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NSW schools have been given the go-ahead to use fingerprint scanning systems as a hi-tech method of roll call.

Students' fingerprints will be scanned as they enter school, after the Department of Education authorised the finger-scanning scheme, which is already operating at Rooty Hill High School, in Sydney's west.

The fingerprint attendance logging system allows students to scan their fingerprint when they arrive at school and can be used to monitor their moves throughout the day.

The technology will not be compulsory but more schools are expected to install the system next year.

The students' fingerprints are converted into an algorithm, with no actual prints stored.

Rooty Hill High School has ordered 14 scanners, which are expected to be used to scan students as they enter the canteen, library and some classrooms.

The school's principal Christine Cawsey said it would allow the school to monitor the students more closely.

But president of the NSW Council for Civil Liberties Cameron Murphy said the scanning system was "intrusive" and suggested those using the system were branding students as lawbreakers.

"It's a clear breach of their privacy and it's treating school kids like they're criminals," Mr Murphy told *The Daily Telegraph* last night.

"It's absolutely absurd.

"If the fingerprinting doesn't work, what's next? Putting ankle bracelets on students?"

Academy Attendance manufactures the electronic attendance systems, which are expected to be rolled out to at least half a dozen other schools next year.

The Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations said they were not consulted about the new technology.

"This is a step too far ... we would have liked to have expressed an opinion to ensure that all the checks and balances were there," federation president Di Giblin said.

"We need to protect our kids so that this technology is used for the purpose for which it was intended ... to monitor school attendance."