Suffolk: Eighth school falls victim to laptop thieves

EADT 05 March 2013

By Emma Brennan

Laptop closeup

EIGHT Suffolk schools have now been targeted by laptop raiders in just two months.

Monks Eleigh Primary has become the latest victim in a string of identical burglaries across Suffolk, with five of the incidents in the west of the county.

The most recent theft happened at Monks Eleigh Primary's Churchfield premises on Saturday at about 9.30pm. The thieves forced entry to the building and took 14 RM Notebook 300 laptops worth around £6,400 from inside a secured cabinet.

Police admitted that there have been no developments in their efforts to trace the perpetrators, who they believe have already taken more than £20,000 of laptops from primary schools in Bardwell, Rougham, Risby and Moulton during the past month alone. They confirmed that they are investigating any possible links between the incidents.

According to Monks Eleigh Primary's executive headteacher Robert Giles, the burglary has left the school's 30 pupils very "upset and anxious".

He said: "The laptops were locked in a cupboard at the back of the staff room and weren't on show. The thieves were in and out very quickly so it appears that they knew exactly what they were looking for.

"We are very disappointed that we will be without computers for six to eight weeks while everything is sorted, and the whole situation is very inconvenient for the school."

He said the laptops were used most days for general curriculum work and for children who need extra support for literacy, adding: "It's the students who will miss out in the short term. They were very worried and upset so we held a special assembly this morning to try to reassure them."

Suffolk Police's western area policing's commander, Superintendent Terry Byford, said officers were linking the eight offences and were working with Suffolk County Council to ensure that every school in the county has been contacted with crime prevention advice in relation to site security – and specifically the security of computer equipment.

He added: "We understand that these type of crimes cause considerable disruption to the schools and we would appeal to anyone who has any information, has seen any related suspicious activity or who has been offered the stolen laptops to buy."

Calls should be made to Suffolk police on 101 or to Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.