Top marks for HD surveillance
at England's oldest school

Industry
Education

Customer
The King's School, Canterbury

Region
United Kingdom

IDIS Partners
Sunstone Systems

Background

Historic school brings 21st century learning to life

Situated on a World Heritage site within the Precincts of Canterbury Cathedral, The King's School, Canterbury is England's oldest school, dating from 597AD. As a co-educational independent school, it offers a 21st-century education within an illustrious historic setting to more than 820 students aged 13-18, including boarders and day pupils. The school estate includes an exceptionally diverse mix of old and new architecture, ranging from medieval Grade 1 listed buildings to brand new premises. Unlike many schools, which typically occupy a single site that can be enclosed with relative ease, the King's estate includes around 220 separate buildings. They are dispersed across a wide area, many within the public Cathedral grounds and others isolated further afield. Amenities include day and boarding houses, teaching facilities, a music school, recreational centre, sports facilities and staff accommodation. The school also runs security at the affiliated Junior King's Canterbury, attended by pupils aged 3-13, on an 80-acre estate four miles away.

Challenges

Logistical, engineering and regulatory constraints

As at any school, student safety at The King's School is of paramount importance. In 2015 the management team undertook a comprehensive review of all aspects of security, from safety policies to major incident planning. At the time security was dependent on disparate analogue CCTV systems plus a diverse range of hardware and software from multiple vendors. The school instead wanted a converged surveillance infrastructure unifying systems from a single manufacturer to ensure seamless capability across all sites. However, there were significant challenges, including logistical, engineering and regulatory restrictions on fitting new wiring and equipment within the historic buildings, some with very thick stone walls. Stringent Department of Education (DoE) controls on surveillance in schools also had to be observed. And, of course, the solution had to be cost-effective, ensure ease of use and require low maintenance. It also needed to deliver the flexibility and scalability to support all future plans in line with ongoing school development.

Solution

Seamlessly converged HD surveillance

Security integration experts Sunstone Systems designed and delivered a customised surveillance solution built around a core base platform with IDIS equipment and software. Once complete, the solution will comprise a mix of 120 cameras from the IDIS fixed range, including dome cameras, network video recorders and all the associated software required to deliver an integrated surveillance infrastructure. Combining unobtrusive IDIS IP cameras with IDIS software ensured that high-quality images could be achieved by running HD TVI over existing coaxial cables, significantly reducing the need for extensive rewiring. This in turn eliminated the need for extensive engineering work in old buildings, helping to contain costs while meeting Historic England's requirements. IDIS software overcame many key challenges, for example, by enabling digital enhancements, digital zoom and privacy masking to enable compliance with DoE requirements while providing comprehensive cover in the most sensitive areas of the estate.
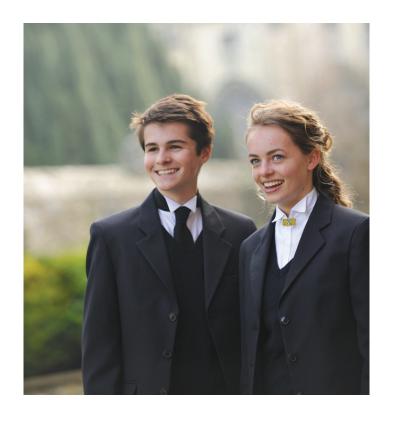

Results and Benefits

Assurance of 24/7 student safety

The system has been very well received. It is proving easy to use by staff, involves less time and administration, delivers improved reporting and requires minimal maintenance. Excellent HD image quality ensures easy access to indisputable evidence of any incident. At the recreation centre, for example, 23 new IDIS motion-detection cameras enable staff to quickly play back any events that require attention.

> " Safeguarding students is our top priority so we need surveillance we can trust implicitly. Sunstone Systems and IDIS were extremely creative in overcoming our challenges and the solution exceeded expectations. It does everything we wanted and more to protect students, the school and our reputation for responsible stewardship. What's more, it provides all the flexibility we will need to meet our security requirements as they continue to evolve. "

Commenting, Lee Connelly
Security Manager at The King's School

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