Managing property risks in schools

A handbook for head teachers

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Preface

In January this year, the Accounts Commission for Scotland published the report 'A Safer Place – Property Risk Management in Schools,' based on the findings of its national study. The aim of the study was to encourage all new councils in Scotland to develop effective risk-management arrangements for their property.

The report highlighted the key role that councils and head teachers have in managing property risks and security in schools. It made clear that the financial case for protecting school buildings and equipment which are at risk of vandalism, theft or fire-raising needs to be distinguished from the arrangements for taking measures to protect schools from unauthorised access.

This handbook is directed principally at heads of establishments. Its purpose is to provide you (the head teacher or rector) with practical guidance on reducing the risk of property crime in your school and improving school security. Provided as an appendix is a summary, which will assist you in reviewing the arrangements for managing property risks in your school.

Material for the handbook is drawn from the information collected during our study, which was undertaken in partnership with 11 participating councils, together with the police and fire services, and professional associations involved in risk management. Importantly, we gathered the views of head teachers by conducting a questionnaire survey in over 260 schools across Scotland. An 82% response rate enabled us to collect risk information on 6% of all primary schools and 18% of all secondary schools.

The following bodies provided valuable advice and assistance during the course of the work:

- The Scottish Office Crime Prevention Unit.
- The Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland.
- The Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers' Association – Scotland.
- The Association of Directors of Education – Scotland.
- The Scottish Office Education and Industry Department.
- The Association of Local Authority Risk Managers in Scotland.
- The Scottish Association of Chief Building Control Officers.
- The Health and Safety Executive.
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools.
- The Department of Risk and Financial Services, Glasgow Caledonian University.
- Zurich Municipal.

This handbook was produced by Martin Christie and John Lincoln within the Local Government Studies Directorate.

1. The challenge

Every year, property-related crime in schools – principally fire-raising, vandalism and theft – costs Scottish councils some £18m. The non-financial consequences of these crimes are also significant. They include disruption to the running of schools and the loss of use of vital equipment. Repeated acts of vandalism and damage to property have a demotivating impact on pupils, staff and the wider community. If left unchecked, the steady decline in morale in a school adversely affects the teaching and learning process.

The costliest aspect of school property crime is the repair of malicious damage, of which the largest element is the boarding up and repair of broken windows. In the former local education authority areas of Fife, Lothian, Strathclyde and Tayside, there are over 100 schools where, in most years, the cost of repairing malicious damage alone exceeds £10,000 per school.

Schools are at greatest risk from vandalism and malicious fires outwith school hours, between the hours of 6 pm and 11 pm and during school holidays, particularly at the beginning and end of the summer holidays.

Head teachers have been concerned about school security and vandalism for some time. Concern about security in schools has increased following the tragic circumstances at the Dunblane Primary School in March 1996. The public wishes to be assured that schools provide a safe learning and working environment for the children, staff and members of the community who use school facilities.

Property-crime risks in schools

Head teachers in two-thirds of secondary schools and one half of primary schools consider property risks to be a problem. Exhibit 1 shows the relative severity of the types of property-related risks identified by head teachers in our survey.

Exhibit 1: Relative importance of school property risks

Property crime is a dominant feature of school property risks
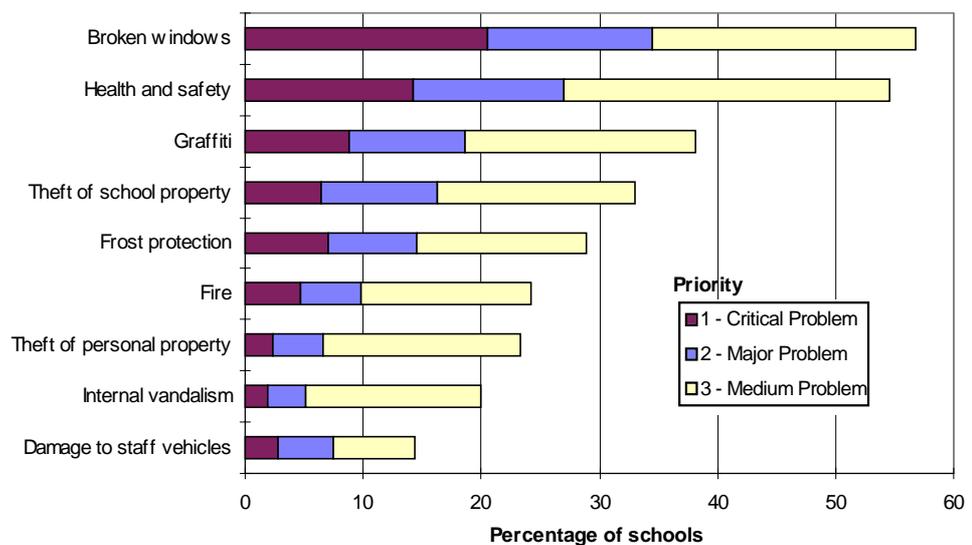
Source: Accounts Commission survey of head teachers.

Criminal acts of malicious damage, graffiti, theft and fire feature prominently in head teachers' concerns. Their most serious concern is broken windows, a problem which affects six out of ten schools, to varying degrees. Instances of vandalism of internal property, mainly to toilets, and of damage to staff vehicles occur on a much lesser scale. In schools where property-related risks are a problem, three out of four head teachers are concerned about the adverse impact of vandalism on the morale of staff and pupils, and on the ethos of their school.

Our survey of head teachers, in combination with our enquiry of the police and fire services, enabled us to identify the key factors which contribute to schools being at increased risk of crime (Box A).

Box A: Key factors which contribute to schools being at increased risk of crime

Factors	Is this a factor in your school?
Location	
• schools in major urban areas experience significantly more crime	Yes/No
• schools in areas of multiple deprivation tend to suffer greater vandalism	Yes/No
• schools with poor surveillance from surrounding areas are at greater risk	Yes/No
Design and layout	
• heavily recessed and hidden buildings are a greater target for crime	Yes/No
• schools set in extensive grounds, especially grassed areas, become unauthorised golf courses or football pitches out of school hours, leading to increased risk of broken windows and other damage	Yes/No
Community involvement	
• neighbourhoods where little community spirit exists tend to have no crime prevention action groups and no active involvement with the school	Yes/No
• reduced community use outwith the core teaching periods increases the opportunity for serious crime	Yes/No

Access control

More than half of the head teachers surveyed identified improved control over access to their school as a priority area for action; most also indicated that the risk was as much a problem during the school day as it was at night and at weekends. Box B lists the key factors which facilitate unauthorised access to schools.

Box B: Key factors which facilitate unauthorised access to schools

Factors	Is this issue a major concern in your school?
• a failure to design schools with security in mind	Yes/No
• the lack of a clearly defined perimeter around the school	Yes/No
• numerous points of entry, particularly in secondary schools	Yes/No
• public rights of way cutting across the school campus	Yes/No
• the use of the schools during the school day by the community and other users	Yes/No
• poor location of reception offices within schools	Yes/No
• the requirement for access by others during the school day	Yes/No
• the absence of a single controlled entry point to all areas of the school	Yes/No

Other property risks

Head teachers also have concerns about health and safety issues and frost protection. These concerns relate, in part, to the standard of maintenance and the condition of their school buildings (Box C). Indeed, in any review of security, the maintenance and condition of the building fabric need to be taken into account. Security will not be effective if doors and windows cannot be securely fastened.

Box C: Head teachers' concerns about the maintenance and condition of their school

Issues	Is this issue a major concern in your school?
• reduced resources for maintenance, leading to a general deterioration in the fabric and condition of the building and school grounds	Yes/No
• low standards of maintenance, undermining a sense of pride of those who use the building	Yes/No
• poor quality of building fabric − principally leaking roofs and inadequate insulation	Yes/No
• a long period elapsing between reporting damage and completing the permanent repair	Yes/No

During the severe winter of 1995/96, many schools suffered serious losses from flooding caused by frozen pipes. Certain factors which contributed to the damage were outwith the control of the school:

- the severe weather, which resulted in power cuts, prevented the activation of frost-protection systems;

- insulated water pipes in roof spaces had not been designed to cope with the extremely low temperatures for such a long period.

However, in some schools, increased damage resulted from schools striking the wrong balance between energy conservation and providing heating for frost protection. Some heating systems had been turned down or switched off. The experience also highlighted the lack of up-to-date contingency plans for exceptionally cold weather. Contingency plans should address both risk-prevention measures and procedures to be followed in the event of frost or flood damage, eg temporary arrangements for displacement of pupils (Box D).

Box D: Contingency planning issues

Issues	Are arrangements satisfactory in your school?
• up-to-date plans for operating heating equipment during exceptionally cold weather	Yes/No
• procedures to take in the event of:	
– pipes being found to be frozen;	Yes/No
– loss or damage due to flood.	Yes/No

2. Managing property risks in schools

What is risk management?

Before describing the action you can take to reduce property risks in your school, it is important to describe how risk management works. A systematic approach to managing property risks in your school involves:

- identifying and evaluating risks, by conducting risk assessments [1];

- taking action to avoid losses (both financial and non-financial); and

- evaluating action taken.

By adopting such an approach, financial losses will be minimised and the learning and teaching environment in the school may be significantly improved. Box E summarises the key principles and processes involved in managing risks.

Box E: Risk management principles and processes

Principle	Process
Risks must be identified before they can be measured. Only after their potential impact has been assessed can you decide what to do about them.	**Identification**: previous losses as well as factors which can cause damage in the future should be identified. Good information on past losses can yield important information on the trend and pattern of losses. **Quantification**: the impact, frequency and cost of the identified factors should be measured.
It may be necessary to spend to save, but the measures put in place must be cost-effective. There is no point in spending more controlling a risk than it is ever likely to cost.	**Avoidance**: steps should be taken (physical or non-physical, whichever is appropriate) to reduce or eliminate identified risks in order of priority. Potential measures should be evaluated for cost-effectiveness before implementation. **Financing**: the ways of financing risk-avoidance measures need to be considered. Reduction measures do not always require large sums of money.
Risks will change over time; introducing security measures in one place can alter the pattern of risk in another. Not every change will be controllable or predictable.	**Evaluation**: risk-prevention measures should be reviewed to evaluate the actual results obtained.

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[1] The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) has published a booklet 'Improving Security in Schools' containing advice to education authorities on managing risks and on possible security measures. It also gives advice on carrying out security risk-assessment surveys.

The council framework

The Commission's report emphasised the important role of councils and head teachers in managing property risks in schools.

Councils have a key role in establishing the policy and overall framework to guide the programme of risk management in school property, covering issues such as objectives, timescales for their achievement, projected levels of investment and criteria for selecting schools for the programme of physical prevention measures. The education authority has responsibility for managing and financing school provision. But, under devolved school management (DSM) schemes, head teachers directly manage at least 80% of the school budget.

Most councils have developed landlord/tenant DSM schemes for school buildings. The landlord (the council) is responsible for the maintenance and repair of the external fabric of the school. The tenant (the school) is responsible for internal decor and repairs. Under most landlord/tenant schemes, the council meets the cost to schools of out-of-hours vandalism. Each school is required to bear the cost of vandalism and losses from theft arising during school hours.

Councils do not wish to pass complete responsibility for the repair and maintenance of individual schools to their head teachers. Given the constraints on their resources, councils wish to ensure that they retain control over the prioritisation and targeting of available resources to maintain the building fabric of schools. Other concerns of council managers regarding landlord/tenant schemes relate to:

- issues regarding the appropriateness and quality of work carried out at the school's direct instruction; and

- ensuring that such work complies with statutory requirements concerning health and safety, fire, and building and planning regulations.

The management of school property risks is complex, with many parties having a potential stake in assisting schools to reduce losses and damage. These stakeholders fall into three main groups (Box F).

Box F: The key stakeholders in managing property risks

The local school	The council	External agencies
Head teacher	Councillors	Police
Teachers, helpers and other staff	Chief executive	Fire
Janitor	Education service	Health and Safety Executive
Pupils	Property/estates department	HM Inspectorate of Schools
School board members	Risk manager/insurance section	Insurance companies
Parent-teacher association (PTA)	Health and safety officer	
Parents and the local community	Building control	

Your education authority has primary responsibility for property risks and health and safety in schools, but management responsibility on a day-to-day basis is delegated to head teachers. You should work in conjunction with your local education department when managing property risks in your school. At all times, you will be expected to operate within the policy framework laid down by your council.

All schools are different and school users know their school best. For these reasons, solutions require to be tailored to local circumstances. In formulating effective solutions, your council will wish to consult with you and other users of the school, and take expert advice from outside agencies.

Whom to involve

Risk management requires clear leadership. But you cannot undertake the task alone. By enlisting the support of your management team and other staff, and by consulting with pupils and others who use the school, solutions can be found for particular problems.

For risk management to work, it needs to have the ongoing commitment and support of all users of the school. It is important to develop a risk-management culture which permeates the whole school. You can create a risk-management culture within the school by:

- clearly demonstrating leadership and the commitment of the school management team to tackling the problem;

- allocating specific responsibilities to all those involved;

- enlisting the participation and support of pupils and other school users; and

- involving the local community.

Our study highlighted the fact that head teachers need training in risk management if they are to extend risk-management expertise to their school management team and then to all members of staff. It may be appropriate for you to discuss risk-management issues at head teacher plenary session meetings. You may wish to consider the provision of awareness training to other teaching staff during their planned activity (management) time.

The following sections explore ways in which teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils, the school board, the local community and others can assist in reducing vandalism and improving security in schools.

The school management team

The capacity for you to delegate specific duties involved in managing school-property risks will primarily depend on the size of your school. In smaller primary schools, for example, responsibility will rest with the head teacher. In larger schools, there will be the opportunity for head teachers to delegate responsibility for managing property risks and security to a member of their management team. We found that measures to reduce property risks feature on the agenda of the management team in seven out of ten schools. In one third of schools surveyed, measures to reduce property risks are included in the school development plan.

Teachers and support staff

Teachers and support staff need to be made aware of the contribution they can make. What is needed is a culture which:

- ensures that sensible measures are taken to reduce property risks, for example, at the end of the school day, by closing off and locking areas that are at risk, and moving valuable items, where practicable, to a secure location;

- encourages all staff to monitor whether measures introduced to control access to the school are being used properly. School users need to be made aware of the implications of their actions; for example, custom and practice can lead to security doors being left open to facilitate access; and

- encourages all pupils and other school users to behave in a manner that respects school property.

The janitor

Your janitor has a key role in managing security in your school:

- responsibility as a main key-holder, in particular, for opening and locking up the school;

- being a first point of contact for the discovery of damage and near-miss incidents; and often the first point of contact for fire-fighters;

- setting in motion procedures for repair of school property;

- keeping a record of security/property-risk incidents;

- checking fire alarms and emergency lighting systems and checking for electrical defects; and

- looking after heating systems (helping to protect the school from frost damage).

It is important that you discuss property matters with your janitor on a regular basis. You will wish to ensure that your janitor understands your need to be informed of *all* problems and incidents. We found that, for one reason or another, some janitors spare their head teacher from a full history of problems and near misses.

To get the best out of janitors it is important that they receive up-to-date advice and training in undertaking their current duties more effectively.

School pupils

School pupils have an important role to play in helping their school to minimise property damage. Anecdotal evidence from a number of councils suggests that schools experiencing disciplinary problems also experience problems with internal vandalism. Pupils should be encouraged to behave responsibly and to respect their school. To increase pupils' sense of responsibility for looking after their school, a few schools have invited pupil representatives to participate in a school panel to discuss vandalism and school security issues.

The school board

Your school board (if you have one) will wish to be kept informed of vandalism and security issues facing the school. It can support the school in promoting positive publicity through school newsletters etc and in enlisting the support of parents and the local community.

The local community

Most property crime in schools occurs outwith school hours. The support of your local community can prove invaluable in keeping an eye on the school outwith school hours and during the school holidays, and reporting suspicious incidents to the local police.

Care should be taken when setting up 'school watch' schemes to ensure that persons assisting the police cannot be identified by offenders, potentially placing them at risk of victimisation. Before setting up such schemes, schools are encouraged to discuss their proposals with the local police.

Examples of ways in which schools have raised awareness of school-property crime issues to pupils, staff, parents and their local community are listed in Box G.

Box G: Methods used by schools to promote awareness of crime issues

Medium	Primary %	Secondary %	Used in your school?
School newsletter to parents	73	60	Yes/No
Talks to pupils on effects of youth vandalism	66	61	Yes/No
PTA/public meetings	38	24	Yes/No
Staff training on risk identification/prevention	26	29	Yes/No
Guest speakers at school assemblies	23	25	Yes/No
Pupil/teacher anti-vandalism group	20	21	Yes/No
Community action group	12	4	Yes/No

Source: Accounts Commission survey of head teachers.

Assistance from the police and fire services

At the behest of their school management team, almost nine out of ten schools surveyed by the Commission have developed a working relationship with their local police force. In many cases, an effective partnership has been formed to assist the school in the improvement of its protection from property crime. Fewer schools have developed a working relationship with their local fire brigade – about 50% of primary and 65% of secondary schools have done so.

Management information

Successful risk management requires good management information. Risk analysis helps schools to identify their main problem areas, which may then be considered for preventative action.

It is important, therefore, that full details of every incident are recorded and a profile of the school's experience is developed. Most councils rely on their property-maintenance finance systems to inform them of the cost of repairs resulting from school property crime. But, these records do not provide the complete picture. They do not include losses from theft, damage left unrepaired or near misses, nor do they record incidents caused by intruders entering the school or its grounds.

In consultation with your council, you should consider developing a systematic approach to the recording of property-risk incidents in your school. If it has not already done so, your council may wish to consider the introduction of a standard system for the recording and reporting of incidents, to be adopted by all schools. Box H lists the type of information which requires to be recorded to give a full picture of your school's property-risk experience.

Box H: Key property-risk management information

Information	Are these details recorded in your school?
• Date of incident	Yes/No
• Time of incident (if known)	Yes/No
• Type of incident (eg theft, intruder, malicious damage)	Yes/No
• Description of incident (eg broken window, graffiti)	Yes/No
• Where, in the school, the incident occurred	Yes/No
• Who reported the incident	Yes/No
• When the incident was reported	Yes/No
• Whether it was reported to the police	Yes/No
• Estimated cost of incident	Yes/No
• Actual cost of incident	Yes/No
• Particular circumstances which may have contributed to the incident.	Yes/No

By analysing incident records, a pattern may be revealed that will enable your school to identify the nature and extent of the main problem(s), for example:

- incidents might repeatedly occur at a certain time, or particular day(s) of the week;

- losses from theft might indicate a need to strengthen arrangements for secure storage in a particular area, for example, in a music room.

Information on the experience of risks enables you, in consultation with your council, to assess the options for tackling the specific problems. By knowing the nature and incidence of losses, you can begin to consider a programme of risk-reduction measures tailored to the risk profile of your school.

Inventories

A regularly updated inventory is essential to provide control over valuable items of school property and equipment. However, a balance requires to be struck between the time involved in maintaining a comprehensive record of all items of equipment and the benefits to be derived. In practice, this may mean restricting inventory control to high-value items. Many schools maintain inventories for all items costing more than £20, whilst others only record items over £100. Guidance on this matter should be available from your council.

Good practice check-list

Managing property risks in schools

	Yes	No
Is there a risk management culture in your school?		
Does everyone involved in the school understand their role in assisting the school to enjoy a safe and secure environment, in particular:		
• **the head teacher;**		
• **the school management team;**		
• **the school board;**		
• **teachers and helpers;**		
• **the janitor;**		
• **pupils;**		
• **the local community?**		
Do staff with responsibility for managing school-property risks receive adequate training?		
Has the school developed a good working relationship with the local police and fire services?		
Is the management information on your school's experience of property risks adequate to manage risk?		
Are up-to-date inventories of valuable school equipment maintained?		

3. Education initiatives

Most primary schools are in the process of implementing national guidelines for environmental studies as part of pupils' 5-14 development programme, including 'health and safety in the environment'. In many primary schools, pupils engage in studies which involve exercises about vandalism, fire safety and involvement with the school's community. Now more emphasis is being given to extending the anti-crime message from primary schools into secondary schools.

The police and fire services, in conjunction with their local councils, have developed specific support packages for school use (Box I).

Box I: Anti-crime initiatives developed for schools

- **School Watch.** This scheme's key objective is to encourage primary school pupils to enlist the support of the local community in the protection of 'their school'.

- **Project Minder.** A community involvement project which encourages the local community, through school-initiated activities, to become involved in the protection of their school.

- **Crucial Crew**. This innovative training package raises the awareness of Primary children to hazards in the modern environment and gives them guidance on safety procedures.

- **Police Box.** A joint initiative between Grampian Police and local councils. It is directed at the 7-14 education programme and covers issues including vandalism, law and order, bullying, safety and drug awareness. Available from Shell Education, PO Box 46, Newbury, Berkshire. Cost £40.

- **Junior Crime-prevention Panels**. Pupils are encouraged to assist the school management team in taking decisions affecting their school. Pupils develop an increased ownership of the problem.

The brigades have community fire officers who visit schools and offer technical advice on fire prevention and safety. These officers also give talks conveying the fire safety message, mainly to primary school pupils. Contributions from the police and fire services are most effective when programmed into the forward planning process. This requires good liaison between the school and the local police and fire services.

Many schools have developed a close liaison with their local police. By visiting schools, the police can:

- foster positive relationships between schools and the police service;
- develop young people's understanding and respect for the law, and the rights and duties of individuals; and
- emphasise the supportive role of the police.

Schools should be sensitive to the possibility of unease among some pupils towards a police presence in their school. Every effort should be made to reassure these pupils.

You should wish to be involved in discussions regarding the setting up of a police liaison scheme in your school. Nominated class teachers should be consulted when specific projects are being discussed. These teachers can then liaise with the visiting police officers so that matters such as the content and presentation of the educational materials, and the appropriate timing of the police visits can be discussed well in advance of the visits.

Box J provides a check-list drawn from 'Police and Schools – A Code of Practice', which was developed by police forces and education authorities in England and Wales. Its good practice pointers are equally relevant to schools in Scotland.

Box J: Police and Schools – A Code of Practice, England and Wales

The Code advises head teachers to:

- consider school policy on police liaison and the curriculum;

- make contact with the appropriate police community liaison officer to initiate discussions on the contribution the police might make to the educational programme of the school;

- consult with staff, where appropriate, to take responsibility for planning the content of the programme, evaluation and follow-up;

- encourage collaborative preparation of materials involving police and individual teachers;

- report on the programme annually to the school board;

- encourage the school board to report annually to parents describing links between the school, the community and the police;

- support community involvement through attendance by the police and fire services at school sports, recreational and social functions;

- promote educational visits by pupils, eg to courts and police stations.

Good practice check-list

Education initiatives

	Yes	No
Has your school adopted 'health and safety in the environment' as part of pupils' 5-14 development programme?		
Have you used the anti-crime initiatives developed by the police and fire services for schools?		
Is there a school policy on liaison with the police and fire services, involving:		
• **the setting up of police and fire liaison schemes in your school;**		
• **the programming of their contribution into the forward planning process?**		

4. Taking steps to reduce property risks in schools

Our study identified that two-thirds of head teachers in secondary schools and a half of head teachers in primary schools consider property risks to be a problem. This section of the handbook discusses the steps that schools can take to manage the three main risk areas:

- crime-related risks – including broken windows, graffiti, fire, and theft of school and personal property;

- access to schools; and

- health and safety.

Action to reduce these risks will involve the school in protecting its buildings and equipment which are at risk of vandalism, theft or fire-raising. It also involves the separate, but related, problem of selecting appropriate measures to protect the safety of the school population.

You have an important role to play in leading the school's commitment to tackling problems relating to vandalism and access control. You need to:

- identify and gain acceptance that there is a problem and encourage a belief that it is solvable;

- address the issues in conjunction with your local education authority;

- establish good liaison with the police, fire service, and other professional and technical advisers;

- involve all teaching and non-teaching staff in discussing the problem and its solution;

- together with your local council, arrange the selection and installation of well-proven measures.

For any expensive measure, all schools need to rely on the support of their council. Head teachers are generally able to implement low-cost measures which can have a significant impact on reducing risks.

You should work in conjunction with your local education department in considering measures to reduce property risks in your school.

Crime-related risks

Vandalism – mainly broken windows

Broken glass is a problem in many schools. It is a potential danger to pupils and staff and can cause considerable disruption to the effective learning and teaching environment. Glass repairs account for more than a half of the total cost to councils of repairing vandalism. The experience of most schools is that broken windows occur outwith normal school hours: in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays (periods when on-site supervision is minimal). Schools with poor surveillance from surrounding areas are at greater risk.

If your school regularly experiences broken windows and other acts of vandalism, physical measures may be required to prevent further costly damage and disruption to class work. Section 5 of the handbook provides information on the types and cost of property-protection measures most commonly adopted by schools.

Physical measures *do* help to reduce crime, especially outwith school hours, but only if they form an effective package of measures. Too often in the past, councils have adopted a reactive approach in response to specific instances of vandalism in schools. This strategy has often resulted in the property crime (eg broken windows) being displaced to other parts of the school. A package of well-proven measures should be chosen to reduce the main risks. In this way, the potential for displacement within the school will be minimised.

Theft

The experience of head teachers is that theft of school and personal property is a common problem in schools. Exhibit 2 illustrates the items most commonly stolen. The majority of these items are of high value and easily sold. Measures should be in place to safeguard attractive items from theft. It is also important to ensure that pupils and other school users are made aware of their responsibility for safeguarding their own property.

Exhibit 2: Items commonly stolen from schools

Stolen school property

- Video Recorders 25%
- Stationery 20%
- Televisions 12%
- Computers/Software 12%
- CD/Cassette Recorders 11%
- Video Cameras 6%
- Money 5%
- Other 9%

Stolen personal property

- Money 30%
- Clothing 19%
- Handbags 13%
- Purses/Wallets 10%
- Stationery 9%
- Food/Sweets 5%
- Jewellery 4%
- Other 10%
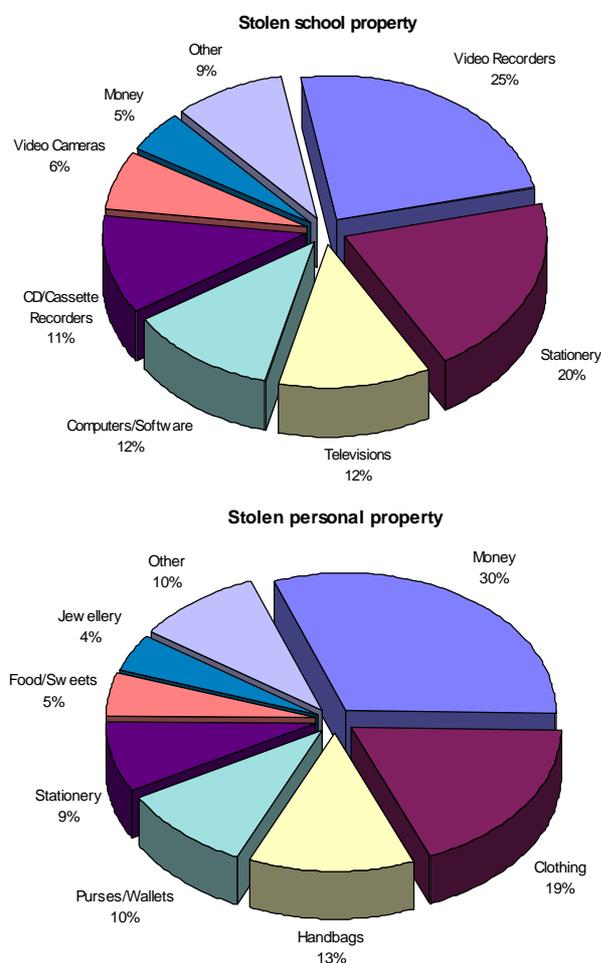
Source: Accounts Commission survey of head teachers.

There is a particular requirement for effective security arrangements in areas of the school that hold expensive items of portable equipment. For example, computer suites are particularly vulnerable to theft. The siting of computer rooms and the extent of alarm protection are important considerations in minimising theft. Box K illustrates some key points regarding the security of computer suites and other high-risk areas.

Box K: Are areas at high risk of thefts secure?

Issues	Yes	No
Is the computer suite located on an upper floor of the building?		
Do you have secure locks on rooms containing valuable items of equipment?		
Are high-risk areas protected by an alarm?		
Is all expensive equipment placed in secure areas at the end of each school day?		
Is valuable equipment removed from sight from outside the school?		

Graffiti

Graffiti is a problem in four out of ten schools. Toilets are a common target during the school day with external walls targeted outwith school hours.

Graffiti can be controlled if it is removed quickly. Otherwise, if left unchecked, graffiti presents an image of decay and can encourage further vandalism and damage.

Your janitor or cleaner should be asked to remove small areas of graffiti as soon as possible. However, more serious acts may require specialist removal by the council. Removal of graffiti is relatively inexpensive and has a beneficial effect on the environment of the school.

Fires

The vast majority of fires in schools are started deliberately. Fire-raising attacks on schools are more likely to happen outwith school hours. Experience shows that schools are at greatest risk of fire between the hours of 6 pm and 11 pm. There is also an increased risk of fires at weekends and during school holiday periods.

Although some large fires occur without warning, a number follow earlier incidents of break-ins, vandalism and theft. Schools with an increasing incidence of vandalism are more likely to suffer malicious fire damage.

Strathclyde Regional Council developed a methodology for identifying schools more likely to suffer malicious fire damage. Their risk-assessment check-list is reproduced in Box L. It highlights the increased risk weightings for specific risk experiences, for example:

- a bad crime profile in the local neighbourhood – 20 points;

- incidence of previous vandal attacks – 10 points;

- incidence of previous acts of fire-raising – 10 points.

You may find the check-list useful in assisting you to assess the degree of risk of malicious fires in your school. There is, however, no absolute threshold for confirming that your school is at serious risk of fire. A high score (say, over 60) would indicate that your school should be targeted for early preventative action.

There are a number of low- and no-cost initiatives that your school can take to reduce fire risks and improve fire safety (Box M).

Box L: Assessment of fire risk – check-list

Factors	Relative degree of risk High - Low	Maximum score	Score
Location and site:			
Crime profile of local neighbourhood	Bad/Good	20	
Type and extent of boundary fences and gates	Poor/Good	3	
Building located in an open site or overlooked by housing	Open/Overlooked	3	
Janitor occupies house on campus	No/Yes	2	
Provision of security patrol	No/Yes	2	
Building factors:			
Primary or secondary school	Sec./Prim.	1	
Size of school	Large/Small	1	
Large number of buildings and/or temporary buildings on campus	Yes/No	3	
Easy access to roof	Yes/No	5	
Recessed doorways	Yes/No	6	
Refuse bins secured away from building	No/Yes	3	
Many computers etc, stored in building	Yes/No	2	
Combustibility of construction	High/Low	5	
State of repair/external appearance of building	Bad/Good	3	
Premises subject to major building works	Yes/No	2	
Property risk experience:			
Incidence of previous vandal attacks	High/Low	10	
Incidence of previous acts of fire-raising	High/Low	10	
Incidence of internal vandalism	High/Low	5	
Existing building protection measures:			
Lack of roof access prevention	Yes/No	2	
Lack of steel shutters to doors	Yes/No	2	
Lack of window and rooflight guards/grilles	Yes/No	2	
Number of risk areas protected by an intruder alarm	None/All	4	
Lack of automatic fire alarm/smoke detector provision	Yes/No	2	
Lack of security lighting	Yes/No	2	
Maximum total score		**100**	

Source: Strathclyde Regional Council.

Box M: Measures to reduce fire risks in schools – check-list

Measures	Action	Are arrangements satisfactory in your school?
Repairs and maintenance	Priority should be given to maintaining security eg repairing doors, windows, locks, alarm systems and electrical faults.	Yes/No
Refuse containers	Refuse containers and skips should be located at a safe distance from combustible structures, doors and windows of the school building and should be chained up.	Yes/No
Fire inspections	The fire service should be consulted about periodic inspection of the school. It may be appropriate for you to designate a member of staff to take special interest in fire hazards and the necessary fire precautions.	Yes/No
Fire drills	Regular fire drills should be undertaken. Most education departments prescribe intervals between fire drills. A fire drill should take place soon after new pupils arrive at the start of the academic year.	Yes/No
Fire warning systems	Fire warning systems should be tested once a week and any fault rectified immediately. Tests, results and action taken should always be recorded and kept in a place of safety in the school and duplicated elsewhere.	Yes/No
Fire extinguishers	Fire extinguishers and other fire-fighting equipment should be inspected regularly and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions.	Yes/No
Training	Staff should familiarise themselves with the use of fire-fighting equipment provided.	Yes/No

Access to schools

The clear message from head teachers and their staff is that more needs to be done to prevent unauthorised or uncontrolled access to school grounds and buildings. Schools should provide a safe and secure environment for all pupils, staff and other school users.

Control of authorised access to the school and its grounds raises many practical issues. During the school day, the issues include:

- the potential conflict between health and safety (eg safe exit from the building) and property risks (eg preventing unauthorised access to the building);

- the receiving of helpers, parents, visitors, contractors and delivery vehicles;

- the changeovers of pupils between classes, at interval breaks, and, for some split-site schools, the transfer of pupils between school campuses;

- the existence of public right of way routes across the school grounds;

- the control of pupil movements outwith the main school building, for example, to temporary accommodation and to outside toilets;

- the level of pupil supervision in the playground.

Outwith the school day, other issues arise:

- community use of the school;

- in allowing children and youths access to school grounds when schools are closed, councils need to recognise that there may be an increased risk of vandalism and fire.

Security measures should be part of the anti-crime package to protect the school building and its contents and to provide a safe environment for the pupils, staff and members of the community. Both Lord Cullen and the DfEE Working Group on School Security endorsed the view that schools should not become fortresses and recognised that there is a need for balance. This view was supported by the government in its response to both these reports. Schools should be welcoming buildings which encourage involvement in the education process and do not deter the community from making use of school facilities.

The first step to implementing realistic access controls should be to designate space as either private access (eg teaching areas) or public access (eg community and other uses). You may be able to adopt relatively low-cost measures to control access during the school day, for example, by:

- reducing the number of entrances used;

- installing door-entry buzzers, but not allowing pupils to answer bell calls;

- installing clear signs directing visitors to the main door/school reception;

- establishing a visitors' book, issuing visitors' pass badges and ensuring badges are returned on exit;

- escorting visitors to their destination within the school;

- ensuring that everyone visiting the school who is not a pupil or a member of staff goes through the visitors' reception procedure;

- establishing procedures that staff and pupils should follow should they see anyone who is not a legitimate visitor.

Before installing any measures designed to improve school security, you should consult with your council to ensure that any measures taken are of an appropriate standard and do not compromise health and safety.

While we do not wish to add to the specific recommendations that each council will be making to their schools, we outline below the key principles for achieving effective control of access by visitors and contractors to your school.

Controlling security in schools

Each school is different in terms of design, the problems it faces and the support it receives from parents and the local community. Therefore, no centrally developed security policy is likely to be fully applicable to all establishments.

You should develop a security policy and action plan to suit the circumstances of your school (Box N). Once established, the security policy should be communicated widely to staff, pupils and other school users so they understand their role and the actions they should take should an incident occur.

Box N: Essential features of a school security policy and action plan

The security policy and action plan should incorporate the following features:
- a security survey of the building;
- a risk assessment;
- a training and communication strategy for teaching staff, non-teaching staff and pupils;
- procedures for access control;
- procedures for emergency incidents;
- policy review procedures;
- a prioritised action plan covering:
    - physical security improvements;
    - improvements in security procedures;
    - health and safety improvements;
    - curriculum/service-led improvements.

Any system for visitor access adopted by your school should be uncomplicated and integrated into the daily routine of the school. If use of the control systems does not become part of the school culture, staff and pupils may forget the reasoning underlying procedures for access control, and the controls will be compromised or only partly effective.

The access control system should be regularly reviewed. Security breaches should be recorded and addressed as part of the regular review.

Controlling contractors' access to schools

Having contractors working at a school can affect property risks and health and safety, in a number of ways. For example:

- building materials may be used by vandals as ammunition to smash windows;
- thieves may be attracted onto the site by the presence of contractors' equipment;
- scaffolding can provide ease of access to upper floors;
- opening the school for contractors during weekends or holidays may make unauthorised access to the school easier; and
- alarm systems may be disrupted.

Before contractors come into the school, the impact of their activities should be considered and action taken to avoid the potential risks. As a matter of routine, contractors should always check in at the school reception before starting work. For anything other than minor work, you should discuss the work schedule with the contractor's site agent in order to minimise disruption to the work of the school.

Health and safety

While your council is responsible for the health and safety of all staff and users of its schools[2], the operational duties relating to health and safety are delegated to you.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 confirm the need for education authorities to carry out risk assessments within their schools and to develop preventative strategies to minimise those risks. Lord Cullen's report specifically points to these requirements and strongly recommends this action.

We found that almost one in three schools has not been the subject of a health and safety audit in the last three years.

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[2] Specified in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Good practice check-list

Taking steps to reduce property risks in schools

	Yes	No

Risk assessment:

Has a risk assessment been undertaken in your school to identify the main risk areas?

Vandalism and theft:

Is your school adequately protected from malicious property damage?

Are all high-risk equipment and rooms protected by alarms?

Is there adequate provision of secure rooms or cabinets to store valuable items such as audio-visual equipment, computers, videos and musical instruments?

Are rooms containing valuable equipment kept locked when not in use?

Are staff and pupils reminded of the need to safeguard personal property?

Is graffiti removed quickly?

Fire:

Is there an adequate fire-detection system?

Are the fire alarms regularly maintained and tested?

Are rubbish containers or skips secured at a safe distance away from combustible structures, doors and windows of the building?

Controls over access:

Does the school have a school security policy and action plan?

Is there a clearly defined entrance with signs directing visitors to that entrance?

Have effective procedures been established to control access by visitors and contractors?

Is the access control system regularly reviewed?

5. Financing appropriate measures to control risks

This section provides information on the cost and types of measures which are designed to control property risks in schools. It is important that you understand the relative cost implications of taking preventative action. Not all risk-reduction measures require large sums to be invested. Updated procedures can significantly reduce risks at no cost. Some schools are able to fund minor adaptations from their devolved school budgets.

The financial case for protecting school buildings and equipment which are at risk of vandalism, fire-raising and theft needs to be distinguished from the arguments for taking measures to protect the school population. However, it should be recognised that certain measures taken to protect school property from crime, for example, CCTV, can also be designed to improve access controls.

In considering the strengthening of security, it is important to build on the measures already in place. Box O lists the types of measures in place in the schools covered by our survey.

Box O: Extent of protection measures adopted by schools

Measure	Primary %	Secondary %	In your school?
Fire alarm	100	100	Yes/No
Physical marking of equipment	90	94	Yes/No
Intruder alarm	70	90	Yes/No
Control over contractors' access	62	64	Yes/No
Security lights	53	63	Yes/No
Control over visitors' access	48	56	Yes/No
Glazing substitutes	34	47	Yes/No
Shutters	17	17	Yes/No
Smoke alarms	12	28	Yes/No
CCTV	10	17	Yes/No
Security fencing	9	14	Yes/No
Sprinkler system	3	1	Yes/No
Security guards	1	4	Yes/No

Source: Accounts Commission survey of head teachers.

The effectiveness of physical protection measures depends upon their proper use. This requires all users of the school to develop a commitment to supporting the measures that have been introduced. One way of enlisting their support is to consult users before introducing property-protection measures. Plans to introduce such measures should include details of how they are to be managed, for example, the staffing of visitors' entrances, and the monitoring of CCTV.

# Investing in measures to reduce property crime

No level of vandalism should be tolerated by schools. But a balance needs to be struck between the level of losses and the amount which can be justified on cost grounds to protect each school from property crime. If your school regularly experiences broken windows and other acts of vandalism, physical protection measures may be required to prevent further costly damage and disruption to class work.

In our report 'A Safer Place', we presented to councils the financial case for investing in measures to protect schools from property-related crime. It is recognised, however, that councils operate within limited financial resources. They will wish, as a matter of priority, to tackle the problem in schools worst affected by property crime.

Exhibits 3 and 4 indicate the level of vandalism experienced by the 1,600 schools covered by the Commission's fieldwork. For the 25% of schools with the highest losses as a result of malicious damage (over £2,850 a year for primary schools; over £9,350 in secondary schools), physical risk-reduction measures will probably be needed. This will require the financial assistance of their councils.

For schools in the lowest quartile (under £290 a year for primary schools and under £1,650 in secondary schools), it is unlikely that the council could justify investing significantly to reduce malicious damage on cost grounds alone. However, in these schools, investment may be justified for other reasons, eg to address serious school concerns about unauthorised access. We found that head teachers are generally able to fund low-cost measures from their devolved school budgets. In certain circumstances, a great deal can be achieved from modest investment.
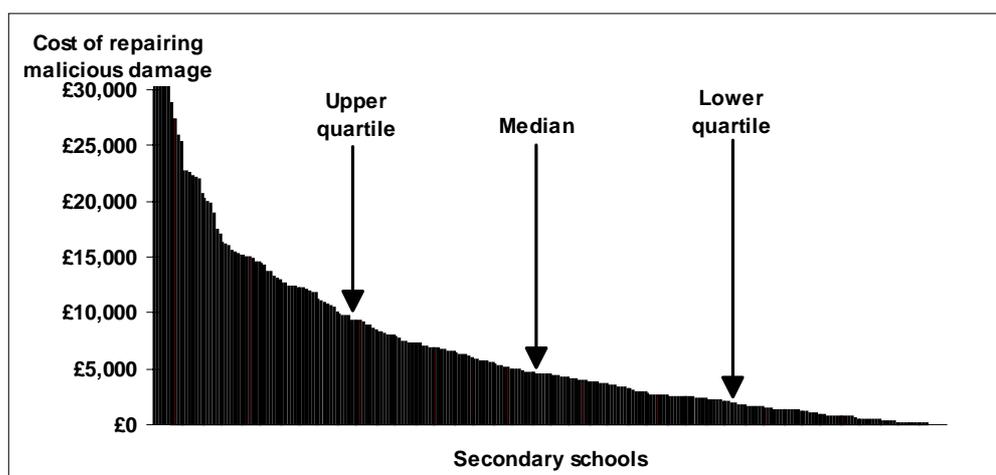
Exhibit 3: Cost of repairing malicious damage – primary schools
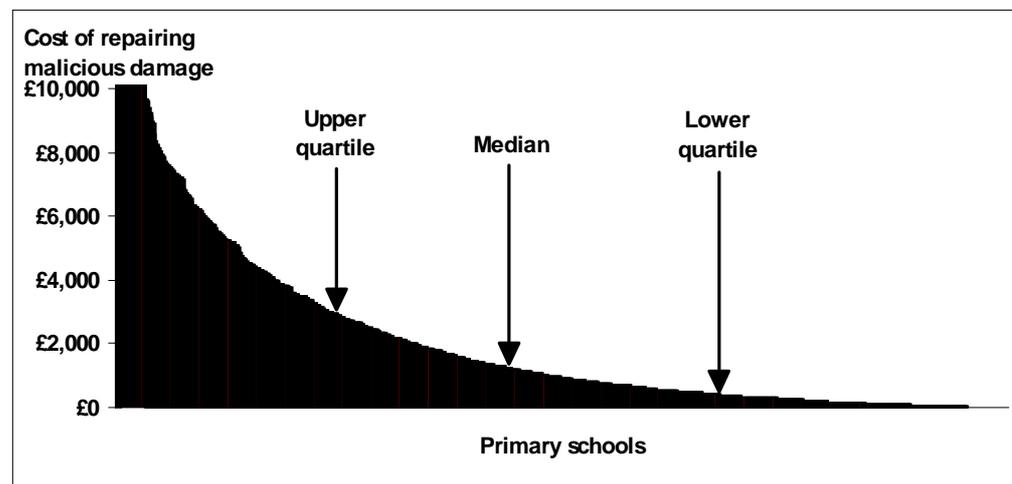
Note: The graph has been cut off at £10,000 a year for ease of presentation.

Source: Four former education authority property-maintenance databases.

Exhibit 4: Cost of repairing malicious damage – secondary schools

Note: The graph has been cut off at £30,000 a year for ease of presentation.

Source: Four former education authority property-maintenance databases.

Cost-benefit calculations are useful in determining the appropriate investment which can be justified, relative to the extent of the problem. But how much money should be spent? We found that investment in physical measures can generally pay for itself within three years. Stated simply, if your losses from property crime total, say, £10,000 a year, an investment up to £30,000 could be justified on cost grounds alone. Box P gives examples of payback periods for typical protection measures installed in schools.

Box P: Successful measures in schools

School type	Measures	Investment	Annual cost of vandalism		Annual savings	Payback period
			Before	After		
		£	£	£	£	years
Primary	Roof access prevention and security screens	2,000	5,500	200	5,300	0.4
Secondary	Window protection and fencing	12,000	9,000	1,500	7,500	1.6
Secondary	CCTV and fencing	45,000	25,200	800	24,400	1.8
Secondary	Improved intruder alarm and security lighting	4,000	3,200	1,300	1,900	2.1

Source: Strathclyde Regional Council.

Physical measures need to be carefully considered to determine the appropriate solution for your school. In Strathclyde, a quality control team was involved in monitoring and evaluating measures undertaken to reduce vandalism in 57 schools. The review involved meetings and interviews with council managers responsible for property-risk management in schools and with head teachers, teaching and janitorial staff, pupils and school board representatives. Their findings will be of interest to schools contemplating the installation of these measures (Box Q).

Box Q: Strathclyde's assessment of the effectiveness of specific security measures

Physical measures	Quality team's review findings
Security lighting and alarm systems	Felt to be highly effective measures by the majority of establishments. They require careful consideration in terms of siting and design, including the use of timing devices. Alarm systems are becoming more effective and reliable and, when combined with effective perimeter fencing and lighting, are proving to be successful.
Polycarbonate window panes	Found to be effective, with the reservation that they can be removed, spray-painted, or easily scored, leading to an unpleasant appearance. Significantly, schools which tried to improve the external appearance of their buildings claimed this to be a successful measure in the continuing battle to prevent vandalism.
Security fencing	The effectiveness of fencing has been more controversial. In some cases, it has helped the pupils feel more secure but, in general, has not been successful in keeping vandals out, mainly because of poor planning and design of the fencing installed. The effectiveness of fencing needs to be reviewed alongside council policy on whether to lock perimeter gates outwith school hours.
Roof access deterrents	Some success, but seen as a challenge to vandals. In many instances the problems have simply transferred to another part of the building.
Door and window grilles	While not enhancing the appearance of the building, grilles were nevertheless effective in preventing some serious incidents of vandalism. Some grilles have been used effectively to prevent access to particular areas of buildings where youths tend to congregate. However, careful regard of the fire regulations must be taken concerning the design of door grilles.
Closed circuit television (CCTV)	CCTV is expensive but its use can be justified where there are particular problems such as continual and expensive vandalism or serious health and safety problems. Care must be taken to ensure an appropriate system is chosen and to ensure that the ethos of the school is not affected.
Designing-out crime	This continues to be one of the effective measures and applies to both new and existing buildings. In the latter case, it has involved the removal of shielded doorways, provision of shutters at vulnerable access points, and the protection of low roof edges to reduce access.

Source: Strathclyde Regional Council.

Measures to improve school security

The objective of improving security in schools is to provide a safe and secure learning environment and to give assurance to the pupils, parents, staff and members of the community involved in the life of schools. Where considered appropriate, schools will wish to install practical measures designed to control access.

Following the report of the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) Working Group into School Security, and Lord Cullen's report, the government has introduced a specific grant of £25 million over three years to assist education authorities in Scotland to implement security improvements in schools. Appendix 2 provides details of the grant receivable by each council over the three financial years 1997/98 to 1999/2000.

Councils have flexibility regarding the range of measures that the grant should support. The measures should be identified following reviews of security, as recommended by both Lord Cullen and the DfEE Working Group. Training of teaching and support staff is considered to be an appropriate use of an element of the grant.

The conducting of a risk assessment, together with consultation with school users, will identify your key risk areas. The cost (both installation and ongoing maintenance and operational costs) will depend on the measure(s) selected as being the most appropriate for your school. Box R provides examples of typical costs for security measures installed in primary and secondary schools.

Box R: Illustrative costs of CCTV and related security measures

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CCTV

Primary school (280 pupils)
Thirteen colour cameras, some mounted on 8m poles with lighting. The system includes colour monitor, multiplexer and video recorder. **Cost £21,000.**

Primary school (400 pupils)
Purchase of a camera kit, mounted by the pupils' main rear entry door, and monitoring equipment in a designated place. **Cost £4,260.**

Primary school (400 pupils)
Camera kits mounted by the pupils' main rear entrances (two) and at the hall entrance. **Cost £9,795.**

Secondary school, three-storey building (950 pupils)
CCTV and security lighting. Eleven cameras attached to the existing building and 16 cameras fitted on new ground poles. The system includes a colour monitor, multiplexer and a video recorder. The system uses luminaires which are operated by a passive infra-red detector. Total cost **£48,000**.

External lighting (primary school)
Installation of luminaires and bollards, mounted on 4m poles, light-sensitive and able to be altered by school management to suit their requirements. **Cost £10,000.**

Security system (secondary school)
The system includes 97 sensors, door contacts, autodialler, keypad and two external sounder and flasher units. All ground-floor classrooms, corridors and stairwells are protected as well as other vulnerable areas. **Cost £8,500.**

Door entry system (primary school)
Entry controlled by means of a digital lock. The system is integrated into the building fire alarm, so that in the event of a fire, the lock is overridden to enable safe passage of the building occupants. **Cost £1,250.** In addition, replacement of existing ironmongery required. **Cost £550.**

Source: Convention of Scottish Local Authorities.

Appendix 1

Physical measures to reduce property risks

This appendix provides brief information on some of the physical measures that may be taken to control property risks. No security measure stands alone. The integration of security measures and their management are key requirements for successful crime prevention. The design of security systems is a complex matter, particularly where electronic systems such as CCTV, intruder alarms, and security lighting interact. Expert advice is therefore essential.

Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)

CCTV is expensive but its use may be justified where there are particular problems, for example, where there is a continuous, and costly, experience of broken windows.

Key issues when considering CCTV

System coverage and siting of cameras	Carefully consider the location and siting of the cameras. Blind spots should be identified. The number of cameras will be determined by the number of sites that need to be covered.
Desired image size	There needs to be a minimum image size for the purposes of identification. As the area covered by each camera increases, the size of image provided is reduced. The required image size influences the siting and number of cameras.
Type of cameras	Fixed or pan, tilt and zoom. Fixed cameras 'see' any action in a chosen area. A zoom facility offers the benefit of a single camera covering a wider area, but needs constant monitoring.
Lighting	Lighting is important if the cameras are to be effective at night. Black and white, infra-red or low-light cameras give a sharper image under limited-light conditions. Colour cameras are better for identification purposes but require appropriate additional lighting.
Local environment	The privacy of neighbouring houses should be considered.
Monitoring arrangements	The monitoring arrangements to be adopted will have a considerable bearing on the effectiveness and running costs of the system. Options available include: • 24-hour monitoring from control station; • Intermittent monitoring with videotaping; and • Videotaping only – time-lapse video recorders.
Incident alert	Staff need to be informed about what they should do in the event of an incident.
System expandability	Can the system be expanded, for example, to cover additional school building development?

Strathclyde Regional Council's review of several CCTV installations confirmed that many benefits were obtained, but it also identified weaknesses to be addressed.

Installation of CCTV had dramatically reduced previous security and vandalism problems and been an effective tool for supervising pupil behaviour. Problems identified included the poor positioning of the cameras and poor picture quality which did not allow the system to be used for detection purposes. These shortcomings could be overcome with improved, but relatively more expensive, CCTV systems.

Review of CCTV in Strathclyde

Benefits	Weaknesses
• Very effective deterrent.	• Location allows pupils to alter the angle of the cameras.
• Allows supervision of internal areas and reduces internal vandalism.	• Existence of blind spots.
• Very effective at monitoring playground behaviour.	• Lack of zoom facility.
• Increases feeling of security.	• Lack of picture clarity.
• Cuts playground bullying and fights.	• Absence of training in its use.
• Improved protection against intruders.	• Additional physical measures required eg fencing.

Intruder alarms

It is important that alarm systems are designed to meet the security needs of the school. There are many different types of alarm systems, ranging from the basic to the more sophisticated systems, for example:

- alarms linked to magnetic locks on doors;
- infra-red, heat-detection systems; and
- sonic and microwave systems.

Many schools experience a problem with false/faulty intruder alarms. The key factors that cause false/faulty alarms include:

- system faults. Tayside Police identified that system failures accounted for 70% of false activations;
- lack of staff training in the use of alarms;
- poor quality of alarm installed; and
- problems with alarm installation and systems design.

Councils should monitor intruder alarm activations and ensure that measures are taken to reduce false alarm calls.

Property marking

All expensive portable equipment should be marked as belonging to the school. Arrangements should be in place to ensure that all new equipment is marked on arrival. Our head teacher survey showed that 90% of primary schools and 94% of secondary schools use property marking.

Property marking is a relatively low-cost measure. It can have important deterrent effects and aids the identification of recovered stolen property.

There are various methods of marking property. Ultra violet (UV) light marking is easy to apply, but is also relatively easy to detect and remove. It may deteriorate over time and may need to be renewed. Engraving is more difficult to apply but is more difficult to remove.

Notices saying that all property is marked should be prominently displayed.

Alarm bug

The alarm bug can be attached to electrical items such as computers and videos. An alarm is activated when the protected item is disconnected from the mains power supply. The unit is sensitive to any movement and when activated emits a piercing sound for a long time. It can be deactivated by using a security key.

Glass substitutes (mainly polycarbonate material)

Polycarbonate material is expensive. However, a number of schools have found it to be effective, for example, it has the highest resistance to breakage on impact. It can have several disadvantages – it can be spray-painted, sprung out of its frame, or easily scored leading to an unpleasant appearance. It is vulnerable in a serious fire situation.

Alternatively, it may be possible to reduce the number and size of windows, or replace glass in the lower parts of doors with wooden panels.

Shutters and guards

Glazed doors and windows may be protected from attack by installing shutters or guards. Care should to be taken to ensure that their installation does not adversely affect the image of the school building.

Security lighting

Security lighting which deters intruders can be a cost-effective protection measure. For maximum effect, it should be used in conjunction with other security measures, for example, CCTV and intruder alarms.

Security lighting may attract youngsters wishing to play football, leading to an increased incidence of broken windows. In all cases, care must be taken to avoid a nuisance to neighbours or a glare hazard to the drivers of passing vehicles. Security lighting is less effective in schools which are not overlooked by houses or passers-by.

White lamps are preferable to low-pressure sodium lamps because they aid the recognition of intruders. Low-energy and vandal-resistant lighting may be more expensive to install but the costs may be offset by significant savings in maintenance and revenue costs.

Lighting should be mounted in positions that are normally inaccessible in order to limit possible damage from attack. Electricity supply to the lighting should also be protected from attack; the installation is worthless if cables can easily be cut.

Access for maintenance purposes is needed. The security lighting installation will need to be tested and inspected at regular intervals. The installation should be regularly checked for signs of damage or lamp failure.

Security fencing

If security fencing is to be installed it must present a substantial obstacle and be able to withstand a determined attack. It may require planning permission. To be effective, it must be continuous and gates must offer the same protection as the fence.

A long perimeter fence is expensive. Where schools have a long perimeter it will be more cost-effective to enclose an inner area or close off recesses. Fencing should be regularly inspected for damage.

Landscaping

Landscaping and planting can be used to improve security. Sensitive and skilled landscape design can make a significant contribution to the creation of a safe and attractive school environment, at low cost. Climbing plants may also help to prevent graffiti.

Trees and shrubs should not be planted in locations which compromise school security. Also, if badly maintained, over-grown shrubbery will provide cover for intruder activity.

Planting should be kept away from entrances and windows to reduce opportunities for concealment and to reduce the risk of trees being used as a means of access. Thorny hedgerows (such as cotoneaster, berberis holly, hawthorn or gorse) planted along the school perimeter can be an alternative to, or they can supplement security fencing. As a rule, plants should not exceed one metre in height where they border footpaths.

Appendix 2

Specific grant to councils to improve security in schools

Education authority	Eligible for grant of (£,000)		
	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000
Aberdeen, City of	326	326	163
Aberdeenshire	535	535	267
Angus	219	219	110
Argyll & Bute	239	239	119
Clackmannanshire	95	95	47
Dumfries & Galloway	378	378	189
Dundee City	257	257	129
East Ayrshire	256	256	128
East Dunbartonshire	202	202	101
East Lothian	160	160	80
East Renfrewshire	148	148	74
Edinburgh, City of	576	576	288
Falkirk	253	253	127
Fife	685	685	342
Glasgow City	1117	1117	558
Highland	610	610	305
Inverclyde	163	163	82
Midlothian	164	164	82
Moray	190	190	95
North Ayrshire	247	247	123
North Lanarkshire	620	620	310
Orkney Islands	69	69	35
Perth & Kinross	262	262	131
Renfrewshire	307	307	154
Scottish Borders	238	238	119
Shetland	94	94	47
South Ayrshire	206	206	103
South Lanarkshire	561	561	281
Stirling	178	178	89
West Dunbartonshire	201	201	100
West Lothian	321	321	160
Western Isles	123	123	62
Scotland	**10,000**	**10,000**	**5,000**

Source: The Scottish Office, Education and Industry Department, Circular No 2/97.

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Property-risk management check-list

Introduction

The following check-list can be used to assist you to review the arrangements for managing property risks in your school. It will help you to identify areas where management action is required.

Completion of the check-list should not be done as a substitute for risk assessment in your school. The conducting of risk assessments is a separate but integral feature of risk management. For advice on conducting and evaluating risks in your school, please refer to the DfEE booklet 'Improving Security in Schools'.

If the answer to any of the following questions is 'No' remedial action should be considered.

Management issues

Risk-management culture

Does everyone involved in your school understand their role in assisting the school to enjoy a safe and secure environment?	**Yes/No**
Are property damage and graffiti quickly made good to discourage further vandalism?	**Yes/No**
Are all acts of property crime reported to the police immediately on discovery?	**Yes/No**

Risk assessment

Has a property-risk assessment survey been undertaken in your school?	**Yes/No**
Has an evaluation of the identified risks been undertaken?	**Yes/No**
Did the results of the risk assessment identify the need for action?	**Yes/No**
Has a timescale been set for action to be taken?	**Yes/No**

Safety strategy and action plan

Does your school have a safety strategy and action plan?	**Yes/No**
Have the procedures contained in these documents (for example, visitor access arrangements) been communicated to all staff, pupils and their parents?	**Yes/No**

Management information

Are details of the nature, time, and place of each incident recorded?	**Yes/No**
Are existing council information systems capable of informing you of the total cost of vandalism, break-ins, theft and fire-raising?	**Yes/No**
Is information on the pattern of property crime (eg times of day, days of week, and within or outwith term) available?	**Yes/No**
Is an up-to-date inventory of school property maintained?	**Yes/No**
Is an up-to-date inventory of all hazardous materials held in the school maintained?	**Yes/No**

Liaison with your council and other bodies

Does your school consult and work closely with your local council in managing property risks in your school?	**Yes/No**
Does your school have a working relationship with your local fire brigade and police force?	**Yes/No**
Are you working with other head teachers in your neighbouring area to improve property-risk management in schools, through sharing information and experience?	**Yes/No**

Training

Do staff with responsibility for managing school-property risks receive adequate training?	**Yes/No**
Have all staff been given a copy of the school's safety strategy and action plan and been trained in its implementation?	**Yes/No**
Have all staff and pupils been instructed on how to react if an intruder or criminal act is detected?	**Yes/No**

Contingency planning

Do you have up-to-date contingency plans for implementation in the event of a major incident, eg flood or fire?	**Yes/No**
Are the roles of key individuals assigned in the contingency plan?	**Yes/No**
Do the local police hold a list of key-holders who may be contacted in the event of an emergency?	**Yes/No**
Are there effective back-up procedures for critical information stored on computer? (Are duplicate records and back-up copies of computer files kept in an off-site location?)	**Yes/No**

School security

General

Do you consider that your school is at low risk from property crime?	**Yes/No**
Are the school buildings in a good state of repair?	**Yes/No**
Are the boundaries of the school clearly defined, eg is there a perimeter fence?	**Yes/No**
Has consideration been given to designing out crime, for example, by installing shutters across alcoves or recessed doorways?	**Yes/No**
Is it difficult to gain access to the roof?	**Yes/No**
Are windows and doors kept closed in unoccupied parts of the building?	**Yes/No**
Are pupils restricted from accessing car parking areas?	**Yes/No**
Does the school's security arrangements extend to protecting its car parks?	**Yes/No**
Are tools and ladders locked away?	**Yes/No**

Access controls

Are there satisfactory arrangements in place for controlling access by visitors?	**Yes/No**
Are all visitors required to report to reception on arrival?	**Yes/No**
Are visitors directed by clear signposting to use the main door?	**Yes/No**

Access controls (continued)

Is the arrival and departure of visitors always monitored?	**Yes/No**
Are visitors asked to sign in and out?	**Yes/No**
Are visitors escorted to their destination?	**Yes/No**
Do staff and pupils know what to do if they see a stranger in the building?	**Yes/No**

Protecting the school (outwith hours)

Is your school adequately protected from school property crime?	**Yes/No**
During community use, is access denied to other areas of the school building?	**Yes/No**
Are all important buildings and rooms containing valuable equipment included in the coverage of the alarm system?	**Yes/No**
Are measures in place to minimise the number of false intruder and fire alarms, eg clear procedures for the setting and maintenance of alarms?	**Yes/No**
Is a key-holder readily accessible in the event of an emergency?	**Yes/No**

Fire

Outside the building

Are rubbish containers and skips secured at a safe distance from combustible structures, doors and windows of the building?	**Yes/No**
Is space under raised huts protected against accumulation of litter?	**Yes/No**
Are door letter-boxes protected on the inside by sheet metal boxes?	**Yes/No**
Are fuel tanks kept in secure enclosures with locked valves?	**Yes/No**

Inside the building

Is there an adequate fire-detection system?	**Yes/No**
Do all staff know what action to take when the alarm sounds?	**Yes/No**
Are arrangements in place to ensure that the fire alarm system is quickly reset after operation?	**Yes/No**
Is fire-fighting equipment checked regularly and the alarm system properly maintained and tested?	**Yes/No**
Are electrical items inspected regularly?	**Yes/No**
Are chemicals (including gases) and highly flammable materials kept locked away in properly designed, secure stores? Are they kept in reasonable quantities only?	**Yes/No**
Are gas supplies to laboratories switched off when the school is unoccupied?	**Yes/No**
Are there arrangements to remove waste paper and other combustible materials, to minimise the risk of fire?	**Yes/No**
At the end of each day, are all doors closed to restrict the spread of fire?	**Yes/No**
At the end of term, are electrical appliances and equipment (including those in craft rooms, workshops, kitchens and offices) disconnected from the mains supply?	**Yes/No**

Theft

School and personal property

Are there secure rooms or cabinets for storing valuable portable items such as audio-visual equipment, computers, videos and musical instruments?	**Yes/No**
Are rooms containing expensive equipment kept locked when not in use?	**Yes/No**
Are stores kept locked at all times?	**Yes/No**
Is action taken on security before new equipment is installed?	**Yes/No**
Are advance arrangements made for delivered goods to be put into store without delay?	**Yes/No**
Does the school have facilities for securing cash and other valuables?	**Yes/No**
Are staff and pupils advised of the need to safeguard their personal property?	**Yes/No**

Theft

Cash

Are large amounts of cash always removed from the school premises and banked overnight?	**Yes/No**
At the end of each day, is cash removed from all vending machines?	**Yes/No**
Is there a notice beside each machine making clear that there is no money left in the machine overnight?	**Yes/No**
Are tills in cafeterias and offices emptied and left open overnight?	**Yes/No**
Is money collected for school meals, class photographs, school trips etc held in the school safe until banked the same day?	**Yes/No**
Do staff vary the time and route taken to the bank?	**Yes/No**

Keys and locking up

Are all entrance doors locked, and windows and skylights secured, when the premises are not in use?	**Yes/No**
Is there a system to control the issue and use of keys?	**Yes/No**
Is there an established procedure for locking up the school?	**Yes/No**
Are rooms such as toilets and cloakrooms checked to ensure that no one remains in the building when it is locked up?	**Yes/No**
Are authorised key-holders, including community users, briefed on securing the premises when they leave?	**Yes/No**
Is there a system for ensuring that all security fitments, eg door locks and window catches, continue to operate effectively?	**Yes/No**

Notes

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