

Safe and tight: Lockdown in schools

A guide to securing your school in response to insider or external threats



The changing nature of the security risk to schools

The prospect of conflict is something schools have always had to contend with. Minor disagreements between pupils, or between teaching staff and students, can escalate and discipline can break down. Personality clashes; hormonal changes; emotional rivalries and bullying are all familiar factors which influence behaviour that may pose a threat to safety in schools.

However, the 1996 Dunblane incident put a new perspective on things, changing forever our view of the safety of UK educational sites. Today, in trying to defend against the security risks in schools, a good approach is to consider the internal and external threat environment.

Insider security threats – the risk from within the school

In two years to March 2017, Press Association analysis of data from 32 of the 43 police forces in England and Wales showed 2,579 weapons were seized from 25,850 schools. This included blunt force, sharp-edge and projectile firing weapons.

A fifth of the overall total related to knives and swords. At least 26 guns, including air guns and an imitation firearm were seized and other weapons included axes, a police baton, a rolling pin, a can of beer and a 15in (38cm) metal rod.

At least 47 children below the age of 10 were found with weapons. This included three five-year-olds; one was caught with a knife; another was found with a 'missile', typically a brick or a rock. While an average discovery rate of one weapon in 10% of schools over two years is statistically low and suggests such behaviour is rare, it is however, significant and alarming.

Gang-culture is increasingly pervasive and this goes hand in hand with the increased availability of drugs and their use by some teenagers. Psycho-active substances such as marijuana are linked with mental illness, and this is well documented in the case of higher potency forms, such as 'skunk'.

This is not restricted to big cities. In structured activity termed 'county lines', the UK's inner city drugs gangs are systematically spreading their trade across the UK to smaller towns and rural and coastal communities, increasing drug dependency, exploiting addiction and recruiting foot soldiers, as young as 8.

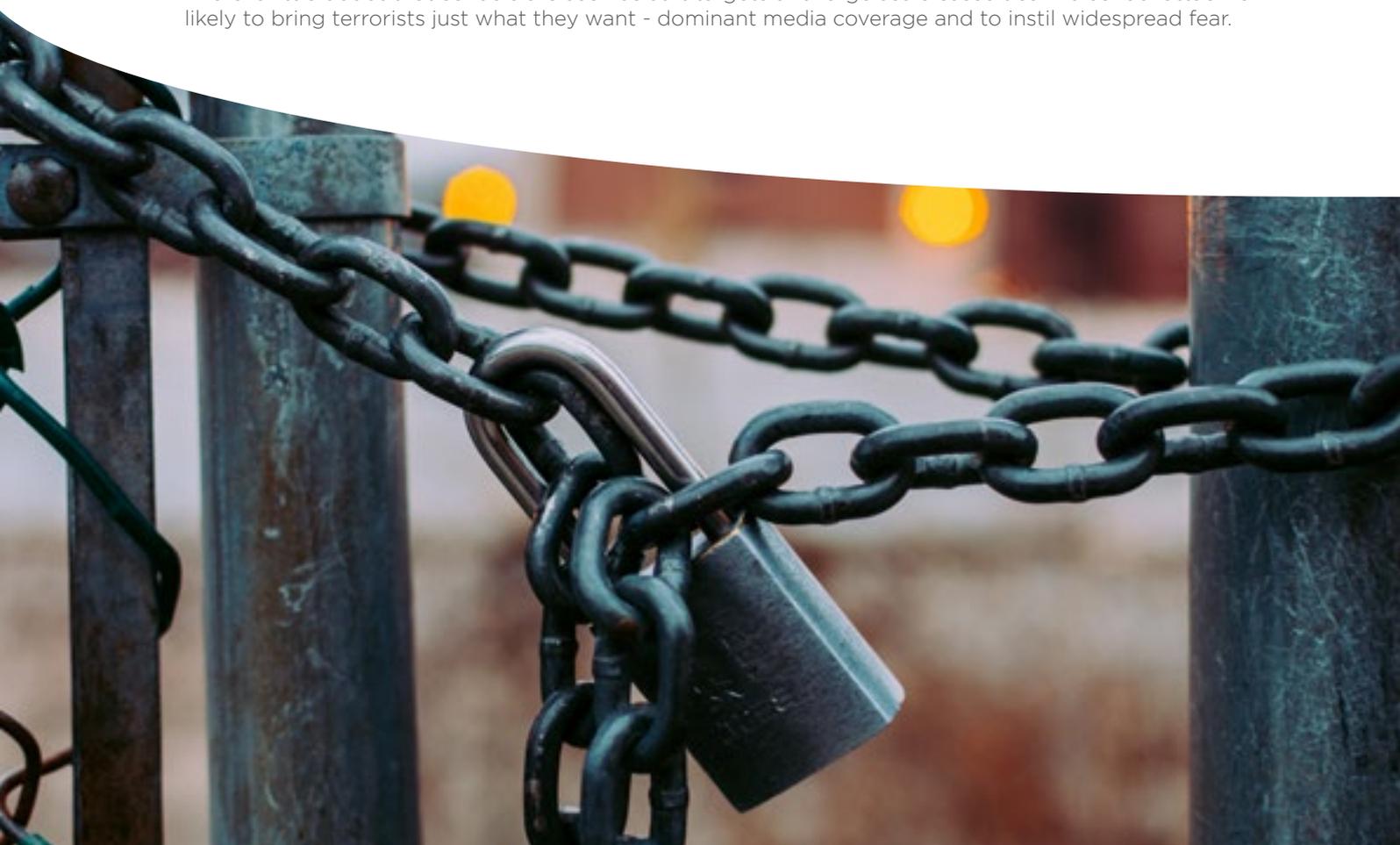
In short, many people of school age are caught up or on the edge of the gang scene. Drugs, guns, and the normalisation of violence is breeding the conditions for serious security incidents and the potential for schools to face serious insider threats.



External security risks - threats originating outside school

Sources of threat to pupils and students as well as staff and visitors may also originate from outside the school.

- Disaffected parents or relatives may pose a risk if pupils are in conflict with each other, or students with staff.
- Family problems may cause conflict between parents or guardians and custody issues may ensue, creating the potential for threat.
- The authorities have lost track of many registered sex offenders and this makes them an unpredictable source of risk that cannot be discounted.
- The potential for terrorist attack is strong and the threat level in the UK is rated as 'severe', the fourth highest on the five tier scale.
 - Whether perpetrated by 'lone wolves', such as in the 2017 attacks on Westminster Bridge and parliament; the Parsons Green tube train and the Manchester Arena bombings; or the organised gang attack in the London Bridge area, all show the government's assessment is appropriate.
 - Much of the current threat revolves around the expectation for outrages inspired by Islamic fundamentalism. However, while the UK's leading role in the world and its foreign policy decisions are likely to bring Britain into conflict with nation states or subversive, religious or activist groups across the world. Over the long term it is impossible to predict with any certainty what circumstances may provoke outrages by others.
 - There is little doubt that schools are seen as soft targets and large scale casualties in a school attack is likely to bring terrorists just what they want - dominant media coverage and to instil widespread fear.



A typical dynamic lockdown procedure

Faced with such an active threat potential each school needs to ensure it has clear-cut procedures to lockdown and prevent access or exit from the site, building or a part of the site or building.

The underlying theory behind locking down a site is to prevent people moving into danger areas and preventing or frustrating those attempting to access a site or building.

A typical procedure for achieving an effective full or partial lockdown:

- From when a staff member first becomes aware of a threat situation there is a need to distribute information quickly and accurately.
- The Executive Lockdown Leader (ELL), typically the most senior member of staff on the site should be made fully aware and given all the information relating to the situation, including intruder numbers, weapons, descriptions and so on.
 - The ELL initiates the alarm and briefs Lockdown Leaders (LL) in the nominated control room.
 - Notify external agencies such as police and the LA
- LL secure the site, liaise and co-ordinate through control room; any given threat situation is likely to be dynamic; essentially, the lockdown process might need to be modified on-the-fly.
 - Locate missing children
 - In a secure area, staff take a register and co-ordinate through the control room
- Give all clear once situation is confirmed as resolved
- Debrief, communicate with all stakeholders
- Review for learning outcomes to improve the procedure

To enable the lockdown to be put into action swiftly and effectively, it is essential to prepare by doing the following:

- Promote and educate around the STAY SAFE principles - everyone should become familiar with RUN HIDE TELL
- Put in place systems to communicate to everyone during lockdown
- Make sure signage is well thought out, clearly visible and unambiguous
- Train your staff and include the use of any physical security measures
- Rehearse staff, pupils and students with drills

Integrating physical security elements to facilitate lockdown

Many school sites use electronic security systems to meet obligations for the duty of care and to deliver effective safeguarding.

Pedestrian access to the site and buildings, and vehicular movements on and off the site are high frequency security 'events' that may need to be monitored and controlled. There are a number of security elements which are commonly integrated to permit and restrict access.

CCTV

Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) has become so ubiquitous because quite simply, it is one of the most effective means of safeguarding property and people. It not only helps deter undesirable behaviour and criminal activity, it is also able to detect misbehaviour and identify the individuals involved.

Video surveillance technologies now include HD CCTV, Wireless CCTV and ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition). ANPR, face recognition and image enhancement technology, makes CCTV an indispensable tool for safeguarding schools and creating a more secure environment for learning.

Access Control

Electronic access control offers significant advantages when compared to key-based systems.

Access control systems make managing door entry into as well as controlling access within buildings easy. Access control systems provide the ability to operate pedestrian and vehicle entrances and exits by any of the following:

- Entering a code into a keypad
- Presenting a key fob or token
- Swiping a card
- Biometric fingerprint readers

Electric Automated Sliding Gates and Barriers

Automated sliding gates and barriers may be operated by Access Control methods, such as key fobs, swipe card systems and visitor audio and / or video intercoms. After opening, gates and barriers automatically close after a vehicle has passed through. 'Free exit' and fully controlled 'permission required' exit are also options.

Automatic rising bollards revolving doors and turnstiles also offer alternative options for controlling access on and off the site and may be under the control of the integrated security system, automated, or manually controlled by an appropriate method.

It should be noted that physical barriers such as gates may be large, heavy pieces of machinery. They have the potential to cause injury and the safety and compliance requirements need to be addressed.

Public Address systems

Public Address (PA) systems enable effective communication with students, school staff and visitors. They are ideal for disseminating verbal information over large-scale educational centres. Where appropriate, they can also be used for sports days, music and paging.

Integrated into a security solution, PA systems are used to support fire safety and burglar alarm activations. Using a PA system for announcements that clearly communicate the need for immediate action strongly supports the communication strategy that is pivotal to an effective lockdown.

Given the current situation where police forces are overstretched, alternative response to alarm activation may be sought from accredited private security companies offering key holding and alarm response solutions.

Lockdown with integrated security

Good planning, well thought through routes for moving from one area to another, and integrated security which supports effective communication, all reduce the potential for panic during a lockdown situation.

Whenever a threat arises, the elements of integrated security are ready to provide centralised monitoring and enable control of the situation.

- **Detection of a security threat**
 - Panic alarms may be activated to signal an incident has occurred or is in progress
 - CCTV may identify a security event such as forced entry or physical assault
- **Response to a security threat**
 - Access control enables all doors, gates and barriers to be locked or unlocked as required
 - PA systems deliver information about the event and where to go to reach safety
 - **Lockdown** - lock all doors, gates and barriers as appropriate in response to the threat
 - **Evacuation** - unlock all doors, gates and barriers and direct students, staff and visitors using PA system
 - **Invacuation** - unlock and lock as appropriate, and direct students, staff and visitors using PA system



SUMMARY

Help to get the right school lockdown security solution from iC2

iC2 is a leading mid-market security systems provider and was established in 2001. The business is owned and managed by a team with a collective experience of over 100 years in the electronic security business. iC2 holds CCTV and security accreditations with NSI and BSI.

Lockdown is an important event for which schools need to be prepared. A good integrated security system enables schools to respond rapidly, effectively and in a structured and organised manner. This minimises risk, and the potential for distress and panic while allowing an appropriate response to a threat situation.

We speak to people like you every day that require guidance on security in schools. We identify your needs and help you make important decisions about making your educational environment safer and more secure.

iC2 offers a complete physical security solution tailored to the needs of schools:

- Works extensively with school security, buildings and facilities management
- Identifies gaps in existing security arrangements
- Consults and offers impartial advice on all elements of CCTV and integrated security
- Specifies, supplies, installs, operates, monitors and fully supports all solutions
- Only provides high quality and appropriate CCTV and integrated security solutions
- Solutions meet all appropriate compliance requirements or follow guidelines
- Our specialist schools' ICT team is able to consult on network and digital security

A prestigious client list including luxury international boutique brands, top flight sporting venues, retail developments and leading educational and healthcare organisations demonstrates how solutions are deployed to meet a variety of requirements.

From deterring theft of high value luxury goods, to sports fan and public safety and child protection, solutions are deployed to meet a range of legitimate purposes for which they are appropriate and fit for purpose.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Recognising the terrorist threat

GOV.UK website

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recognising-the-terrorist-threat/recognising-the-terrorist-threat#stay-safe--terrorist-firearms-and-weapons-attacks>

Advice to leaders of schools and other Educational Establishments for Reviewing Protective Security National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO)

<http://www.collegedevelopmentnetwork.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/NaCTSO-Guidance-Note-1a-Police-Scotland-amended-Advice-to-Education.pdf>

Hold fire: Schools security calculator: Is your school high, medium or low risk?

iC2 CCTV and Security Specialists (UK) Ltd e

<http://www.ic2cctv.com/white-papers/schools-security-calculator-school-high-medium-low-risk/>

5 ways to get locked up with electric gates

iC2 CCTV and Security Specialists (UK) Ltd

www.ic2cctv.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/iC2-5-ways-locked-guide.pdf



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About Us

Keeping you safe and secure at all times

iC2 provide you with innovative solutions tailored to you and your sector. We are London-based with a national team of surveyors and engineers that work closely with our clients throughout the UK and internationally.

Our unique consultative approach allows us to tailor bespoke systems to your individual requirements, ensuring that your operational requirements are met.

We appreciate the need to demonstrate the best value to you every time and as a technology-led company, you can expect our cutting-edge and ground-breaking approach to serve your needs for many years to come.

Please feel free to contact us to discuss any requirements you may have. We are happy to give you impartial advice, should you have any queries.

