

Emergency and School Security

School security

Fact sheet 2 – Developing security guidelines at schools

Why do schools need to develop security guidelines?

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

Whilst the department manages the requirements for [security design guidelines](#), [alarm monitoring](#), [electronic security](#), (DoE employees only) [CCTV](#) and [security fencing](#) (DoE employees only), development of some school-based guidelines for day to day security will have the benefit of being 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 the 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.

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 for business as usual school operation. 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 might include:

- **Visitor management** (guidelines for how and when visitors can access the grounds);
- **Key management** (issue, storage and auditing of schools keys);
- **After-hours access and authorised use of facilities** (conditions for access outside of school hours for staff and authorised users);
- **After-hours lighting and perimeter gates** (schedules for activating after hours lighting and securing perimeter gates);
- **After-hours alarm and incident response** (a process for response to after-hours alarms and security incidents);
- **Use of CCTV** (refer to the [CCTV use in schools](#) procedure for more information. A [template](#) for a school CCTV use policy is available on the [School security management](#) OnePortal page (DoE employees only); and
- **Critical incident response** (refer to the department's [Disaster and Emergency Management](#) website for more information).

Your [School Security Advisor](#) (DoE employees only) 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 schools hours;
- physical access to other areas of the grounds from the 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 the Administration, providing the following details:

- Name
- Area visiting
- Person visiting/reason for visit
- Contact phone number
- Time in
- Time 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
- Time out
- WAAP completed - Y/N.

There should be notification at the school fence line that all visitors are to sign in on arrival (a template for a department approved visitor sign can be found on [OnePortal](#) (DoE employees only)).

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

- how visitors are identified (lanyards, coloured labels etc.);
- identifying and reporting persons on the grounds who have not signed in; and
- any additional conditions for visitors that may apply when a security threat has been identified.

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 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);
- they should be stored in a secure (preferably purpose built) cabinet and/or room covered by the intruder detection system;
- 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 master keys from the school site increases the risk of loss or theft. The loss or theft of a master key may make re-keying of the entire school a necessity, whereas the loss of a single room key will require the changing of only a single or limited number of locks.

Key management guidelines should outline:

- 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 the [Management of school and tenancy keys](#) handout (DoE employees only).

After-hours access and authorised use of facilities

School guidelines for after-hours access will be largely dependent on the requirement of staff to access the grounds outside of school hours, and any applicable groups that have authority to use facilities.

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 around 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 alarm 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:

- 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 if and/or how much lighting operates during night time hours. Like the other guidelines for security, 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, in accordance with the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) (refer to your [School Security Advisor](#) (DoE employees only) for more information), 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 [School electronic security systems guidelines](#) (DoE employees only).

This monitoring service includes:

- Notifying a nominated contact of alarm activations (intruder alarms, system alarms and power losses);
- Notifying a nominated contact of incidents such as break and enters and insecurities; and
- Alerting notified contacts 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 give Protective Services up to date dispatch instructions for responses by submitting an [Alarm response procedures agreement](#) form (DoE employees only).

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 may wish to be notified for alarms only before 8pm and security be advised after, or only be notified for fire alarms and security be notified for intruder alarms.
- For the safety of staff, all schools are encouraged to engage a security provider to respond 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 arrange one independently. If you arrange a provider independently, ensure the company and employees have the [required security licenses](#).

- 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 incidents and 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](#) (DoE employees only) or Emergency & School Security at ISB.EmergencySecurity@qed.qld.gov.au.

