



Students at Cedar Girls' Secondary School scanning their ez-link cards to record their attendance. ST PHOTO: CHEW SENG KIM

School attendance checks go digital

The digital methods also cut down time spent on administrative work.

SAC's Ms Teo said that between 30 and 60 students out of the entire school population of 1,300 may be absent in a day. Previously, teachers would have to personally call parents, which may take an hour or more.

These systems generally cost about \$7,000 to \$10,000, depending on the set-up, and parents may co-pay monthly for the operational costs of, say, text messages.

Students said they quickly got used to the new way of taking attendance.

Said PHS student Sanesh Sailesh, 15: "At first, when the school introduced the system, we were really surprised and it was really cool. But now it's become a habit."

As with all new technologies, there can be the occasional hiccup. Sanesh said he has occasionally "just walked past the scanning machines, when I'm in a rush or talking to a teacher".

His mother then gets a text message and he will get a "love note" from her, checking where he is.

"I just assure her I'm really in school," he said.

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How three schools do it

■ Anglo-Chinese School (Barker Road)

It will use iPod Touch wireless handhelds to take attendance. This will be fully implemented by the end of this month.

Attendance will first be taken at the start of the day, and expanded to before every lesson and co-curricular activity.

This information is wirelessly transmitted and automatically updated into the school system.

■ Cedar Girls' Secondary School

Students and staff scan their ez-link cards, which have a unique number, each time they arrive at and leave the school.

Parents can check online if their daughters have arrived or have left the premises.

Students who forget their cards can ask staff in the general office to register their attendance.



ST PHOTO: ALPHONSUS CHERN

■ Presbyterian High School (above)

Students and staff key in their identification numbers or scan their ez-link cards, then scan their fingerprints, in a two-step process.

Text message alerts go out to parents of children who have not reported to school.