MILLBURN TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Around-the-Clock Support in a 1:1 Environment

ABOUT MILLBURN TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Known for its rigorous academics, Millburn Township Public Schools is a 1:1 Chromebook district that serves 5,000 students across eight schools.

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gaggle.net/demo

sales@gaggle.net

(800) 288-7750

When students at Millburn Township Public Schools were given Chromebooks, district leaders knew it was their responsibility to monitor these devices in order to keep their students safe.

Challenge

Students were using technology both in and out of school, and the district wanted to make sure those students were using their devices safely and properly.

Solution

Working with community stakeholders and partnering with Gaggle to prevent dangerous student situations.

Results

With two major student situations where lives were potentially saved, the district makes sure Gaggle is the first tool they renew every year.

In today's society, a school's responsibility extends well beyond the traditional school day. This is especially true for districts that hand out devices to students, knowing that they need guidance and support along their digital journeys. To ensure that its students were using these devices responsibly and to detect any potential causes for concern, Millburn Township Public Schools in New Jersey recently implemented the Gaggle student safety platform.

"We have medical, health, and wellness professionals and guidance counselors who provide for our students' wellness," said Dr. Christine Burton, the district's superintendent, "but oftentimes when students are having a crisis, it doesn't happen during the school day. It happens after hours, during holidays, or other times they're off campus."

Last December, for example, the district received an alert about a student who was in crisis and possibly considering suicide. The student discussed the issue online with peers—a conversation that immediately triggered a Gaggle alert. "We knew right away that we had a middle school student who needed our help and support," recalled Dr. Burton.

"My principal got the alert and immediately dispatched the information to the police," she continued. "The child was able to get to a hospital during winter break—when school wasn't even in session—to obtain the necessary mental health support."

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

With eight schools and 5,000 students in grades pre-K through 12, Millburn Township Public Schools is a 1:1 Chromebook district that's known for its rigorous academics. The district takes both digital and physical security very seriously, which is why it decided to implement a student safety platform to support its 1:1 initiative. "Our job is to give students anytime, anywhere access to information," said Evan Abramson, director of technology, "and we also need to keep them protected."

Abramson noted that all principals and board members were involved with the platform selection process, and the local police department also played a role in those early meetings. "We worked together to create a plan of policies and procedures," said Abramson. "That way, anytime an incident occurred, everyone would immediately know what to do and how to act upon it."

"We understand that it takes a village to raise a child. Bringing in a product like Gaggle helps us all sleep at night, knowing full well that our students are protected."

By working in partnership with its surrounding community and implementing Gaggle, the district can effectively protect its students. "We understand that it takes a village to raise a child," said Abramson. "Bringing in a product like Gaggle helps us all sleep at night, knowing full well that our students are protected."

SUPPORTING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

A critical facet of education for Millburn Township Public Schools, social and emotional learning radiates across all students, teachers, clubs, parents, and community stakeholders—all of which understand that the well-being of students comes first.

This commitment strengthened further during the COVID-19 pandemic, when students were learning from home. During that period, the district leaned especially hard on Gaggle to alert it to potential issues being shared via email or in Google Docs. "When we got the alerts, we were able to provide services to students immediately," said Abramson.

"If there's an incident, we get the phone calls morning, noon, or night, and while it may be a mission-critical situation, the Gaggle team is always calm and collected and ready to help."

Gaggle also gives Millburn Township Public Schools a true partner it can reach out to around the clock versus just another piece of technology. "If there's an incident, we get the phone calls morning, noon, or night," said Abramson. "And while it may be a mission-critical situation, the Gaggle team is always calm and collected and ready to help."

Knowing that students in need of help may not always verbalize their needs, Dr. Burton said the student safety platform helps to bridge the gap between a child in need and an adult who can come to his or her aid quickly and confidently. "Students may voice their thoughts in a different form of communication, and that's where Gaggle comes into play," she said. "Then, it's our responsibility to do what we can to connect students with mental health professionals and truly get them the level of help and support that they need."