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# Security and Personal Safety in Schools

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent times the importance of school security has been highlighted by the tragic events at Sullivan Upper School in Holywood and Hall Garth School in Middlesborough, the death of London Head Teacher Philip Lawrence, and perhaps most alarmingly the multiple deaths at Dunblane Primary School.

These events and subsequent incidents have all emphasised the need for a safe and secure school environment so that those who are employed in schools, together with the school children themselves, may work in an environment which minimises the risk to their personal safety.

This document is designed to provide a framework of practical advice and guidance for those who have a statutory responsibility for schools and other premises used by young people so that matters relating to the security and overall safety management of such places may be addressed in a systematic and logical manner. The guidance focuses on the personal safety of the entire school population and the contribution that the security of school premises can make to personal safety. The document has been prepared drawing heavily upon:-

1. DfEE Guidance Document, Managing School Facilities (Guide 4) "Security in Schools" and
2. The Report on the Public Inquiry into the shootings at Dunblane Primary School on 13th March 1996: The Lord Cullen - Cm. 3386.

Other reference material is included in the bibliography on pages 54-55.

The intention throughout has been to provide detailed guidance to assist in the fulfilment of statutory responsibilities and suggest effective ways of anticipating possible security breaches and potentially violent incidents in educational establishments. It is hoped that the guidance contained in this publication will be of help to all those who are concerned with making schools and other facilities used by young people, safer places overall.

**MARCH 1997**

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## PART ONE

### THE SECURITY OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

#### 1.00 Legislative Framework

Much of the published information which refers to school security highlights the statutory responsibilities of Employing Authorities and Boards of Governors and cites existing relevant legislation and related recommended best practice including most recently Lord Cullen, who states “I am in no doubt that a solution to the problem of protection should be tackled through the application of sound principles of safety management”. The primary legal foundation of the responsibility for the **protection of school staff against violence** which they may encounter during the course of their work, may be found within Article 4 of the Health and Safety At Work (NI) Order 1978 which imposes a duty on the employer to “so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees”. This duty is not confined to the physical working environment but also covers the provision of information, instruction, training and supervision. Article 4(3) supports this main provision by imposing a duty to “prepare and issue a statement of safety policy” and put in place the organisation and arrangements for carrying it out.

Moreover, every employer has a duty under Article 5 to conduct his undertaking in such a way as to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable “that persons *not in his employment* who may be affected thereby are not exposed to risks to their health and safety” ie pupils and others.

Article 6(4) of the Order imposes a similar duty on every person who has to any extent control of premises in connection with his carrying on an undertaking, eg Governors or Trustees.

#### 2.00 Managing the Risks

The existence of risk requires that some measures be employed to control it. In this regard, every employer is required, under the provisions of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 1992, to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk to his/her employees as well as other persons *not* in his employment.

In satisfying such a legal requirement, Lord Cullen indicated that what is required is a **safety strategy and action plan** for each school which would be based on a **risk assessment** relating to its particular features. It should be borne in mind that the risk of violence, theft or criminal damage may also come from within the establishment. This guidance may also help in the reduction of these internal risks in the context of both the criminal and civil law.

The Employing Authority or the Board of Governors (in the case of the Voluntary Grammar or Grant-Maintained Integrated sector) may also require additional practices and procedures to be drawn up within schools to further manage these internal risks. These include, in the case of pupils, adherence to school codes of conduct and in the case of teaching and non-teaching staff, their appropriate contracts of employment.

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## **2.01 Roles and Responsibilities**

Management responsibility for school security primarily resides with the Employing Authority and the Board of Governors. In the Voluntary Grammar and Grant-Maintained Integrated sectors the Governing Body has this responsibility.

## **2.02 Role of the Employing Authority**

The main role of the Employing Authority is to maintain an overall policy for security within schools, preferably as part of its health and safety policy, and to support and monitor its implementation by schools. Additionally, this may involve such things as arranging training, providing advice, inspection visits and requiring the monitoring of annual reports on health and safety by Boards of Governors.

## **2.03 Role of the Board of Governors**

The Board of Governors will need to draw up their own more detailed security policy. The policy should include such things as:-

- how they exercise their responsibilities - for example whether there is a sub-committee or an individual Governor with specific responsibilities for security;
- arrangements for consulting and informing all staff about security;
- resources (financial, physical and staffing);
- arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the policy, including the frequency and form of reports from the Principal;
- annual reports to parents to include school security.

Boards of Governors may wish to consider designating a member of staff with specific responsibility for security. These duties may be part of an existing wider premises management brief which could include health and safety and fire safety. Responsibilities might encompass the following:-

- the preparation of a security policy statement for submission to the Board of Governors for approval;
- the drawing up of an implementation strategy for the policy;
- the carrying out of security surveys of the school premises considering staff, pupils, buildings and moveable assets using the risk assessment check list (see Appendix 1);
- liaising with the Employing Authority and local crime prevention officer on security matters;
- organising training for staff on security and personal safety;

- monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the school's security strategy;
- undertaking reviews and proposing amendments of the school's security policy as necessary.

#### **2.04 Role of the Principal**

The Principal will be responsible for implementing the security policy agreed by the Board of Governors and for ensuring that:-

- all staff appreciate the importance of security and understand the school's policy and their own responsibilities;
- staff training needs are kept under review and training is arranged as necessary;
- parents are informed of the security policy and are encouraged to help;
- regular reports are made to the Board of Governors and, where appropriate, the Employing Authority;
- advice is obtained from the police and mechanisms are in place for continuing liaison with them (eg on local crime patterns);
- there is an established method of contacting the police in the event of emergency (and that all staff know of this);
- all crimes are reported to the police;
- there are specified periodic surveys/risk assessments of security arrangements;
- there are more regular routine security checks.

It will be for the Principal, in consultation with staff and the Board of Governors, to determine which tasks and functions to delegate to whom. There is no blueprint for this. Much will depend on the unique requirements of individual establishments, as reflected (amongst other factors) by their size, design, layout, location, age and purpose.

#### **2.05 Involving Staff, Pupils and Parents**

Whatever the arrangements for delegating certain functions, there needs to be a clear message that good security involves everyone in the school. Staff will be more committed if they are kept informed and involved in decision making by being consulted prior to policies and procedures being put in place. Training is also vital. Both teaching and non-teaching staff need to know the part that they play in:-

- protecting pupils from all hazards;
- guarding against assault from whatever source;
- safeguarding property;

- contacting the police;
- implementing the school's emergency plan (see 8.01).

Advice on training should be available from the local police and, where appropriate, the Employing Authority.

New staff need to be informed of the school's security policy when they join. Regular open reviews will help keep everyone aware of the risks that are current and how to respond. Pupils should also be encouraged to play their part. Parents should be informed that a policy is in place to safeguard the welfare of pupils and staff. They will also need to know what is required of them to make the policy work and how they can help beyond that minimum. The school security policy can also be usefully made available to other interested parties, particularly the police and local community groups, to improve awareness and co-operation.

### **2.06 Security Strategies**

Each school is different and must develop a strategy tailored to its own unique circumstances. The measures used should reflect the character of a school and its educational needs as well as the demands of good security. What is appropriate for an urban secondary school may not suit a small, rural school. Each will have its own problems. Urban schools might appear to be most at risk, yet rural schools are often the most vulnerable to theft and arson.

An effective security strategy should set out how to implement the school's security policy. Whoever writes it will need to be informed by a security survey of the school. This will identify and assess risks. From that information, recommendations can be made about which measures to use to minimise and control those risks in order of priority. All Employing Authorities employ safety advisers who will be able to advise their schools. Supplemental expert advice can be obtained from the local police crime prevention officer. This document includes general principles to point the way.

### **2.07 Identifying and Assessing Risks**

The starting point for the successful management of security is to gather as much information as possible about the risks facing a school. The scale of the risk and the effectiveness of security measures can then be assessed.

A balanced overview of all risks can be obtained by carrying out a security survey and risk assessment. Appendix 1 contains a method of assessment which schools can utilise themselves. This enables schools to assess themselves as low, medium or high risk depending on the outcome of the risk assessment undertaken. There is no such category as a "no risk" school. A school that scores medium to high risk may wish to consult their Employing Authority's school security or safety adviser.

Overall Score	Rating of School
0 - 49	Low risk - Attention should be paid to maintenance and improvement of existing security measures.
50 - 100	Medium risk - Seek advice from the Employing Authority, police and other agencies.
101 -150	High risk - Seek advice from the Employing Authority, police and other agencies.

A range of security measures which may be considered are illustrated in paragraph 4.0.

### 2.08 The Changing Risks

A security survey is only valid at the time it is carried out. Risk is dynamic. Even introducing security measures can alter the pattern of risk. Changes also occur when a building is deployed for a different use. Examples include the conversion of a classroom to a specialist computer room or a parents' evening requiring a higher than usual level of vehicle security. Risks increase at certain times, for example, after open days or evenings whenever strangers are given access to the school, or in the school holidays.

Not every change will be controllable. When one school introduces new security measures, the incidence of crime at a neighbouring school may rise. This is known as crime displacement and is a common feature of many crime prevention initiatives.

The purpose of monitoring and reviewing security measures is either to anticipate changes in risk or, failing that, to respond to any change as quickly as possible.

It is important to be vigilant as major crimes are often signposted by an increase in the number of minor incidents. Trespass is most common where school grounds provide a convenient shortcut. A burglary might be preceded by a rise in trespass, or an arson attack preceded by outbreak of fires in rubbish bins, door alcoves or building recesses. A stranger reported wandering around one school may mean that other schools in the area are at risk of something more serious occurring. (See Parent and Community Involvement 4.14.)

Hindsight means that serious incidents always encourage the introduction of better security measures, **but successful security comes from the intelligent use of foresight to anticipate risk.** For example, security measures should be in place before the arrival of valuable equipment.

High value, easily portable items such as sports equipment, televisions, computers and video equipment are a popular target. A room by room survey will show where this type of equipment is kept overnight (the most vulnerable period) and each room can be given a security risk rating and classified as being high, medium or low risk. Appropriate security measures can then be better targeted.

What is often overlooked is that the effectiveness of security measures is also subject to change. Controlling risk demands extra effort from staff and pupils. No security measure will be implemented perfectly all of the time. Enthusiasm is at its greatest immediately after an incident, but security practices can become troublesome very quickly and may be either circumvented or forgotten.

It is unrealistic to expect staff to make security their first priority all of the time. The Principal should arrange to review and monitor the level of risk in order to adjust the response, so that it is more in step with the level of threat. In larger schools this may require formal arrangements to inform staff and can apply either to the school as a whole or to individual risks.

A review is a formal overview carried out at set intervals, termly or annually, and is normally the subject of a written report. Monitoring tends to pick up changes in scale and frequency of risks while reviews detect changes in types of risk.

### **2.09 Reporting Incidents**

All incidents of crime and all losses should be recorded and reported to the police and the school's Employing Authority. This requires:-

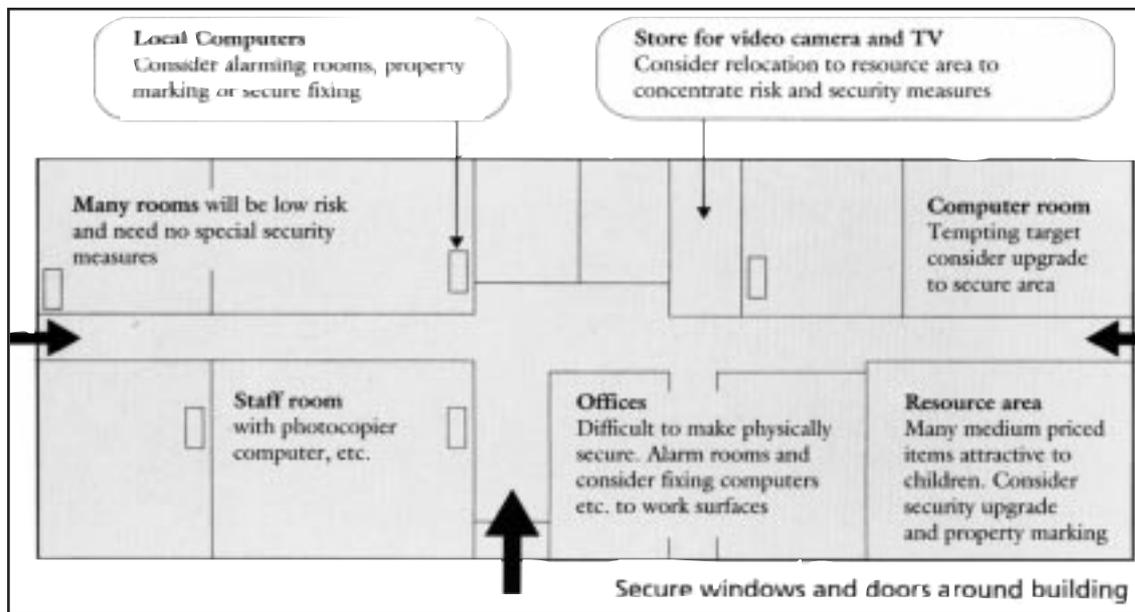
- accurate information. A simple straightforward incident reporting system is essential if the information is to be comprehensive and accurate;
- a standard method of classifying each incident. If one incident involves more than one type of crime, then it should be classified under the crime involving the greatest loss;
- a consistent system of assessing consequences. Financial costs are the easier to quantify, but it is important to decide which cost elements should be included. Seeking simplicity by omitting as many costs as possible may create a distorted view. For example, counting the cost of a burglary solely in terms of stolen equipment can conceal the cost of making good any property which has been damaged in the process. The objective should be to build up as full and accurate a picture as possible but without unnecessary bureaucracy.

A new provision of the revised Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations for Northern Ireland (RIDDDOR 97) will be that where injuries to people at work are caused by acts of violence, these should now be notified to the appropriate Employing Authority and the Health and Safety Inspectorate by means of the normal reporting channels for reportable accidents and incidents in schools. (See Incident Report Form - Appendix 4.)

A study of incident reports will reveal if:-

- some types of incident are more prevalent than others;
- the pattern of crime is changing;

- certain times of the day or week, term or year give rise to a higher level of risk than at other times;
- some locations are more popular, either as a point of entry to the school or as a final target;
- some items of equipment are more likely to be stolen than others.



## 2.10 Insurance

Insurance arrangements vary depending on the type of school, ie controlled, maintained or voluntary grammar. The school should liaise with its Employing Authority in order to determine what arrangements are in place for its particular classification.

Increasingly the level of insurance premium charges being levied by insurance companies is directly related to the diligence which is exhibited through individual risk assessments being undertaken by the school and those measures which are put in place as a result.

## 3.00 Security Measures

There is often a considerable gap between the expectations and the reality of security systems.

An intruder alarm detects intruders. A CCTV (Closed Circuit Television) camera takes pictures for possible identification later. **Neither will prevent an intruder gaining access to a school and it is unlikely that they will stop them from leaving.**

It is important to remember that no security measure stands alone. For example, the effectiveness of an intruder alarm depends as much upon denying intruders access to their target and the response procedure to the alarm's activation, as it does on the reliability of the detection system.

All security measures should be considered in relation to every other measure used by a school. The measures adopted should be in proportion to the risk. Cost calculations used

to decide between options should include running costs as well as initial capital costs. Running costs include maintenance, staff costs, administration, training, and depreciation of equipment.

### 3.01 Security by Design

Security is a major factor in the design of new school buildings. However, many existing schools were not designed with security in mind. Security of these schools can be improved but it should be recognised that some sites and buildings are inherently difficult to make secure.



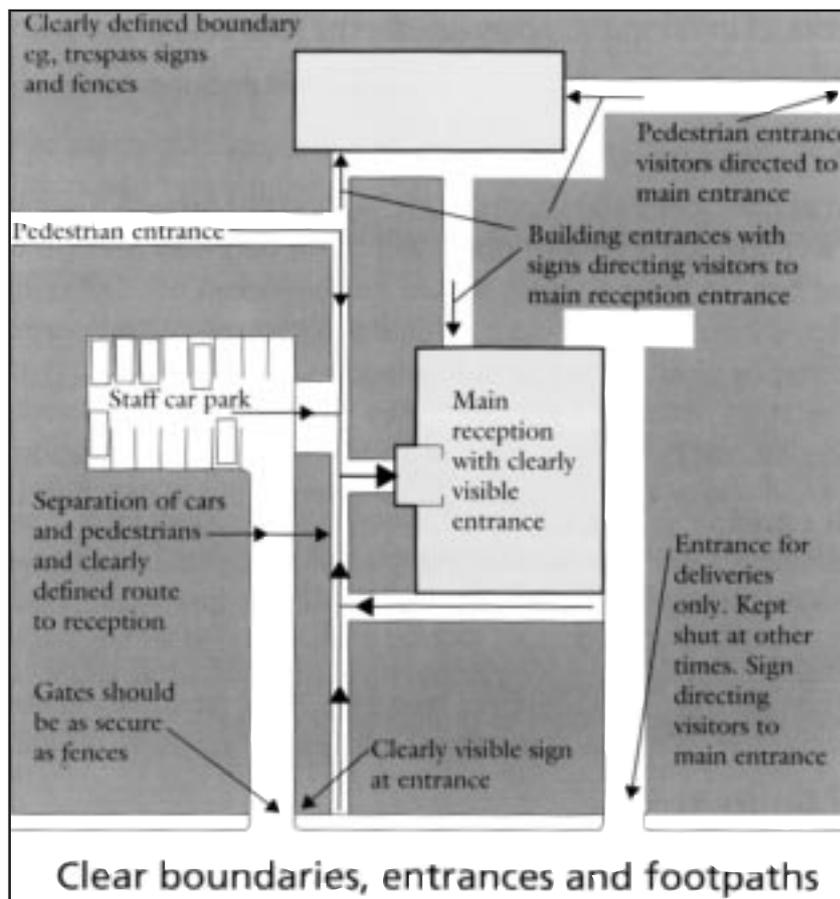
Features which commonly cause problems are:-

- open sites with long perimeters and poor fencing;
- multiple entrances open during the day;
- reception areas located far from school entrances;
- “spread out” schools with many independent buildings;
- isolated buildings;
- split sites;
- rights of way (roads and footpaths) through the school;
- easy access to roofs (eg via stepped flat roofs, low eaves, low angled roofs) and insecure roof lights;
- over complicated building perimeters with many recesses;

- recessed doorways;
- temporary buildings;
- public access out of school hours to community facilities (eg swimming pools, sports halls, youth clubs, evening classes, libraries etc).

### 3.02 Security Versus Fire Safety

Most security measures are intended to prevent unauthorised access to school buildings and grounds. Some, particularly physical measures, can do so in a way that directly conflicts with fire safety. The advice of the Fire Safety Officer should be sought before security doors are fitted on fire escape routes or any decision made on the widespread use of polycarbonate glazing or sealed windows. The Northern Ireland Fire Authority has issued guidance entitled “Review of School Security” in March 1996. The Authority realises the importance of security in schools but has expressed concern that **the means of escape from schools may be impeded if external doors are locked and, should a fire occur, this may lead to tragedy.** Doors forming part of a means of escape should, therefore, be fitted with easy opening devices.



#### 4.00 Factors Affecting Security Measure Selection

Appropriate security measures vary with the type and size of the school and its local circumstances. The starting point is the degree of risk faced by the school. This can be assessed using the guide in Appendix 1. The table below lists the type of security measures which might be appropriate for low, medium and high risk schools.

Level of Risk	Security Measures for Consideration
Low Risk	Visitors' access control A limited number of entrances Clearly defined boundaries and signs Secure doors and windows Out of hours access procedures A basic fire alarm system Additional fire compartmentalisation Cash handling procedures Buildings cleared of materials that can be used for arson or vandalism Control of contractors' works Pupil involvement Parent and community involvement Property marking Security of computer equipment Intruder alarms in sensitive areas (eg Principal's office, IT room etc)
Medium Risk	Comprehensive intruder alarm system Automatic fire detection Security lighting Precautions against damage to glazing Secure storage areas and IT rooms Securing the building envelope Security fencing Car parking and vehicle security
High Risk	Personal attack alarms CCTV Mobile phones Shutters or grilles on windows and doors Security guards or patrols

This cannot, however, be regarded as a blueprint for guaranteeing security in schools. As the Report of the DfEE Working Group on School Security stated, there are limits to what can be achieved in terms of security to prevent something as extreme as that which occurred at Dunblane, and it is ultimately a matter for each individual school to judge, through the mechanism of a risk assessment, what constitutes reasonable security in the light of its own circumstances. By its very nature an approach based on risk assessment cannot address the rare, extreme incident.

All schools, even those with a low risk, should have some security measures in place. However, it would be wrong to see security as nothing more than choosing the right control measures. Security is an attitude of mind. Security measures are tools and should be treated as such. Regardless of what claims may be made about the performance of security systems, and despite impressive technical specifications, their effectiveness depends upon their proper management and the personal commitment and training of staff, pupils and the support of the community at large. To ensure the support of staff, it is important that they are involved in the planning of security measures. All school staff, teaching and non-teaching, should be familiar with security procedures.

Security measures can be electronic, physical or human. Electronic measures such as intruder alarms, CCTV and access control systems are generally expensive to buy and install. Some systems such as CCTV have high running costs and involve sophisticated equipment that must be installed and commissioned by experts. Staff training, systems management and regular maintenance are essential for their full potential to be realised. These systems, however, tend to become obsolete quickly. **Further advice on the installation and suitability of electronic security systems can be obtained from the school's Employing Authority.**

While electronic security measures may be introduced quickly, and in the short term may be very successful, they do in the long term depend upon staff commitment.

Physical measures, however, vary in cost from moderate to expensive. They include: perimeter fencing, secure storage, heavy duty doors and locks, security lighting, window grilles and bars and building adaptations. They are generally used to harden target areas, relying on strength of materials and form of construction, and are best manufactured and installed by experts. They can easily have a forbidding appearance. They require little training for successful use, have low maintenance requirements and a long working life.

Human measures include: guarding and security patrols, educational programmes, community involvement, effective management and "School Watch" initiatives for school premises. While material costs may be comparatively low, staff costs can be high. Human measures attempt to either directly control behaviour or change attitudes so that individuals choose to modify their own behaviour. For example, not assuming that strangers on school premises, however plausible in their appearance, are there on legitimate business. These programmes require high levels of staff training and long term commitment to be effective. Good interpersonal skills are essential. They are likely to be seen as the public face of the school and can only be introduced in conjunction with a staff training programme. These measures may be slower to produce benefits but can produce results that last.

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No list of security measures can ever hope to be complete and not every measure will suit every school. The following pages contain descriptions of the more popular measures starting with those for lower risk schools, which all schools are advised to consider, and ending with those for higher risk schools.

#### **4.01 Visitors' Access Control**

An open door policy can put staff and pupils at risk. Problems may range from troublesome youths and angry parents to criminal damage, abduction of children, and sometimes even worse. Access control offers some reassurance and protection but its introduction can give rise to unexpected difficulties. The logging of visitors (and sometimes staff and pupils) in and out of school is only one element of access control.

##### **The Problems**

1. Schools desire an open door policy to encourage community involvement.
2. Too many separate teaching blocks.
3. Too many entrances to building and grounds.
4. Lack of a clearly defined, easily identifiable main entrance to the school.
5. Frequent use of all entrances making securing them extremely difficult.
6. Unattended reception areas.
7. The public may have the idea that they own the school and don't regard it as private property.

##### **The Solutions**

1. Introduce a simple, workable access control system which meets the needs of your school.
2. Treat everyone who is not a member of staff or a pupil as an intruder until they have gone through the visitor reception procedure.



3. Provide visitors with a waiting area until they can be dealt with. This needs to be well signposted, preferably close to the main entrance and welcoming. Attractive, but robust, furniture and the provision of reading material will help. It is important that staff working in such areas can easily contact other colleagues.
4. Identify legitimate visitors, monitor their arrival as well as their movement around the school and their departure time.
5. Make all visitors sign in and give their reason for visiting.
6. Give all visitors a badge or name tag which they should wear as long as they are on the school premises. Pupils should not approach any stranger who is not wearing a badge and should be told to report all strangers and intruders immediately to the nearest member of staff.
7. There will be a considerable strain on the staff if every visitor is escorted. If, however, only some visitors are to be escorted then the badge system should differentiate between escorted and unescorted visitors.
8. No visitor should be given unrestricted access to the school. It might be useful to indicate on the badge the final destination within the school.
9. Badges and tags should be used only once and should not be transferable either to another time or another individual.
10. Identification provided by education and library board and CCMS staff, utilities or other organisations should not be accepted as an alternative to the school's own system.
11. School procedures should allow for parents to obtain permission to take children out of school during the school day and to inform the school when someone else will collect children at the end of the day.

Whatever system is adopted, it should be simple to operate. Intruders are not an every day occurrence but if access control procedures are not a matter of daily routine, **they are likely to fail when needed.**

In some situations it may be desirable to strengthen the access control system. For example, some schools lock their gates during a large part of the day. Also, electronic access control systems under the control of secretarial staff have been successfully used to secure the front entrances of primary schools. Secondary schools are more difficult to secure in this way due to their layout and the need for pupils to come and go more freely. An important balance has to be struck between an open school policy and the exclusion of intruders.

At the same time there is need for deliveries to be supervised and checked and recorded on receipt. Unlocking a delivery point in anticipation of goods arriving can leave the area susceptible to theft or vandalism. Consideration also needs to be given to the discreet disposal of the packaging, since it indicates the arrival of new and possibly valuable goods.

## 4.02 Clearly Defined Boundaries

It is important that the public know the extent of the school grounds. This does not always mean that the grounds are fenced, but some form of boundary is necessary to mark the perimeter and to act as a visual indicator of trespass. At the same time, care needs to be taken that landscaping does not act as a screen for potential intruders. It is helpful to have one main entrance, preferably visible from the reception area. Separate entrances for pedestrians are commonplace, but to increase security they should be opened only at peak arrival and departure times.

## 4.03 Security Signs

Access control and school boundary identification are considerably assisted by the appropriate use of clear and unambiguous signs on the school premises. Ideally they should welcome and direct the bona fide visitor but deter a potential trespasser.

To this purpose, signs are used to convey:-

- the identification of the school;
- the necessity of visitors to report to reception;
- directions to visitors' entrance, reception area, car parking etc;
- arrangements/directions for school deliveries;
- trespasser warnings;
- warnings concerning improper use of school property eg motor-cycling, golf practice, dog fouling, exercising horses, etc.

Signs may also announce security measures which are already in place such as:-

- membership of "School Watch";
- the use of surveillance cameras;
- security guards;
- the use of alarms;
- security etching and the marking of school equipment.

In conjunction with other measures such as access control and visitors' badges, school staff will be assisted in distinguishing between intentional trespassers and legitimate school visitors who are genuinely, albeit temporarily, lost.

#### **4.04 Rights of Way**

Rights of way through school grounds may present a particular security risk. Schools which are concerned about this may be able to have the right-of-way re-routed or, in certain circumstances, “extinguished”. They can also object if a new right-of-way or additional use of an existing right-of-way is proposed. They should contact the Department of the Environment for advice.

#### **4.05 Secure Doors and Windows**

All external door locks and window catches need to provide a similar level of security. Some fire exit doors with push bars may need to be upgraded, but fire escape routes should not be locked off. Exit doors can be fitted with alarms to warn of unauthorised use during normal hours. It may be worth fitting locks to windows as well as doors. Effective management of keys is a vital element of school security. There should be strict control of keys with key storage boxes in alarmed areas. Regular checks ought to be in place to confirm the whereabouts of keys. Main school keys should never be given to pupils or parents. A periodic audit should take place to confirm the whereabouts of every key. Where a system of audit is already in place, location of keys should form an integral part of such audits. While key control is unpopular with staff and tedious to manage it is nevertheless crucial to the maintenance of good school security.

Doors fitted with push button combination locks or self-closers can give additional security to offices and staff rooms used by large numbers of staff, where constant locking and unlocking by key would be a nuisance. As the combination can be compromised at any time, these locks should not be used to protect secure areas.

#### **4.06 Out of Hours Access**

Staff, pupils or contractors may require access to school buildings during holidays, weekends and out of normal school hours. This will cause a risk to building security if alarm systems are disabled or if proper locking up procedures are not followed. Access can be provided to certain areas of the building only, whilst keeping the remainder locked and alarmed. However, this requires careful planning of the security system.

There may also be a risk to personal safety where staff are working alone, particularly in isolated buildings. The risk may be greater when it is dark and the lights in the room are on, identifying a particular teacher and thus making him/her vulnerable. Simple remedies, such as the provision of curtains or blinds, may help the individual concerned feel less vulnerable, but will not suffice on their own. Procedures should be put in place to minimise the risk. Telephones or personal attack alarms can provide additional security.

#### **4.07 Fire Detection Systems**

Arson is one of the most serious security problems faced by schools. The ways of reducing risks are:-

- fire safety management - eg adequate maintenance of fire doors and keeping them closed;

- building design for fire safety - eg compartmentalisation and escape routes;
- fire detection and alarm systems;
- regular inspections to check for fire and security risks.

The Department of Education and Science's Building Bulletin No 7 gives advice on fire precautions affecting school buildings. It advises all schools to have a fire alarm system. In all but low risk schools this would preferably have a degree of automatic detection.

The Arson Prevention Bureau has also produced a booklet giving advice on fire safety management. The next booklet to be published in the current "Managing School Facilities" series from the Department for Education and Employment will cover fire safety.

#### 4.08 Cash Handling

Cash is an attractive target. At the end of the school day cash should be removed from all vending machines, including photocopiers and by each machine there should be a notice to the effect that there is no money left in the machine overnight. Tills in cafeterias and offices should be emptied and left open overnight.

Once money has been collected for school meals, class photographs, school trips, etc, it should be held in the school safe (where available) until it can be banked. It must never be kept in desk drawers or filing cabinets even if they are locked. There may be limits on insurance cover for cash held on the premises, but in any event a limit should be self imposed by the school and as a general principle, cash should *not* be left in school overnight.

When cash is counted on school premises it should happen away from public view, preferably in a locked room and by two people. **Staff should be advised that their personal safety takes priority in the event of an attempt being made to steal money from the school.**

In practice the safest way to bank money is to use a cash handling service from a security company. If members of staff have to take money to the bank regularly themselves, the school should seek advice from the police. In any event, two members of staff should be involved and, as far as possible, should vary the time and the route to the bank. A vehicle should be used in all cases and parked as close to the bank door as possible.

#### 4.09 Personal Property

Pupils should be discouraged from bringing valuable items to school. Confiscation is one way of enforcing this rule. However there can be legal problems if items are subsequently lost and it is recommended that confiscated items are returned to parents at the earliest opportunity.



A common problem is theft from unobserved bicycle sheds. This can be prevented by locating them in a position overlooked by classrooms or administration areas.

#### 4.10 School Property

Schools should keep an asset register to record the quantity and location of school property. An asset check at least once a year is recommended.

Staff are advised to keep a log of borrowed equipment to avoid confusion over whether or not items have been stolen. Certificates of authorisation should be given to the borrower.

#### 4.11 Loose Materials



Loose materials left outside buildings can be used for arson or vandalism. Large fires can be started from waste left in rubbish bins and skips. Wooden pallets and wooden huts can also provide fuel for fires. Other materials such as scaffolding poles can be used for vandalism or to break in. Skips should not be placed within 15 metres of a building. Rubbish bins should be secured to a post or locked in a secure compound.

#### 4.12 Contractors

Contractors working at a school can affect normal security precautions in a variety of ways. These include:-

- building materials lying around thus allowing them to be used as missiles to smash windows or as a fuel for arson attacks;
- thieves attracted on to the site by the presence of contractors' equipment;
- scaffolding giving access to previously secure upper floor areas;
- opening the school for the contractor at weekends and holidays resulting in access to areas beyond those used by the contractor;
- alarm systems being disrupted;
- workmen not being vetted, as are school or board and CCMS staff.

Before the contractors are allowed on site the effect of their activities should be reviewed. Action necessary to maintain security at its normal level should be agreed with the contractor who should, where the situation demands, set up a "permit to work" system for any activity involving working in confined spaces or the application of heat. Contractors

engaged on routine day-to-day maintenance must always check in with the school before starting work. (See Visitors' Access Control 4.01.)

#### **4.13 Pupil Involvement**

Children form the greater part of the school community and as such they can act as the eyes and ears of the school. Acts of vandalism both during and after school hours can be reduced by their vigilance and close observation. Similarly, sightings of strangers can be reported by them to persons in authority. Teaching honesty, respect for the individual and social responsibility are all parts of school life and form part of every curriculum. Making pupils aware of the value of both personal and school property and giving them an understanding of the need for personal safety, can encourage a sense of responsibility and lead to a reduction in the potential loss to the school through vandalism, theft etc. Pupil involvement, therefore, should receive the support of both staff and parents with additional advice being available from the police community liaison officer as required.

#### **4.14 Parent and Community Involvement**

If parents understand the need for security it makes the school's job much easier. Similarly, parents will be reassured if they know the school is committed to the safety of pupils and staff as well as the school buildings. To increase the awareness of security it can be beneficial to publish the security policy in a school brochure for new parents. When the school is seen as part of, and not apart from, the community it serves, it can expect the community's active support and protection. This will only occur if the community is vigorously encouraged to take part in school activities and to use the school and its facilities. In this way the school will be valued for what it has to offer.

"School Watch" schemes encourage neighbours living around the school to report any suspicious persons or unusual events to the police. Such schemes will be most successful at those schools which are largely surrounded by, and in clear view of, neighbouring houses or which are clearly visible from the road.

Fear of reprisal can make neighbours reluctant to report incidents directly to the police. If this is likely, schools can consider giving carefully selected neighbours, who are prepared to make a commitment to help the school, the contact number of a member of staff who could then pass the details on to the police. It is possible that members of staff will not wish their personal telephone number to be circulated, in which case an organisation providing central station monitoring of intruder alarms may be willing to offer this service.

In addition to "School Watch" there are schemes whereby schools exchange information on current matters of concern regarding security. For example, if a stranger is spotted loitering outside a school, then the information is quickly passed on to other schools in the area.

#### 4.15 Property Marking

All expensive portable equipment should be marked as belonging to the school. This can be done by:-

- engraving;
- branding;
- security paint;
- etching;
- stamping;
- (UV) fluorescent markings.

Schools should also be aware of the requirement of the Electricity at Work Regulations (NI) 1990 which necessitate the accurate inventory of all school portable electrical equipment. This will assist in the identification and control of such items.

Irrespective of whichever method is used, it should:-

- be quick;
- be inexpensive;
- be durable;
- require no special tools;
- need no special skills;
- be easily done by staff;
- be clearly visible.

The postcode and a suffix of two or three letters indicating the school name can be used. Valuable and recognisable items should also be photographed. Property marking does not prevent items being stolen and it is always possible for the marking to be defaced or removed, but it does extend the time a thief is at risk of detection. Allied with other security measures such as anchor chains and securely attached eyelets, this can be a useful defence and an aid to recovering stolen property. Portable equipment may also be kept in secure stores.

#### 4.16 Computer Security

Many schools now have an increasing number of high value pieces of computer equipment, often concentrated together in classrooms, school offices or in IT blocks.

The hardware, software and stored data are all important assets that schools should be aware of when drawing up their security strategy. Data may include administration records and coursework which is vital to the running of the school. The very lowest level of protection should be the use of a password to prevent uncontrolled access to sensitive data/software programmes. Backing-up procedures for the data should be well defined and conscientiously followed. The method used should be kept under review as advances in technology continue to make the process quicker and easier. Paper copies of some work will also need to be stored.

Storage of key data and programs either off site or in a fire proof safe allows recovery of systems, even after total system loss, following a theft or accident.

Experience shows that very often the first port of call for a computer thief is the school office, so extra care needs to be taken where often some of the most valuable and vulnerable computers and file servers are sited. In addition, this is often where data of a confidential nature is stored, for example, staff salaries and details relating to children who have statements of Special Educational Need. It is also important that the legal obligations imposed by the Data Protection Act 1984 are complied with, namely “appropriate measures should be taken against unauthorised access or alteration to, disclosure or destruction of personal data and against accidental loss”.

#### **4.17 Intruder Alarms**

An intruder alarm system depends on effective detection and signalling, effective building management and adequate response to the activation of alarms.

##### **Detection Systems**

In schools these are normally based upon some sort of protection which triggers an alarm as a result of changes in the environmental conditions. These changes are not always caused by an intruder and may be false alarms. The most common type of detector is the passive infra-red. Dual technology detectors (ie combined passive infra-red and microwave detectors) are used where false alarms are likely to be a problem.

False alarms with passive infra-red (PIR) detectors can be caused by:-

- free hanging decorations such as mobiles;
- warm air from fan-convactor heaters;
- curtains moving in draughts;
- spiders;
- user error.

If false alarms are to be avoided then the choice and location of detectors should be compatible with the environment in which they are to operate. The number of units determines the size of the system. The larger the system then the greater the chance of false alarms and the more difficult it is to manage. The number of detectors should be kept to a

minimum. It is not necessary to place a detector in every room. Even so, larger systems may need to be divided into zones to be easily manageable. Zoning should take account of evening and out of hours use so that areas not in use remain protected by the alarm system.

### **Signalling Systems**

When a detector is triggered then the system must raise the alarm. It can do this in two ways:-

- by passing information on the alarm to a central station via the telephone network. This is a remote signalling system. Some systems have a limited capability to verify the nature of the alarm by monitoring visual or audio signals at the central station. If it is a false alarm the central station can remotely reset the system or if it is genuine, pass the information on to the key holder and the police. The security of telephone junction boxes and incoming mains is also worth considering. Overhead telephone lines are vulnerable to attack and underground lines may be worthwhile. It is also possible to use the cellular radio network which is independent of telephone lines;
- by sounding bells or sirens on site. If there is also a remote signalling system then the sounding of the bells might be delayed with the intention of catching the intruders. The Association of Chief Police Officers recommend a 10 minute delay.

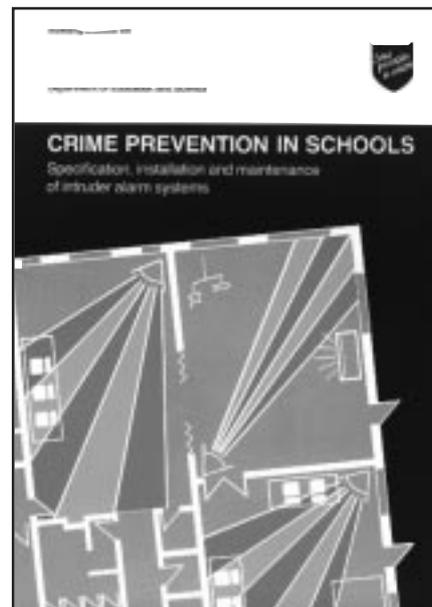
The Department of Education and Science's Building Bulletin No 69 gives comprehensive advice on choosing detectors and alarm systems for schools.

### **Effective Building Management**

The most common cause of false alarm activation is the lack of attention to correct opening and closing procedures - for example, staff leaving doors open when resetting the alarm after out of hours use.

### **Adequate Response to Alarms**

Unless there is a prompt, effective response to an alarm then intruders can escape. The police will respond as operational conditions permit, but may decline to do so if there is a history of false alarms. It may not be wise to allow a school caretaker or other members of staff to be the first on site by themselves as they may encounter determined and possibly violent intruders. In these circumstances staff should not enter the premises unless accompanied by the local police. If, due to a number of false alarms, the police are no longer responding to an activated alarm, it may be necessary to use the services of a security company to make the initial response.



#### 4.18 Security Lighting

The purpose of external lighting is to:-

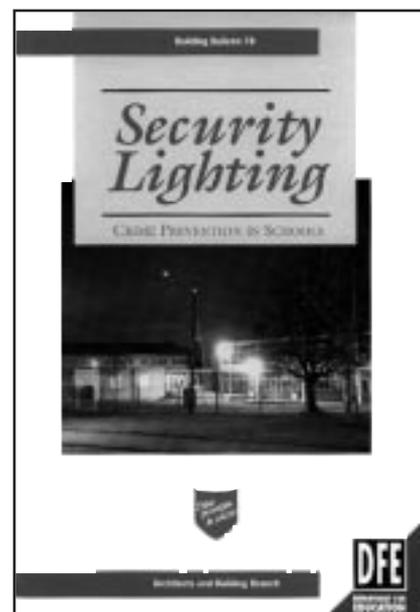
- illuminate pathways and car parking areas to enable individuals to see and move safely around the school grounds after dark;
- deny intruders the cover of darkness by illuminating their access routes and target areas thus making them visible to passers by and neighbours. This is security lighting.

To be successful both types of lighting must be reliable and provide adequate levels of illumination. In addition those areas lit by security lighting must be under regular surveillance from one or more of the following:-

- neighbouring property or passers-by;
- CCTV, in which case infra-red (black or non-visible light) can be used;
- police.

Like CCTV, lighting units are vulnerable to attack and security lighting is particularly prone to deliberate damage. All lighting units and associated wiring should be located and installed in such a manner as to reduce the risk of deliberate damage.

If areas lit by security lighting are not protected by fences and under surveillance, then there is every likelihood that they will become informal, floodlit play areas. The Department of Education and Science's Bulletin No 78 gives more detail on security lighting.



#### 4.19 Glazing

Glazed openings are means of access for thieves as well as a target for vandals. Repairing broken windows can be a major drain on building maintenance budgets. Options to reduce the incidence of broken windows include:-

- keeping yards and grounds free from any material that could be used as a missile;
- reducing the amount of glazing. In many schools up to half, sometimes more, of existing glazing can be replaced by solid panels without noticeably reducing natural lighting levels. This will also result in significant energy savings;

- use of laminated glass in vulnerable areas. This assumes the school's incident reports are sufficiently detailed to identify those areas which have been most vulnerable in the past;
- use of polycarbonate glazing in vulnerable areas. This should be done with caution. Not all window frames can accept polycarbonate material and it should not be used on designated fire escape routes. In addition polycarbonate material is subject to UV degradation, vulnerable to scratching (even from window cleaning) and damage by heat. Polycarbonate glazing is not suitable for use as a safety glass;
- use of adhesive safety film to maintain the integrity of the window if attacked;
- use of shutters or grilles to protect the glazing.

#### 4.20 Secure Storage

Intruders are unconcerned about damage and are willing to destroy several items of equipment to steal one. PCs and their memory chips, musical instruments, video equipment, fax machines, etc may all require to be located in secure areas or locked away outside school hours.

Secure storage can be a secure store room, cupboard, safe, or devices securing individual items of equipment to work surfaces. It is often necessary to make entire classrooms secure areas. A locked door does not make an entire area secure. Metal lockers, desk drawers and filing cabinets are not secure.

Access to secure areas should be by security doors. Only secure areas should be locked at night and when the school is unoccupied. A normal classroom door and its frame is incapable of withstanding a moderate attack. Usually they should be **left closed but unlocked overnight as should filing cabinets and desk drawers**. Allowing intruders a degree of movement around the school will increase the likelihood of them being detected by the intruder alarm system.



Keys to secure areas should only be issued to those who require access and a record should be kept of keyholders. If the keys are kept on the premises overnight they should be locked in the school safe and the key taken off the premises. If a key to a secure area is lost then the lock must be replaced immediately.

Advice on the specification of doors, shutters and partitions, as well as alarm systems, should be obtained from the local police crime prevention officer and the security advisers in the education and library boards or CCMS.

Daily storage of valuable equipment can be a chore for staff, but decreases considerably the opportunity for theft. If daily storage is not feasible, special end of term procedures are strongly recommended.

#### **Secure Storage Areas**

- If possible select a room with no windows, external doors or roof lights.
- Install a security door or roller shutter designed to withstand attack.
- Ensure walls offer the same resistance as doors and windows, eg attack with sledge hammers. Prevent access through ceiling voids or from roofs.
- Avoid rooms with windows or roof lights or fit bars/grilles.
- Use an intruder alarm system to protect approaches to the secure store and also its interior.

#### **4.21 Securing the Building Envelope**

The security of the building envelope can be increased by measures such as:-

- fitting security roller shutters on doors and windows; mounted internally or externally and alarmed to give an early warning of attempted break-ins;
- coating scaleable walls and drain pipes with anti-climb paint;
- preventing access on to low roofs.

This is usually a cheaper option than increasing the security of the site perimeter.



## 4.22 Security Fencing

The purpose of perimeter fencing is to prevent intrusion. Casual intruders and dog walkers are usually deterred by a 1.8 - 2m high fence, but to deny access to determined intruders the fence must present a formidable obstacle at least 2.4m high and be able to withstand a high level of physical attack.



Fencing of this type is conventionally metal palisade or weld mesh and usually requires planning permission. To be effective it must be continuous and all gates must offer the same protection as the main fence line. The long perimeters of many schools can make it a very expensive option. A cheaper alternative is its use to enclose an inner perimeter, or to close off recesses, together with an increase in the security of the building envelope, **but means of escape must be maintained**. This can be just as effective as completely encircling the school boundary. Fencing needs to be inspected to check for breaching, eg by digging underneath or other damage.

Planting of dense thorny hedgerows along the school perimeter can either be an alternative or supplement to security fencing. It has a less forbidding appearance and can be effective, but to maintain sightlines for surveillance, greater breadth of a hedgerow is preferable to greater height. It should not be used close to buildings or where it can provide cover for an intruder.

## 4.23 Car Parking and Vehicle Security

It is only recently that schools have been designed with realistic levels of car parking facilities. Most have had to adapt existing space. **Everyone parking in the school grounds should clearly understand that they are responsible for the security of their vehicle and its contents**. But it is good practice to provide some vehicle security. Car parking is better located away from play areas but under natural surveillance from the school. Lighting for evening and winter use may be necessary to enhance the personal safety of staff using the car park.

School mini-buses are a target for theft. It is worthwhile specifying locking wheelnuts and having the windows etched with the school's name and postcode and/or the vehicle's registration number. They should also, where possible, be parked in a designated enclosure but not where they can be used as a means of access to roofs. Immobilisers, lockable fuel caps and anti-theft alarms are all useful additions.

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#### 4.24 Personal Attack Alarms

One measure to enhance personal safety is to provide staff with panic buttons or personal attack alarms. Staff who believe that they are under imminent threat of attack can press them to summon assistance. It is simple in principle, but in practice, advice should be sought on the most suitable type of system.

A first consideration is who will respond to the alarm? Do staff in neighbouring classrooms respond? If so, who supervises their class while they are giving assistance? Remember that whoever responds to an alarm may have to deal with an attack in progress. What action should be taken in such circumstances?

Secondly, is the alarm to be audible or silent? An audible alarm will reassure the victim that the alarm has worked and may scare off an attacker. It may also be the final trigger which turns a potentially violent situation into a reality.

There are two kinds of personal attack alarms:-

- **aerosol or battery driven screech alarms** which are intended to deter an attacker and bring assistance from bystanders;
- **panic buttons** which may be sited at fixed locations or carried by members of staff. These raise the alarm at a central location, which may be in the school office or at the central station monitoring all activations of the intruder alarm.

If a school plans to install panic buttons, it should consider:-

- where the alarm will be raised. The monitoring station must be manned whenever staff may be at risk;
- how the alarm will indicate the scene of the attack. Panic buttons carried by staff may show which member of staff is being attacked, but not their location;
- who will respond to an alarm;
- how long will it take to respond. If staff on site are expected to respond then the response time is likely to be under 5 minutes. Even this may be too long. An attack can be over in seconds. Raising the alarm at a central station may mean a delay of 5, 10 or even 15 minutes before those responding arrive on site. Is this acceptable? If not then how can the response be speeded up? It may be worth considering using staff on site to see to the safety of pupils and other members of staff, while containing the situation until the police or security personnel can deal with the attacker. It may also be worth providing caretakers with means of summoning assistance, eg mobile telephones or 2 way radios;
- whether panic buttons may be open to abuse by pupils.

## Mobile Phones

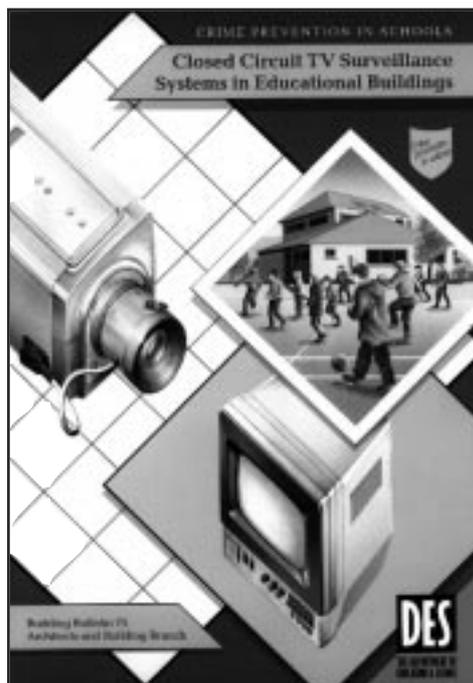
Rapid reaction is an important feature in managing security and those situations which arise as a result of breaches of security policy. Mobile phones can provide a high degree of flexibility and have been used to beneficial effect on school trips. It should, however, be borne in mind that the phones themselves are valuable items of equipment and should be treated as such from a security standpoint.

### 4.25 Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)

CCTV can be used to provide surveillance of areas not directly watched by staff, remote areas prone to vandalism or theft, or for general premises protection during out of school hours. Systems installed in some schools are also currently being used effectively in the management of children in the school playground.

It is important to specify the operational requirements for CCTV systems to avoid the purchase of inappropriate and ineffective systems. This also enables the performance of completed systems to be tested. The operational requirement of each camera location will determine the necessary size of the screen image. This in turn affects the type of lenses and camera used and the area that can be covered by each camera. An increasing number of companies are providing installation on a lease basis to schools.

The uses to which CCTV systems can be put range from simple deterrents, through monitoring of disturbances and groups of individuals, to the recognition of known individuals and their identification for legal purposes. The education and library boards or CCMS are able to advise on requirements suitable for individual schools.



CCTV pictures are transmitted, normally by cable, to a convenient location where they can be viewed on a monitor and recorded. How the pictures are to be monitored is an important consideration.

It is possible to monitor a school from a central monitoring station. During out of hours periods the station can notify the police in the event of a crime being committed. This, however, is expensive. More usually, a recorder is kept on site. This is best located in a secure container in the main reception area or in the premises manager's office where the monitor can be observed during school hours. Alternatively the recorder can be located in a secure room.

Event triggering, eg by passive infra-red detector, can be recorded on the video tape, enabling quick checking of the recordings by staff during school hours.

Both colour and black and white cameras are presently available at reasonable cost. However for use in low light situations black and white cameras give improved image resolution. Security lighting should be considered together with the design of the CCTV system. Floodlights operated by passive infra-red detectors can be installed with the cameras.

Cameras and their cables are vulnerable to attack and their protection should be considered. The Department of Education and Science's Building Bulletin No 75 gives further details.

#### **4.26 Commercial Security Patrols**

Patrols and guards may be used to complement other security measures in high risk schools. They can, in quite specific circumstances, provide a considerable deterrent, but have high running costs for the labour employed. For this reason they should only be considered as a short term measure. There are a large number of firms providing this service, although they vary in quality. They should either be members of the British Security Industry Association (BSIA) or the International Professional Security Association (IPSA) but, in any event, the police should be asked to check their credentials. Security patrols are useful after a major incident (such as a large fire) when normal security measures may be inoperative.

## PART TWO

### PERSONAL SAFETY

#### 5.00 Personal Safety Strategy

The physical security of school buildings plays an important part in the personal safety of staff, pupils and visitors.

Those tragic incidents referred to in the introduction demonstrate the vulnerability of individuals and the school community to acts of violence. The possibility of extreme incidents like the stabbing of Mr Philip Lawrence and the shootings at Dunblane cannot be totally discounted. However, Lord Cullen in his report into the Dunblane tragedy stated:-

*“Those who have responsibilities for health and safety of teaching staff and pupils at school should prepare a safety strategy for the protection of the whole school population against violence”. (Cullen 1996)*

Schools should, therefore, consider the development of a strategy which is appropriate to their particular situation.

This strategy should consist of:-

- identification of those at risk;
- a plan of action;
- monitoring/reviewing action plan effectiveness.

#### 6.0 The Potential for Violence

##### 6.01 What is Violence?

The Education Service Advisory Committee (ESAC) of the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) defines violence as:-

*“any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted by a student, pupil or a member of the public in circumstances arising out of the course of his/her employment”. (ESAC 1990)*

This definition recognises a school as a place of work and identifies the pupil or member of the public as potentially being the source of the violence directed against the teacher. Recent experience shows that each member of the school community is a potential victim of violence. Schools should, therefore, not confine their strategy to dealing exclusively with violence directed against staff.

## 6.02 Types of Violence

Physical Violence	Non Physical Violence
Assault causing death Assault causing serious physical injury Kicking Biting Punching Use of weapons Use of missiles Spitting Scratching Sexual assault	Verbal abuse Racial or sexual abuse Physical posturing Threatening gestures Abusive phone calls Threatening use of dogs Swearing Shouting Name calling Bullying Innuendo Deliberate silence

## 6.03 Who is at Risk?

Experience shows that the greater the contact with the general public (pupils, parents, other visitors) then the greater the potential risk of violence. A wide variety of activities potentially expose staff to violence or aggression at work. Some examples of activities and those who may correspondingly be at risk are given below.

Activities	Staff
Caretaking, looking after premises Laboratory work/resource areas	Caretakers/security staff Workshop/science and technology/ resource technicians
Working Alone	Principals/teachers/library staff/ancillary staff/grounds maintenance staff
Home visiting Evening working	Teachers with home school liaison duties Teaching staff/library staff/cleaning staff/ caretaking staff
Catering Working with pupils with behavioural difficulties	Kitchen staff Principals/teachers, educational psychologists/care helpers/classroom assistants
Looking after money	Principals/school secretaries/clerical staff/ancillary staff

**NOTE:** *This list is not exhaustive. There may be other activities and groups in your school that may be at risk.*

## 6.04 Sources of Violence

Recent high profile cases of violence in schools have been initiated by assailants from outside the school. An effective access control system will reduce the possibility of staff and pupils being attacked by an intruder. However, it is worth noting that the majority of assaults are carried out by those who have legitimately passed through controlled access. In the case of Philip Lawrence the attack took place outside the school building.

Consideration should therefore be given to all potential sources of violence both internal and external. Examples of such potential sources within the school include:-

- pupil on pupil
- pupil on staff
- parent/intruder on staff
- parent/intruder on pupil

## 6.05 Risk Assessment

Lord Cullen advised that the existence of risk calls for the development of a preventative strategy, at the heart of which is *risk assessment*. Such an assessment is an explicit duty for employers, Boards of Governors and Principals under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 1992, which states:

*“Every employer shall make a suitable and sufficient assessment of:-*

- i. the risks to the health and safety of his employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work; and*
- ii. the risks to the health and safety of persons not in his employment arising out of, or in connection with, the conduct by him of his undertaking.”*

A risk assessment is a careful, systematic examination of what could cause harm to staff and pupils. The aim is to allow schools to weigh up whether their existing precautions are adequate in the light of their experiences. Each school will have its own particular strengths and weaknesses and so the assessment of risk should take account of each situation.

The Health and Safety Agency (HSA) has prepared guidance on risk assessment contained in its publication - *Five Steps to Risk Assessment*.

The five steps are:-

- |               |  |                  |
|---------------|--|------------------|
| <i>Step 1</i> | Identify the hazardous activities.   | See Section 6.02 |
| <i>Step 2</i> | Decide who may be at risk.   | See Section 6.03 |
| <i>Step 3</i> | Evaluate the risks arising from the hazardous activities and decide whether existing precautions are adequate. |                  |

*Step 4* Record your findings and inform all staff.

*Step 5* Review the assessment regularly and in the light of new evidence.

### **6.06 Dealing with a Violent Incident**

Schools should have a procedure for dealing with violent incidents. The objective should be to make sure that staff have immediate support and can call for assistance to contain or diffuse the situation.

There may be a need for staff to:-

- receive regular training in dealing with aggression;
- acquire knowledge of security procedures and equipment;
- cultivate a sense of safety awareness.

The latter involves physical measures that will depend very much upon the layout of the school. In this connection, it may be appropriate to consider:-

- panic buttons;
- telephones - especially for outlying buildings;
- personal alarms for teachers;
- CCTV as a means of remote surveillance. However, its effect may be minimal in this context if it is not continuously monitored;
- encouraging pupils to be alert to the presence of strangers.

### **6.07 Plan of Action**

Schools should formulate a policy which addresses the subject of violence in the school.

The main elements of this policy should include:-

- a policy statement;
- assessment of risks;
- incident reporting procedures;
- prevention strategies;
- dealing with emergencies and their aftermath.

## 7.00 Prevention Strategies

To be effective, measures for dealing with violence at work need to be based on a proper analysis of the problems and full consideration of the alternative strategies available. There are no ready-made solutions. The process is likely to require time, careful planning and a combination of remedies to achieve desired objectives.

Some suggestions to consider within a preventive strategy include:-

- environmental aspects of premises as these relate to personal safety;
- work practices and patterns;
- staff training;
- pooling of information.

### 7.01 Environmental Aspects of Personal Safety

The general design and physical environment of buildings can sometimes be improved to reduce the likelihood of outbreaks of violence.

Some suggestions are:-

#### Reception

Easily identifiable and accessible reception areas which allow office staff to receive visitors, direct them to their destinations, answer queries, etc. A proper reception system should help reduce numbers of unauthorised visitors wandering around school premises.

Factors to consider are:-

- location - preferably close to the main entrance
- signs - should be clear, unambiguous and possibly repeated at intervals depending on circumstances
- ease of contact - important for staff working alone in reception areas.

#### Security

Useful information and ideas on security and design improvements to reduce vulnerability to intruders is contained in Building Bulletin 67, Crime Prevention in Schools published by the Department of Education & Science (DES) in 1987.

### 7.02 Work Practices and Patterns

We have already mentioned how particular activities or jobs within an organisation can create the potential for violence. Sometimes specific activities can be altered so that they are carried out in ways which lessen those risks. When activities or jobs cannot be altered or adapted, specific precautions may be necessary to help reduce risks.

## Dealing with Aggression

When angry parents or other visitors arrive at school premises, some procedures can help diffuse a difficult situation and avoid violent confrontation.

Below are four examples:-

- avoiding confrontation in front of an audience, particularly groups of pupils. The fewer people that are involved in an incident, the easier it is for the aggressor to back down without losing face;
- asking another, preferably senior, member of staff to help talk things through with the visitor;
- staying calm, speaking slowly so as not to be drawn into a heated argument;
- avoiding aggressive body language such as hands on hips, wagging fingers or looking down on the aggressor.

## Home Visiting

Some staff will need to visit clients in their homes. The client may be an anxious or aggressive parent who could act violently or in a threatening manner. Suggested precautions include:-

- an itinerary of the employee's movements to be left with a responsible person;
- periodic reporting to base or to a responsible person;
- avoiding evening visits wherever possible;
- checking clients' records beforehand to see whether the person or someone in the household is known to be potentially violent;
- carrying a personal alarm;
- visiting in pairs in some situations.

## Cleaning Outlying Buildings

Cleaning staff who work in buildings remote from main occupied areas and/or who work at night may often be alone and vulnerable to attack by intruders. Such staff should, where possible, work in pairs.

## Separating Fighting Pupils

Many violent incidents towards staff in educational premises stem from attempts to separate pupils during playground fights. Teachers, classroom assistants and playground supervisors should be given guidance on how playground fights should be dealt with and staff should be made aware of this advice.

### 7.03 Staff Training

Training of staff plays an important part in any overall strategy by helping to increase confidence levels and by generating an awareness of potential hazards. Training should be provided for all levels of staff who may face violence in their work. As a blanket training package is unlikely to be successful, the content of training courses should be geared towards groups of staff, the risks they face and their particular needs. (See paragraph 4.5 of Appendix 3.)

A training programme might include the following elements:-

- causes of violent and aggressive behaviour;
- familiarisation with the employer's policy and strategy;
- communications/inter-personal skills;
- techniques for preventing and avoiding violence and calming aggressive people;
- assertiveness training;
- techniques for breaking away from aggressive persons.

### 7.04 Pooling Information

Some clients, or the relations of clients, of an education service will be known from previous experience to be potentially violent or to have displayed aggressive tendencies. There will be occasions when sharing relevant information between sections or between departments can be important in helping to prevent risk of violence to others.

#### The Role of the Police

It is useful to develop and maintain good links with the local police station. This will be particularly relevant for those schools with a history of violent incidents. A good working relationship with the police in such circumstances, will prove beneficial. **Remember to always use 999 when requiring urgent assistance** as the local number may be unavailable or engaged.

## 8.00 Crisis Management

### 8.01 Emergency Planning

Although it is very unlikely that a major crisis will occur in your school, consideration should be given to the practices and procedures that will be employed should a major incident occur. Consideration of the potential difficulties will ensure that, as far as is possible, the crisis will be dealt with efficiently and speedily, thus limiting hazardous and/or dangerous effects.

### **What sort of crisis might your school have to deal with?**

- Violence and assault in school.
- Death or injuries on school journeys.
- Death of a pupil or teacher in school.
- Civil disturbances and terrorism.
- Fire destruction or vandalism of the school.
- Natural disaster in the community (eg flood).
- Road, sea or air traffic accident involving pupils.
- A pupil or teacher being taken hostage.

### **Contact telephone numbers should be established and regularly reviewed.**

These will include:-

- Principal and senior staff;
- Chairman of the Board of Governors;
- premises manager;
- emergency services;
- Safety Adviser/Emergency Officer.

Where possible, a 24 hour contact number should be available and substitutes established when normal contacts are unavailable. These numbers should be available to the Premises Manager/Principal and other individuals as appropriate.

### **8.02 When a Crisis Occurs**

Other matters to be considered when a crisis occurs include:-

- initiating emergency procedures;
- informing all staff of the extent of the situation;
- informing parents of the pupils involved;
- establishing a point of contact within the school (crisis co-ordinator);
- informing pupils and parents not involved in the crisis and re-assuring them;
- staffing the school telephone lines and noting all conversations in a logbook;

- informing members of the Board of Governors;
- informing the Employing Authority;
- involving specialist services where necessary eg counselling services available through the Employing Authority;
- advising parents of all pupils at the school that their child may be upset, even if not directly involved in the incident;
- considering the need for the provision of temporary school accommodation;
- devising arrangements for easing pupils' re-entry into school after long term absence;
- establishing a detailed record of all matters relating to the crisis and actions taken during it;
- ensuring, where possible, that the school continues to operate.

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## SECURITY SURVEY AND RISK ASSESSMENT

A security survey gives a rounded picture of the risks that your school faces and the security measures in existence. Without this information it is difficult to assess:-

- the type and scale of risk;
- any trends or patterns in the incidents occurring at the school;
- the selection of security measures;
- the efficiency of the chosen security measures.

### Checklist

To help you conduct a survey and risk assessment a checklist which you can photocopy is provided. It is divided into three parts:-

#### Part 1 Incidence of crime

This section assesses the type, scale, patterns and trends of incidents which have actually happened in the last 12 months.

This part of the *risk assessment* can be based on an analysis of the reported incidents. However, if your school does not yet have an incident reporting procedure a more subjective assessment will have to be made, possibly based on discussion with the local police crime prevention officer.

#### Part 2 Environment and buildings

This section of the survey assesses the environmental and building factors which contribute to school security.

#### Part 3 Security measures

This section assesses the degree and effectiveness of the security measures employed.

Parts 2 and 3 are based on a security survey conducted by walking through the school.

Each element of the checklist is graded from 0 to 5 points. The scoring ranges from 0 for low security risk to 5 for high security risk.

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**5. Safety - attacks on staff or pupils**

No attacks or threats reported  Attacks inside school or in vicinity of school \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Drug/solvent abuse**

No problems reported  School or locality problem concerning drug or solvent abuse \_\_\_\_\_

**Sub Total** \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 2: ENVIRONMENT AND BUILDINGS**

**Points**

**1. Incidence of crime in surrounding area**

Locality has a low crime rate  Locality has high crime rate as reported to police \_\_\_\_\_

**2. School overlooked from roads and/or housing**

Grounds overlooked by busy roads or housing  Unobserved grounds \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Boundaries, fences and gates**

Boundaries well defined with fences and gates to grounds preventing all but determined intruders  No fences or gates preventing unauthorised access \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Clearly defined entrances**

Clear entrances with signs directing visitors  No clear entrances or multiple entrances \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Well organised reception area and visitors' control**

Pass system in operation with badges issued to all visitors  No system of recording visitors \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Car Parking**

Car parks well lit and overlooked  No safe place to park, car parks unlit and not overlooked eg surrounded by trees \_\_\_\_\_

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**7. Condition and appearance of buildings**

Buildings well kept and in good repair with no graffiti and not vandalised	<input type="checkbox"/>	Buildings badly kept and in state of disrepair, graffiti covered and vandalised	_____
--	--	---	-------

**8. Detached and temporary buildings**

No detached buildings apart from main block	<input type="checkbox"/>	Many detached buildings including temporary classrooms	_____
---	--	--	-------

**9. Recesses and internal courtyards**

No places for intruders to hide and break in unobserved	<input type="checkbox"/>	Numerous places for intruders to hide and break in unobserved	_____
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**10. Secure exit doors**

Doors secure against all but most determined intruders	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fire exit doors easily forced, inadequate locks	_____
--	--	---	-------

**11. Secure windows and rooflights**

Windows and rooflights protected against burglars	<input type="checkbox"/>	Windows and rooflights provide easy access	_____
---	--	--	-------

**12. Valuable equipment that is easily stolen and disposed of**

Few computers, TVs and video cassette recorders	<input type="checkbox"/>	Many computers, keyboards, faxes, camcorders, etc	_____
---	--	---	-------

**13. Fire precautions**

Buildings have adequate fire compartmentalisation and fire/smoke barriers and doors	<input type="checkbox"/>	Over-large compartments and lack of fire/smoke barriers and doors	_____
---	--	---	-------

**14. Community ethos and support for school**

Strong community and parent support for the security eg Active PTA	<input type="checkbox"/>	Insignificant parent or community involvement	_____
--	--	---	-------

**15. Out of hours use of schools facilities**

No reported problems and/or security benefit from out of hours use	<input type="checkbox"/>	Many security problems due to out of hours use, special risks (eg evening classes, libraries, sports clubs, community use etc)	_____
		<b>Sub Total</b>	_____

**PART 3: SECURITY MEASURES**

			<b>Points</b>
<b>1. Schoolwatch scheme</b>			
Efficient system of reporting suspicious incidents	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	No scheme in operation	_____
<b>2. Pupil involvement</b>			
Pupils diligent in reporting strangers on school premises	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	No involvement in security	_____
<b>3. Waste bins</b>			
Waste and recycling bins locked up every night	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Unlocked mobile bins left around school	_____
<b>4. Security lighting</b>			
Lighting of all entrances, footpaths and building façades	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	No lighting	_____
<b>5. Surveillance</b>			
Efficient surveillance eg CCTV covering perimeter or security patrols	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	No system	_____
<b>6. Intruder Alarms</b>			
System using intruder detectors on all ground floor perimeter and other vulnerable rooms	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	No system	_____

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**7. Fire detection system**

Automated and linked to central control room  No system \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Property marking**

All valuable property marked and kept in a secure store or secured locally  No markings on property \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Cash handling procedures**

Secure methods in operation  Procedures lacking \_\_\_\_\_

**Sub Total** \_\_\_\_\_

**Security Risk Assessment Score Summary**

Part 1 - Crime  (0-30)

Part 2 - Environment & Buildings  (0-75)

Part 3 - Security Measures  (0-45)

**Grand Total**  **(0-150 points)**

**What physical measures do you feel your school requires in order to improve personal safety and security? *Please list these in order of priority.***

**PERSONAL SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT**

**(5 STEP ACTION PLAN)**

<p>Step 1</p> <p>Find out if there is a problem</p>	<p>Ask staff. Survey using a questionnaire. Consult Board of Governors. Establish any cost implications.</p>
<p>Step 2</p> <p>Report and classify all incidents</p>	<p>Use reporting form. Open a file to allow for easy access of information.</p>
<p>Step 3</p> <p>Record and investigate all incidents</p>	<p>Use the form (Appendix 4) and any other information contained in Part Two of the document. Discuss with Board of Governors, staff and pupils.</p>
<p>Step 4</p> <p>Implement policy and procedures</p>	<p>See “Guidelines for Developing a School Policy on Violence”. (Appendix 3)</p>
<p>Step 5</p> <p>Check that the measures are working</p>	<p>Re-survey all staff. Have the number of incidents been reduced? Discuss formally at Board of Governors meetings, on a regular basis.</p>

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## GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING A SCHOOL POLICY ON VIOLENCE

### 1. Elements of Policy

A school policy regarding 'Violence to Staff and Pupils' is intended to:-

- reduce the risks to staff and pupils from violence;
- fulfil legal obligations by ensuring the safety of staff;
- identify the steps necessary to reduce and combat the risks of violence to staff and pupils;
- ensure all school staff and pupils are aware of and fulfil their obligations and responsibilities not to engage in violent acts.

### 2. The Definition of Violence

Some examples of a working definition of violence are:-

- any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted arising out of the course of his or her employment;
- behaviour which can produce damaging or hurtful effects, either physically or emotionally;
- the application of force, severe threat or serious abuse including severe verbal abuse or persistent harassment.

For examples of both physical and non-physical violence see Section 6.02.

### 3. Reporting Violent Incidents

This is a major step in the strategy for reducing incidents involving violence. An example of an Incident Report Form is attached. (See Appendix 4.)

### 4. Search for Preventative Measures

Strategies for the prevention of violence in schools should include:-

- a statement of intent from the Board of Governors;
- a school based policy on violence;
- physical aspects of the premises;
- work practices and patterns;

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- staff training;
- pooling of information.

#### **4.1 Employing Authority's Statement of Intent**

Employing Authority's Statement of Intent regarding violence in schools should cover the following topics:-

- a commitment to introduce measures for combating violence to employees;
- a declaration of full support for staff who have been assaulted or suffered from verbal abuse;
- the appropriate investigation of all reported incidents of violence;
- support in providing information concerning legal advice following an incident;
- arrangements for liaising with the employers of contract staff working in the school;
- liaison with the police when assaults have taken place (subject to employees permission).

#### **4.2 School Policy on Violence**

Any policy should cover the following subjects:-

- researching and understanding the nature of the problem;
- reporting and recording of all incidents;
- developing a preventative strategy;
- understanding the role of the police;
- implementing the measures contained within the plan of action; (see 6.07)
- providing support for staff who have been involved in incidents;
- ensuring the training of staff with regard to this policy and their role in the prevention of violence;
- monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the policy.

#### **4.3 Environmental Aspects of the Premises**

The risk assessment for the premises should be carried out and the score summary should reflect the true picture of the risks that the school faces. (See Appendix 1.)

#### 4.4 Work Practices and Patterns

Identify staff who may be particularly at risk, examples include:-

- lone working;
- working late and leaving the building in the dark;
- drivers on school trips - returning late or in the event of vehicle break-down;
- paying particular attention to home visits.

#### 4.5 Staff Training

A training programme is likely to include some or all of the following topics:-

- aim - a general statement covering the purpose of the training;
- objectives - decide what the training will accomplish;
- target group - who is the training for? (staff induction) why do they need it? what are the benefits? and how will it integrate with their jobs?
- location - what venue?
- trainers - who will deliver the training?
- content - what topics will be covered?
- approach - the approach taken should be informal and varied to involve all participants;
- evaluation - there is a need to evaluate how effective the training course has been.

The following basic questions should also be asked before any training is organised.

##### *What*

- needs have been identified?
- are the aims and objectives?
- help is needed to organise the training?
- length of training course is needed?
- approach is best?

### *Who*

- is the training for?
- is responsible for what (bookings, briefing, presenting, evaluation)?
- needs to be contacted (trainers, contributors and participants)?
- else should be involved regarding training?
- are the trainers? why have they been selected? - what is their particular expertise or experience?
- will evaluate the effectiveness of the training?

### *When*

- will the training take place?
- do the staff need to have information about the training, and their part in it?

### *Where*

- will the training take place?

### *Why*

- is the training necessary?

## **5. Pooling of Information**

Where there is information on pupils and parents (relatives) who are known from previous experience to be potentially violent or to have displayed aggressive tendencies, this detail should be shared between Departments and other professionals (Education Welfare Officers, Youth Leaders etc).

This is a sensitive area and Principals need to give consideration to the confidentiality of information which relates to identifiable individuals and the justifiable need (on the grounds of personal safety) for such information to be transmitted to other persons who may be at risk when dealing directly with the pupil, parent, or relative in question.

## 6. Risks Classification

Illustrated below is a simple chart which may be used in ranking the magnitude of risk.

Level of Risk	Description
Not Significant	A risk that is <i>unlikely</i> to result even in minor injury or illness.
Low	A risk that <i>may</i> possibly result in minor injury or illness leading to lost time.
Moderate	A risk that is <i>likely</i> to result in injury or illness leading to lost time or disablement.
High	A risk that is <i>highly likely</i> to result in serious injury or illness leading to lost time, disablement or death.
Very High	A risk that will <i>certainly</i> result in serious injury or illness leading to lost time, disablement or death.

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## INCIDENT REPORT FORM

## VIOLENT OR AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS SCHOOL STAFF

(Includes physical violence, aggression, verbal abuse, sexual or racial abuse, intentional damage to personal property.)

Victims of violence or aggression should complete this form as fully as possible. Please use a continuation sheet if necessary.

<i>Date of incident</i>	<i>Day of week</i>	<i>Time</i>
-------------------------	--------------------	-------------

## 1. Employee - personal details of victim

Name ..... School address .....

.....  
 .....

Position ..... Dept/Section .....

Age ..... Gender .....

What work was being done when incident occurred:

Classroom  PE/Games

Administration  Caretaking/Cleaning

Other (*please give brief details*)

.....  
 .....

## 2. Details of assailant, if known

Name ..... Address .....

.....

Age approx ..... Male/Female .....

Description .....

Relationship between victim and assailant, if any .....

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**3. Witness, if any**

Name ..... Address .....

Age approx ..... Male/Female .....

Description .....

Relationship between victim and assailant, if any .....

**4. Details of incident**

a. Physical violence  Verbal abuse

Specify .....

b. Were you injured in the incident? Yes  No

Did you receive first-aid treatment? Yes  No

Did you require professional medical attention? Yes  No

Did you require time off work? Yes  No

c. Location of incident

Classroom  Assembly  Canteen

Playground  Corridor  Sports field

Other .....

**5. After the incident, did you verbally inform**

No-one

Principal  Head of Department

Colleague  Police

**6. Other information (to be completed as appropriate)**

a. Possible contributory factors .....

.....

b. Is assailant known to have been involved in any previous incidents?

i. in school Yes  No

ii. out of school Yes  No

c. Give date and brief details of b. if known .....

.....  
.....

d. Have any measures been taken to try and prevent an incident of this type occurring?  
If so, what? How did they fall short? How could they be improved?

.....  
.....

e. Even if no measures had been taken beforehand, what action in your view, may be  
taken now?

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f. Any other relevant information .....

.....

*Signed* ..... *Date* ..... *Position* .....

Please return to your Employing Authority as soon as possible.

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HSE priced and free publications are available from HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 6FS, Tel: 01787 881165 Fax: 01787 313995.

\* *Available from DfEE Publications Centre, PO Box 6927, London E3 3NZ.  
Tel: 0171 510 0150 Fax: 0171 510 0196.*

\*\* *Home Office publications are available from the Home Office,  
50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT.*

In addition to the above most police forces and fire services as well as many local authorities have issued helpful publications on security related matters aimed directly at schools.

## OTHER ORGANISATIONS

**Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers**, Delta House, 222 Balham High Road, London SW12 9BS. Tel: 0181 675 5211 Fax: 0181 675 5449.

**ALARM**, Association of Local Authority Risk Managers, Galaxy Building, Southwood Crescent, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 0NJ. Tel: 01252 387912.

**Arson Prevention Bureau**, 140 Aldersgate Street, London, EC1A 4DD. Tel: 0171 600 1695 Fax: 0171 600 1487.

**NACOSS**, National Approval Council for Security Systems, Queensgate House, 14 Cookham Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 8AJ. Tel: 01628 37512 Fax: 0162 8773367.

**SSAIB**, Security Systems and Alarm Inspection Board, 70/71 Camden Street, North Shields, Tyne and Wear NE30 1NH.

**ECA Security Group**, The Electrical Contractors' Association, ESCA House, 34 Palace Court, Bayswater, London W2 4HY. Tel: 0171 229 1266.

**BSIA**, British Security Industry Association, Security House, Barbourne Road, Worcester WR1 1RT. Tel: 01905 21464 Fax: 01905 613625.

**Youth Action Groups Initiative**, Signal Point, Station Road, Swindon, Wiltshire SN1 1FE. Tel: 01793 514596 Fax: 01793 514654.

**The Suzy Lamplugh Trust**, The National Charity for Personal Safety, 14 East Sheen Avenue, London SW14 8AS. Tel: 0181 392 1839 Fax: 0181 392 1830.

