

CCTV cameras should be installed in all classrooms in the UK

Over the past two decades, Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras have been widely introduced into shops, streets and public spaces in order to reduce crime. In the United Kingdom, there are an estimated four million cameras in use – more than any other country in the world. By monitoring what is happening; shop owners, local councils and the police have been able to slash crime, improve prosecution rates and provide crucial assistance to crime victims.

The vast majority of secondary schools in the UK have over twenty official CCTV cameras installed in corridors, playgrounds and around the boundaries of the school, which are used to help everyone feel safer. It is a fact that the majority of crimes committed in schools are connected to vandalism of property and graffiti. Obviously, introducing CCTV greatly reduces the incidence of such antisocial crimes, saving the school thousands of pounds each year. The money saved can be spent, for example, on newer computer systems, or improved sporting facilities instead. Who wouldn't want better equipment for their school?

Clearly, CCTV cameras deter thieves from stealing. Both school property and pupils' belongings, such as expensive bicycles, can be protected by the introduction of cameras in strategic places. Similarly, arson attacks on schools are reduced by the presence of cameras as CCTV footage can be supplied to the police, who can use it to prosecute offenders. Sadly, arson attacks not only cause devastating damage to school buildings, but can also destroy special pieces of coursework. In addition to these obvious benefits, pupils feel much safer at school knowing that the threat of bullying is lessened by the presence of cameras in playgrounds and corridors; places where teachers may not always otherwise be available to help. It is essential that pupils feel safe in school.

Based on the huge successes that have been seen in schools where CCTV is in use, there is strong evidence to suggest that cameras should be installed in all classrooms in the UK. Not only would this continue to ensure pupils (and teachers) are safe in school, it would also surely lead to improved behaviour as teachers would have impartial evidence to show parents about their child's behaviour. It is a fact that poor behaviour in class is disruptive to education and any attempts to reduce this should be beneficial to all.

In summary, CCTV cameras have proved their efficiency in schools: reducing crime, saving money and making everyone feel safer. The time has come to insist that cameras are installed in all classrooms in the UK to ensure that all pupils gain the potential benefits from the greater protection and improved behaviour that these provide.

CCTV cameras should not be installed in all classrooms in the UK

Over the past two decades, Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras have been widely introduced into shops, streets and public spaces in order to attempt to reduce crime. In the United Kingdom, there are an estimated four million cameras in use – more than any other country in the world. It was hoped that CCTV would help cut crime, but, despite the billions of pounds spent on this technology, crime rates have not fallen since the introduction of cameras. A recent study shows just 3% of street crime in London was solved using evidence from CCTV cameras.

Most secondary schools in the UK have over twenty CCTV cameras, allegedly to help everyone feel safer. However, although cameras may help to identify a person who has committed a crime (although people can hide their faces if they want to) they do not help to *prevent* it from happening. It is a fact that the majority of schools do not have the budget available to employ a team of people to watch what is happening on monitors and therefore stop crimes in progress. One person can only efficiently watch eight CCTV screens at a time, so the average school would need to employ three people just to watch screens, and an additional member of staff to allow those three people to have breaks.

Some people argue that introducing CCTV greatly reduces the incidence of antisocial crimes such as graffiti, therefore saving schools thousands of pounds each year. However, the expense of buying the camera system and employing security staff far outweighs any supposed savings. Surely schools should spend this money on better facilities for their students? Students who attend schools with better facilities and more clubs are much less likely to commit crimes in school.

In addition to the clear cost implications of CCTV, the issue of privacy must be considered. Some schools even have CCTV cameras installed in toilets and changing rooms! It has been argued that CCTV cameras in changing rooms help to prevent bullying, but a teacher is always in charge of a class during a P.E. lesson, and that teacher is also present and in charge of student safety in the changing rooms. Some people argue that cameras should be installed into all classrooms in the UK as this will improve pupil behaviour. Yet it is a fact that schools already have effective systems of managing pupil behaviour, and that CCTV is likely to simply distract pupils from learning and teachers from teaching.

In summary, CCTV cameras have proved totally ineffective in schools; they do not prevent crime and are a huge waste of money which could be better spent. Furthermore, they are an invasion of the privacy of students and staff, who have the right to learn and teach without being watched at every turn. The time has come to insist that cameras are not installed in classrooms, and are actually removed from all schools in the UK.