

School holiday security guidance



With the school being empty, it is essential that school management teams start to consider and plan suitable security arrangements for the closure or partial closure over the holidays.

Historically, these periods have seen many significant losses in terms of thefts, vandalism and arson attacks, which commonly are crimes of opportunity as opposed to planned events. This is particularly the case just before the school closes and in the first week of the holiday period, and similarly at the end of the summer holidays and the first week of the autumn term. It is essential that adequate measures be taken to ensure effective security is provided to school premises in order to combat these potential losses.

Control Measures

The following advice is aimed at helping you to provide an appropriate level of security for your school premises during the holidays:

- **Site or boundary fencing:** Carry out checks before the summer closure to ensure the fencing is intact, with no holes or footholds evident. Ensure gates are fitted with suitable locks and that bolts, hinges and handles do not act as easy footholds/scaling points.
 - **Overgrown planting:** Ensure planting around the building does not provide unnecessary areas of seclusion, where intruders may gain easy cover. Such planting may also detract from easy surveillance of the site from security patrols, police, neighbours or passers-by. Trees and bushes overhanging boundary/security fencing can also act as an easy access route for the intruder. In cases where CCTV is provided, such planting may obstruct sight lines.
 - **External lighting:** Ensure external lighting is operating correctly and that any damaged fittings/bulbs are repaired or replaced.
 - **Loose debris:** Remove from the site any loose debris which may be used for vandalism attacks or to assist in gaining entry.
 - **Refuse and vehicle storage:** Bins and skips should be located at least 8m from buildings and be secured in position. Ideally bins and skips should have lockable lids. In the case of contractors' skips, instructions must be given that their skips must not be placed adjacent to buildings. The summer break is a common time for a clear out of old or disused furniture. It is essential however that combustible items including furniture are not left outside the buildings. School minibuses/coaches should not be parked in close proximity to the buildings (unless within a secure and alarmed garage, etc). This is due to the potential fire spread from a vehicle to the building.
 - **Contractors:** Contractors' compounds should be located away from school buildings, ideally a minimum of 10m, and be secured. Contractors' skips must be sited away from the buildings (minimum 8m) and ideally be enclosed skips with lockable lid/doors.
- Permit to work/hot work permit systems should be introduced and adhered to. Access control is essential when contractors are working in parts of the building. They should wear security badges and any workers not doing so should be challenged. Opportunist thieves often strike when contractors have access within the school accommodation, posing as contractors if challenged.
- **Security shutters/grilles:** Ensure these are operating correctly and are fitted with suitable locking devices. We recommend these be itemised on a site lock-up checklist to act as a reminder.
 - **Windows doors and skylights:** These must be adequately locked and secured at all times, and we recommend that grilles be fitted to skylights. Effective access control must be provided in the summer holiday with particular attention being paid to parts of the building being used by clubs, community groups and contractors.
 - **Maintenance programmes:** Checks are required to ensure that maintenance programmes on services including fire alarms, intruder alarms and sprinkler system are up to date.
 - **Intruder alarm:** Ensure this is operating correctly and showing no faults. If the system is linked to a central monitoring station, check that this link has not been broken and that the monitoring stations are able to detect activation.

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- **Fire alarm:** Ensure this is operating correctly and showing no faults. During the holiday, ensure tests continue to be carried out. If the system is linked to a central monitoring station, check that this link has not been broken and that the monitoring station is able to detect an activation. If the system currently contains automatic detection (smoke/heat), but is not already monitored, it is strongly recommended that the system be linked to a central monitoring station in order to prompt an early response by the fire brigade.
- **Building damage:** An assessment of damage to the building should be carried out and any remedial works actioned. Particular attention should be given to:
 - broken windows*
 - roof damage – missing tiles/slates/broken roof lights*
 - damaged wall cladding – vertical tiling, timber boarding, etc*.
 - skirts to base of ‘temporary’ or demountable classrooms.

*Repair works must be carried out completed and without delay.
- **Disaster recovery plan:** Ensure such a plan is up to date and copies are kept off-site. Remember to include details such as key contacts, showing names and numbers. If you don’t have a plan in place you can use our Business Continuity Management tool to build and store one with us; free of charge. Just visit the BCM link on the Risk Curriculum home page.
- **Security patrols:** Consider the need for security patrols, which may include random visits. This is of particular relevance if the school has suffered unwanted attention in the weeks/months leading up to the summer holiday period. If this has been the case, speak to both the police and fire authority for further advice during the holiday period.
- **Key holders:** Check that designated key holders will be available during the holiday period. It may be necessary to put alternative arrangements in place, including the employment of a professional key-holding company to assist in this process. Ensure that the monitoring station for the intruder alarm has up-to-date key-holder details.
- **IT security:** Put in place adequate security arrangements for IT equipment. Such measures include:
 - ensuring equipment is located within areas having suitable alarm protection
 - items are secured to desks, etc by appropriate lock-down devices
 - items are security marked
 - warning labels referring to security marking are placed in prominent locations/windows. Consider entrapment devices to data projectors or remove and secure in high security and alarmed stores. If new IT equipment is being installed/delivered, increased vigilance is required. Such equipment should not be visible from outside, and empty packaging must not be stored outside.
- **Essential building information:** Key information on the location of isolation switches, gas shut off valves, stopcocks, etc should be updated and ideally kept inside the school entrance in a readily identifiable location and given to key-holding staff. It may be beneficial to share such information with your local fire station in the case of the larger, more complex school buildings. Any on-site fire hydrants should be suitably marked (and serviced/checked).
- **Holiday access policy:** Clear instructions should be given to staff in relation to times when the premises are accessible. The management of keys is an important factor in school security at all times, but perhaps of greater importance during long holiday periods. Staff should be asked to be vigilant when visiting/attending the school during the holidays – this is for their own safety in addition to school security. The unnecessary opening of windows should be discouraged and caretaking staff should pay particular attention to such practices when securing the building. Appropriate measures must be considered when the buildings are partially occupied to ensure the limited occupation does not adversely effect the security of neighbouring parts of the premise.
- **Routine maintenance/servicing works:** If essential works are being carried out on services such as the fire or intruder alarms that may result in the system being out of operation for extended periods, suitable contingency arrangements should be put in place. Advice in this regard can also be sought from the police and fire authorities. Zurich Municipal should be advised of any extended periods where these services will be out of commission/operation.

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- Deliveries and mail:** We recommend that letterboxes be fitted with metal containers to the inside, in which to contain the mail deliveries. It may be beneficial to arrange for school mail to be collected from a local post office or similar in order to reduce the amount of mail being left at the school. Deliveries should not be left outside when premises are unoccupied.
- Smoking procedures:** Smoking practices need to be carefully monitored and designated smoking areas checked on a regular basis when the premises are partly occupied. Contractors must be advised of and comply with the smoking policies. Suitable metal receptacles must be provided for smoking materials and be clearly separate from general waste receptacles.
- Procurement process:** It may in certain cases be necessary to review the procedures for site/care taking staff raising orders for essential maintenance and repair works. Such measures may be deemed necessary to facilitate the rapid procurement of contractors for completion of essential works.

Further information

www.homeoffice.gov.uk

www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp

Note: Zurich do not take responsibility for content on external websites.

Holiday checklist

Here is a short checklist that we have/developed to help school managers secure the school and to use as a reference point for regular checks during holiday periods.

Site checks

Valuable equipment is secured and out of view	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Date <input type="text"/>
Flammable materials are locked away	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Date <input type="text"/>
Rubbish is removed from the building and secured away from the building	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Date <input type="text"/>
No intruders are hiding in the building prior to lock-up	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Date <input type="text"/>
External lighting is operational	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Date <input type="text"/>
Fire alarm is operational and any faults reported/rectified	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Date <input type="text"/>
Security alarm is working correctly and activated whenever the building is secured (zoned if necessary)	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Date <input type="text"/>
All internal doors are kept shut	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Date <input type="text"/>
External doors are adequately locked/secured	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Date <input type="text"/>
Missing/dislodged ceiling tiles are replaced	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Date <input type="text"/>
Windows are locked shut – any grilles locked shut	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Date <input type="text"/>
Windows are intact and any broken windows repaired/boarded up	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Date <input type="text"/>
Any damaged cladding/tile hanging is repaired/boarded over	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Date <input type="text"/>
Do roof tiles/slates/flashing/skylights appear in good condition (visible check from ground)	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Date <input type="text"/>
Fencing complete and effective – gates locked – look for signs of access	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Date <input type="text"/>
Contractors' skips/materials are secured away from buildings	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Date <input type="text"/>
Only nominated staff lock-up premises	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Date <input type="text"/>
Minimise entry points for contractors and staff	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Date <input type="text"/>
Check smoking areas/procedures	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Date <input type="text"/>
Permit to work/hot work permit procedures are adhered too	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Date <input type="text"/>

For more information visit: www.RiskCurriculum.co.uk

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