

School security – Fact sheet 2:

Developing security guidelines at schools

The [School security procedure](#) outlines principals' responsibilities to develop locally applicable guidelines for school security matters affecting staff, students and visitors, as well as the wider school community.

While the department manages the requirements for security design within the [Design Standards for Department of Education facilities](#), [alarm monitoring](#), [electronic security](#), [CCTV](#) and [security fencing](#), development of some school-based guidelines for day-to-day security should be tailored to attributes unique to each school, including (but not limited to):

- Geographic location;
- Size and layout of the campus, including entry points and location of administration;
- Numbers of staff and students;
- Physical environment surrounding the school;
- Security measures at the school (physical, electronic, security patrols, lighting); and
- Any person/s specifically known to present a security risk within the school community.

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What security guidelines should schools have?

Principals should consider the attributes noted above, as well as any others unique to their school, when developing security guidelines. Schools may also choose to develop security guidelines as strategies to treat identified security risks (refer to [Fact sheet 1: Conducting a security risk assessment](#) for more information).

Some common school-based guidelines for security are outlined below.

Your [School security advisor](#) can assist with developing security guidelines specific to your school.

Visitor management

Having guidelines for visitor access will allow for a consistent approach to when and how external persons enter the school grounds. It also enables schools to retain records for visitor entry, which may assist when investigating security incidents on the grounds. Schools can develop their individual guidelines based on:

- The typical type and number of visitors during school hours;
- Physical access to other areas of the grounds from administration; or
- Any specific identified security risks.

Principals may choose to have a register or electronic device for visitors to sign in, but at a minimum, all visitors to the school grounds should be required to sign in and out at administration, providing the following details:

- Name
- Area visiting
- Person visiting/reason for visit
- Contact phone number
- Time in/out

Contractors should have a separate sign in with the following information:

- Name

- Company
- Area of work
- Nature of work being carried out
- Contact phone number
- Any keys issued (alternatively recorded in a key sign out register, more information below in Key management)
- Time in/out
- WAAP completion

Signage should be installed at the school fence line advising the requirement for all visitors to sign in on arrival

Visitor entry guidelines should also provide school staff with information about:

- How visitors are identified (lanyards, coloured labels, etc.);
- The process for identifying and reporting persons on the grounds who have not signed in; and
- Any additional processes for visitors that present a security threat.

Key management

Development of key management guidelines at a school will be influenced by:

- The type of key system at the school; and
- Times and frequency of required access outside of school hours.

While each school will have specific management practices for keys, the department recommends the following be adopted for any keys which provide access to all locks within the school master system, known as grand master keys (GMKs):

- GMKs should not be taken off the school site (staff should be issued with either keys to access required areas, or access to the storage of master keys only);
- GMKs should be stored in a secure (preferably purpose built) cabinet and/or room covered by the intruder detection system;

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- GMKs should be signed out every time they are issued to any person; and
- All GMKs should be accounted for on a regular basis.

Removing grand master keys from the school site increases the risk of loss or theft. The loss or theft of a grand master key may make re-keying of the entire school a necessity, whereas the loss of a single room key will require changing of only a single or limited number of locks.

Key management guidelines should include:

- How keys are signed out by contractors;
- Who is authorised to issue keys to staff;
- Who is authorised to have new keys cut (or programmed for electronic access);
- What records are kept for issue of any keys;
- Responsibilities of any staff who are issued keys;
- The process and timeframes for auditing keys; and
- The process for any lost/stolen keys (this will be incident specific).

For more information about key management practices refer to [Management of school and tenancy keys](#).

After-hours access and authorised use of facilities

Guidelines for after-hours access will be dependent on the requirement of staff or other parties to access the grounds and facilities outside of school hours.

Principals may wish to allow use of their school oval for community greenspace outside of school hours, but should be aware it can be very difficult to prevent persons from moving from the oval to arounds school buildings without a barrier such as fencing.

Authorised users should be provided with a written notice from the school, which can be presented to security or Police. Any keys and intruder detection system codes provided to facility users should only give access to the areas for which they are authorised.

Principals should ensure all authorised users have sufficient instruction to:

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- Disarm and arm the intruder detection system as required;
- Contact [Protective Services](#) for security assistance;
- Report any unauthorised or suspicious activity while on site; and
- Secure buildings and gates upon departure.

After-hours lighting and perimeter gates

After-hours lighting guidelines will determine the school's approach to how lighting operates. The approach to after-hours lighting will be influenced by each school's individual circumstances.

A school with neighbours in close proximity is likely to benefit from operating lighting after-hours, while a school without any neighbours nearby may see better results from a 'lights out' approach.

When developing guidelines for use of after-hours lighting for security, principals should consider:

- Does the school have neighbours in proximity (i.e., are neighbours likely to see unauthorised activity taking place if lighting is on)?
- Is there likely to be staff/user groups on site after-hours who would benefit from after-hours lighting?
- Does the lighting system have capacity to be programmed for different times/days to accommodate access by staff and user groups as above?
- Does the school have capacity for installation of energy saving lighting activated by sensor?

After-hours alarm and incident response

As part of the department's partnership with [Protective Services](#), the department funds monitoring of school intruder detection systems that meet the requirements of the department's [Electronic security guidelines](#). This [monitoring service](#) includes alerting nominated contacts of:

- Alarm activations (intruder alarms, system alarms and power losses);
- Incidents such as break and enters and security breaches; and

- Occasions when the intruder detection system is not armed by a certain time (referred to as a “late to close”).

To get the most out of this service, it is important to have an established process for how alarms and incidents are responded to. You can instruct Protective Services how to respond to alarms by submitting an [Alarm response procedures agreement](#) form.

When developing a response process for alarms and incidents after-hours, it is important to note:

- You can choose who gets notified and when, for alarms at your school. This can be tailored to certain times and types of alarms. For example, you wish to be notified for alarms only before 8pm and for a security provider to be advised after, or only be notified for fire alarms and security be notified for intruder alarms.
- For the safety of staff, all school are encouraged to engage a security provider to response to intruder alarms. This will mean a cost to the school, but will ensure an immediate response, and avoid any risk to staff from being the first in attendance. You can arrange a security provider through Protective Services, who will manage quality assurance of the provider on your behalf, or you can arrange one independently. If you arrange a provider independently, ensure the company and employees have the required [security licences](#).
- If your school has an established arrangement with a security provider for patrols, they can be allocated as the first contact, not only for alarm response, but also minor incident and to provide approval for make-safe repairs after-hours.
- For any major events, such as a major fire, the principal will be notified regardless of the normal response process.

For more information, contact your [School security advisor](#) or Disaster, Emergency and School Security at ISD.EmergencySecurity@qed.qld.gov.au.