

Visitors at Haverhill school to get background check



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HAVERTHILL, Mass. -- You may expect to undergo a background check when applying for a job or an apartment, but soon, a local high school will be running checks on every non-student who pays a visit.

It's part of a new plan for school security. In Haverhill, they're expanding the use of background checks in the district. It's one of many changes to keep students safe as they return to class.

Haverhill High School is stepping up security this year when it comes to visitors.

“Across schools nationwide, particularly here in our urban centers, there are always problems with people coming into our schools that shouldn't be there. We have people that are convicted felons. We have people that are on an offender list,” said Jim Scully, the Superintendent of Public Schools in Haverhill.

Beginning in a couple weeks, any person who enters the school will have their background checked electronically by swiping their driver's license.

“We get a warning indicator that that person isn't welcome in the schools. So what it does, it provides a safer atmosphere,” said Supt. Scully.

Another school in Haverhill, the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School, has been using this technology called LobbyGuard for the past two years.

“We have probably, over the last couple of years, had five or six people identified as not having access to the building,” said Bill DeRosa, the superintendent at Whittier Tech.

DeRosa explained the process to 7NEWS.

First, the visitor's license gets scanned. Then, the person's name and birth date are verified.

“At that point, a visitor’s pass is printed out from LobbyGuard, and they’re able to attach it to their clothing,” said

Some people think the technology is great.

“I think it’s a great tool to have in this day and age, to prevent unwanted people who are not supposed to be in the school, to be in there,” said one man.

“It’s important that everyone comes into the school, identifies who they are, and if scanning is an easier method than others, then I think it’s perfectly fine,” said a woman.

The superintendent also said that this year students in grades five and up are required to carry bar-coded ID badges.