

Access Control - The First Line of Defense

“A critical aspect of an effective response to any threat to your school is the ability to control entry. Once a threat has entered a school, it becomes much more difficult to deal with that threat.”

— Dennis Ryan, DoDDS/HDSO Security Officer

Access control includes procedures and physical security measures designed to limit access to those persons with a legitimate purpose for visiting the school. DoDEA Regulation 4700.2 “Internal Physical Security,” Enclosure 4, describes procedures for visitor and access control. The regulation states: “A positive personnel identification and control system must be established and maintained in order to prevent unauthorized entry to offices or schools” (Section E4.1). The following measures can strengthen access control:

- ▶ Make entry possible only through the main entrance. Limit entry during the school day.
- ▶ Restrict the number of entrances to the grounds and the school. Exterior doors that are open for convenience should be locked to prevent entry from the outside.
- ▶ Post signs directing visitors to the main entrance. These signs steer people unfamiliar with the school to the school office and provide staff a legitimate reason to challenge visitors who are not wearing a visitors’ badge.
- ▶ Provide security awareness briefings for staff. Encourage staff to greet visitors who are not wearing a badge or who are unescorted with an assertive “May I help you?”
- ▶ Post signs warning that unauthorized trespassers are subject to arrest and vehicles are subject to search.
- ▶ Require vehicle parking stickers or decals. Warn visitors that vehicles found on the school grounds are subject to being ticketed or towed.
- ▶ Station greeters or monitors at all open entrances to the school.
- ▶ Use school dress code policies to isolate and identify outsiders.
- ▶ Fence the perimeter of the school. Fencing will discourage casual intruders and better define school property boundaries and control zones for weapons and drug-free areas.



Administrators in U.S. public schools have found that if they explain security procedures to parents through all of the communication channels available to them, the parents who initially resist sign-in procedures or locked doors, wind up becoming the strongest advocates. Keep door locks, signs, fences and other physical security equipment in good repair to ensure all of your security measures work as expected. For help expediting security related repairs contact your facilities manager or your Area/District Safety and Security Officer. ■