff the nature of emergency and next steps</li> <li>- If button does not automatically call 9-1-1, someone must be tasked with calling when button is pushed</li> <li>- Need to establish alternative way to communicate nature of emergency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Budget allocations usually needed for installation costs</li> <li>- Often notifies third party alarm company, delaying the notification of 9-1-1</li> <li>- Must use other channel for staff communication</li> <li>- Risk of student pushing panic button</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rave Panic Button™</b></p> <p><i>Mobile app smartphone-based emergency notification tool that can also be used for school staff communication</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Direct integration with 9-1-1</li> <li>- No hardware purchase necessary, can be installed on staff's smartphones</li> <li>- Custom staff notifications based on emergency type</li> <li>- Staff Assist feature allows for internal staff communication</li> <li>- Can be initiated from anywhere on school grounds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourages planning and coordination with 9-1-1 on emergency response</li> <li>- Requires geo-fences of school campuses to transmit accurate location information</li> <li>- Can be enhanced by providing 9-1-1 with facility profile and other information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Set up integrations with existing systems like mapping data, video surveillance, access control, lockdown, radio systems, and PA system</li> <li>- The mobile app is installed on staff's smartphones</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other panic apps</b></p> <p><i>Smartphone-based apps that vary in their capabilities and communication options</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No hardware purchase necessary, can be installed on staff's smartphones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If there is no 9-1-1 integration involved, must independently ensure that both emergency plans are aligned</li> <li>- Need to establish other channel for staff communication</li> <li>- Must find out options to use for non-emergencies, like drills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need a way to get information to 9-1-1, and indicate that call is coming from school (if from a mobile device)</li> <li>- Must work into system ways to indicate that 9-1-1 has been called</li> <li>- If there is no 9-1-1 involvement, need a tactic for avoiding self-dispatch</li> <li>- Staff needs to know that school and building info will not be accessible to call takers if 9-1-1 is called from landline</li> <li>- If 9-1-1 is called from a landline, need to find strategy for alerting staff that call has been placed</li> </ul>

# 7 Important Questions to Ask When Evaluating School Safety Solutions

There are many options out there that promise to enhance the safety of schools. Yet not all of these choices provide the capabilities and features that really matter in the preparation and response to school incidents.

It's easy to be overwhelmed when reviewing all the choices for enhanced security.

To ensure that you select a school safety solution that can truly impact and improve emergency response, ask yourself these questions during your evaluation.



# 1

## How does it provide for a rapid response?

The amount of time it takes to react to a school emergency can literally be a matter of life and death. This is especially true with violent incidents such as an active shooter.

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***69%** of active shooting incidents last **less than 5 minutes**, however officers arrived before the end of the episode only **31%** of the time.*

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Speeding up this response time requires the capability to automatically provide crucial information to 9-1-1 call takers, such as the nature of the emergency, where it is occurring on the school campus and the school's procedure for dealing with each type of incident.

A swift reaction doesn't just matter on the side of 9-1-1, but also for school staff and security. Instantly notifying key personnel means the sooner they know about the emergency, the sooner they can respond appropriately. While drills can help them train for the right reaction, they still require information when there is a real emergency to react to. They need to know if, for instance, an intruder has entered the building, requiring a classroom lockdown. Common communication strategies, such as using a PA system, do not provide the capacity to discreetly alert staff and convey the nature of the emergency.

## 2

# How does it integrate with 9-1-1?

Although some systems such as Rave Panic Button allow for easy information sharing with 9-1-1, a complete integration can bridge any information gaps and make for a seamless response.

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*A complete integration with 9-1-1 ensures the call takers can act as incident command and have the **key data about the incident and communication tools to respond.***

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When the Rave Panic Button is pushed, the 9-1-1 call taker is provided the emergency type and location as well as key contact information, facility layout, and emergency response plans. With this complete view of the emergency as it unfolds, 9-1-1 and first responders can take critical steps towards responding to and resolving an incident and improve situational awareness and a faster dispatch. Additionally, call takers can send messages to on-site contacts to provide updates as the incident unfolds.

Most importantly, an integration with 9-1-1 helps schools avoid the headache of self-dispatch. This can happen when panic buttons without integration capabilities notifies emergency responders in the area about the emergency, but does not alert 9-1-1. Situations like this can be hazardous, as it hinders communication and leads to confusion. For example, if a school uses a non-integrated solution to report an active shooter, the call for help can go out to local law enforcement, but not 9-1-1. This can result in a disjointed response effort, or even worse, utter disorder if there is no central location to coordinate a unified effort. In this scenario, if a plain clothes police officer arrives on the scene first with a weapon, that officer could be confused for the actual shooter by staff or responders who later arrive on scene.





# 3

## Can it be used everywhere on school grounds?

It's not a secret that emergencies can be unpredictable. This means that while there may be a solution that works in classrooms, it can't be used for non-traditional settings instances, such as a student having a medical emergency in a sports field or in a hallway.

One of the important factors of a comprehensive safety solution is that it accounts for events that may happen anywhere on school grounds, and communicates to 9-1-1 exactly where first responders are needed.

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*Students and staff are not always confined to their classrooms, **so a school's emergency reporting solution should not be restricted to it either.***

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# 4

## Can it be used for every emergency?

There are a wide range of incidents that can happen in a school, varying from gas leaks and fires to violent incidents and natural disasters.

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*Even if students and staff have trained to swiftly take appropriate action, **they still need to know the nature of the emergency so they can determine which procedure is necessary.***

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Likewise, 9-1-1 also needs to know not just that there is an incident, but what exactly is happening in the school. This impacts their response and determines if they will be sending a law enforcement team to disarm an active shooter or the local fire brigade to investigate smoke coming from a boiler room.

Filling in 9-1-1 about the nature of the emergency takes time, but it can be expedited with solutions like the Rave Panic Button app that allows users to easily convey that information from the get-go.



# 5

## Does it allow for communication with on-site staff?

When it comes to school emergencies, on-site staff needs to be notified about more than just the emergency itself. They also need to continually be informed of details such as if there are any specific procedures they need to take, where they should lead students, and when the incident has ended so that the school day can proceed as normal.

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*Conveying this information via a cell phone ensures that staff will see it regardless if **they are near an intercom or have evacuated the building entirely.***

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It also means that if there is a class missing from a meeting point after an evacuation, for example, staff can use this feature to communicate with them and gather information.

This function is also helpful during emergency preparation, because it means that staff will never be left in the dark or confused about next steps. If a fire drill happens during school hours, for example, features such as Rave Panic Button's Staff Assist can be used to alert them about what to do or that a drill has ended.

# 6

## How often will it be used?

Some school safety solutions aren't restricted to only be used during an emergency. In fact, the more frequently a school can take advantage of the tools they have purchased, the greater the return on their investment.

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*Ideally, a solution can be used not just during an emergency, **but also to help prepare for it.***

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For example, the Rave Panic Button app can be used to run safety drills, allowing staff to get familiar with the same system that they will use during an incident.

The Rave Panic Button app also allows for internal communication around the clock. This means it can provide functionality outside of emergency scenarios, such as notifying staff that the school will be closed due to inclement weather. Or it can be used for day-to-day instances, like contacting an individual teacher about a student in their class.

# 7

## Has its effectiveness been proven?

There are many school safety solutions on the market, however not all of these have been widely tested, used in actual emergencies, and proved to be effective. In fact, when [The Washington Post](#) conducted a survey of schools that had experienced a school shooting, no one cited bulletproof blackboards, metal detectors, or any other newer or untested solution as capable of preventing the violence at their school.

Before investing in an expensive, cumbersome solution, explore which has been used at other schools. Ask educators in the community what has worked for them at their school, and follow their references instead of sales pitches.

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*After all, a solution that has been in place for a longer time is an indication that it has **continually provided value to school staff, students and first responders.***

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# How can Rave School Safety Solutions help your school?

Rave Panic Button accounts for many of these important factors that are necessary in a comprehensive school safety solution. Learn more about how it can clearly communicate an emergency to 9-1-1, on-site personnel and first responders in seconds while shortening response times and enhancing safety for all those in the immediate area.

**Find out the impact this can have on your school by scheduling a demo of Rave school safety solutions today!**

**SCHEDULE A DEMO**

