

GETTING SCHOOL SECURITY RIGHT

CHOOSING THE PERFECT SUPPLIER



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INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, employers have a duty of care to all members of staff. For schools, this extends to pupils and other users of the school facilities. An important part of this obligation is to ensure the school environment is safe and secure.

This means the school must provide adequate Fire Protection and Physical Security that meets the relevant legislation, like the Fire Security Order and the Health and Safety at Work Act.

Every school manager needs to pay heed to the responsible person's risk assessment and consider the merits of security systems that include features like:

- Burglar alarms
- Access Control
- Automatic gates and bollards
- Fire protection
- Emergency lighting

With the advent of Academies, much of the safeguarding responsibility has passed from the Local Authority to the school itself.

Now, more than ever school managers must be vigilant in keeping the building and grounds secure. This eBook explains how well-meant but bad decisions can cause this vigilance to slip. There are tips on how school managers can avoid problems that could result in **prosecution, fines and Ofsted difficulties.**



Every school finance manager should read this eBook!



PRIORITISING BUDGET: SHINY OR ESSENTIAL?

Fire protection and security upgrades can be a bit of a grudge purchase. Of course, schools want to ensure they comply with legislation and are committed to keeping their children safe but...

It would be ideal for the children to have access to the latest iPads. The question is, are technology items such as iPads necessary or simply shiny distractions?

Severe financial restrictions in the public sector, coupled with legal and moral requirements for appropriate school security, make balanced budgeting critical.

No-one wants iPads before safe children or failure to comply with the Law, not to mention subsequent ramifications.

Then, of course, there is the issue of price.

A cheap quote for a security system might be tempting, but there's no such thing as a free lunch... See the accreditation section for more on the false economy.

Any failings will be reported and result in prompt and proportionate action.

Failing to suitably comply with your duty of care obligations can lead to fines and even Ofsted difficulties.

WHY THIS IS A PROBLEM

A school has a health and safety duty of care to staff and pupils. This extends beyond fire safety to their physical security, after all, there have been serious personal safety issues at schools in the recent past.

While Ofsted is not a HSE authority, inspectors want to be sure legislative obligations for health and safety and safeguarding are fulfilled.

Any failings will be reported and result in prompt and proportionate action.

To all intents and purposes, failing to suitably comply with your duty of care obligations can harm an Ofsted inspection.

BLAKE SAYS

A poorly designed and installed system will need to be upgraded or replaced to satisfy legal requirements and do the job properly. Whatever your budget constraints are, never go for just the cheapest option!



FIRE AND SECURITY OBLIGATIONS CAN SLIP...

FIRE AND SECURITY OBLIGATIONS CAN SLIP...

There are responsible person requirements for fire protection and duty of care responsibilities for health and safety, which includes physical security.

The Fire Safety Order (FSO) requires a responsible person to be appointed.

If this person remains unclear on the extent of their obligations, then if the worst were to happen, they will be held accountable and prosecuted.

[For more information, this free guide provides useful advice.](#)

To comply with the law you must:

- carry out a fire risk assessment of the premises and review it regularly
- tell staff or their representatives about the risks you've identified
- put in place, and maintain, appropriate fire safety measures
- plan for an emergency
- provide staff information, fire safety instruction and training

For example, compliance requires maintained fire detection and warning equipment and well-planned escape routes with adequate lighting.

FIRE AND SECURITY OBLIGATIONS CAN SLIP...

Schools cannot allow people off the street to wander onto school property without appropriate vetting.

Past tragedies have made high-tech security common place in schools, but who is responsible for the physical safety of school users?

The legal responsibility usually lies with the Local Authority but with so many Academies, accountability will pass to the

governing body and the headteacher.

Day to day responsibility is often given to teaching or support staff, including estate/property managers or bursars and administrators.

With so many people involved it's easy to see the potential for well-meant but bad decisions to impact the security of the school.



FIRE AND SECURITY OBLIGATIONS CAN SLIP...

IT CAN ALL GO WRONG...

There are several ways a responsible person can slip up, here are three common examples.

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

Regular fire risk assessments needn't be conducted by the responsible person, but it must be performed by someone suitably qualified. It can be tricky.

For example, an electrician may seem correctly qualified to install emergency lighting for escape routes. However, without specific training they will be unaware of the correct placement and how many are required.

OVER-RELIANCE ON THE CARETAKER OR ESTATES / PROPERTY MANAGER

A school caretaker is invaluable and perfectly capable of maintaining perimeter security fences.

With regulations changing frequently, only an expert in a given field of security is qualified to design, maintain and install the security improvements that a risk assessment stipulates.

Relying on the caretaker could land you in trouble as a responsible person!

OVER-RELIANCE ON THE WRONG EXPERT

It's important to realise how specific qualifications need to be. An electrician may have all the skills and approvals required for regular electrical work. However, these do not cover design and installation of fire protection equipment or electric gates for the car park!

How do you know you are employing competent persons for the job in hand?

BLAKE SAYS

Here are some tips for choosing the right security company;

1. Get more than one quote, at least two
2. Don't automatically choose the cheapest, it's usually a false economy
3. Check for a track record with experience of installing security systems in schools
4. Check for appropriate accreditations
- see below for more info



FIRE AND SECURITY OBLIGATIONS CAN SLIP...

REPERCUSSIONS - WHEN IT ALL GOES WRONG...

PROSECUTION

Breaches of the Fire Safety Order legislation incur significant fines, regardless of an actual fire.

In the worst case scenario, prison sentences have been known.

WITHDRAWAL OF SERVICE

If a piece of equipment has been installed incorrectly, to negate risk of harm to users it may need to be withdrawn.

For instance, improperly installed electric gates that don't comply with regulations are not safe.

A Door and Hardware Federation qualified company may be forced to lock unsafe gates and render them inoperable. That would make staff parking very difficult!

OFSTED

Health and safety of pupils and staff is an important part of a school's safeguarding responsibilities and duty of care.

A poor showing in this area will impact an Ofsted inspection negatively.



ACCREDITATION: WHO IS QUALIFIED FOR WHAT?

With budgets tight, price is always a concern. There are three major issues with choosing the cheap option:

- you may be buying twice if the system installed isn't up to the job
- you may not meet current legislation and land your responsible person in trouble
- the emergency services may ignore an activation from lower grade equipment

It's simple really, the design and installation of security systems needs to be completed by qualified people.

You wouldn't let a learning support assistant head up the maths department - that would be ludicrous.

So why would you leave the safety of your pupils in the hands of an unqualified electrician or under-qualified security installation company?

The mechanics of installing a security system can be managed by a competent electrician - they can do the wiring for you.

But, what about the design of your security system and any recent changes in legislation?

A qualified electrician will provide an NICEIC certificate, and a master locksmith will be registered with the Essex police.

Both may offer to design and install your security systems. But...

Neither have relevant qualifications for Fire and Security system design and installation nor to qualify for police response, unless NSI or SSAIB approval is in place.



BLAKE SAYS

For an automatic police response, your security system must be designed, installed, maintained and monitored by an NSI or SSAIB approved company

ACCREDITATION: WHO IS QUALIFIED FOR WHAT?

WHY USING UNQUALIFIED PEOPLE IS A PROBLEM

Substandard security installations can affect the smooth running of the school and compromise the safety of pupils and staff. Here's a few examples:

1. Your system could fail when you need it most
2. False alarms could be an issue, disrupting lessons
3. Children could get access to places they shouldn't
4. Failure to comply with legislation (see number 6)
5. Insurance may insist on accredited company
6. Fines and Prosecutions

FINES AND PROSECUTIONS

Abbey College School in Malvern was fined £24,000 after pleading guilty to not reviewing existing risk assessments.

Using appropriately qualified professionals would have avoided this.

FOUR TIPS TO AVOID PROBLEMS

1 Check accreditations carefully – is it relevant to security system installation

2 Is it valid? – some cowboys do fake certificates!

3 Is it on the organisation's website? – NSI, SSAIB

4 The best companies always insist on NSI Gold – for quality management as well as capability tested



BENEFITS OF USING AN NSI APPROVED COMPANY

The previous page mentioned NSI Gold approval, which is recognised as the highest level of approval a security company can possess. This certification goes beyond testing fit for purpose competency to include quality control so you can be sure the level of service you receive will be top notch..

SECURITY

- NSI Gold audits are renowned for being professional, thorough and the toughest in the industry.
- Using an NSI approved company to install a monitored alarm makes you eligible for automatic police response.
- An NSI approved company helps you meet your Fire Regulatory requirements by proving you have used 'competent persons'.

INSURANCE

- Many insurers specify the use of NSI approved companies to carry out contracts.

OFSTED

- Safeguarding (welfare, health and safety of pupils)
- Meeting duty of care requirements for staff as well as pupils

BENEFIT

- All staff are suitably qualified to the highest standards
- You will receive regular, reliable maintenance
- Quality service, a great experience and job done correctly, first time
- Bespoke, high-quality system that fits your needs and budget
- Satisfying legislation and Ofsted requirements for duty of care
- Emergency Services response assured

NSI GOLD



ROUNDING UP

Fire Protection and Physical Security are critical responsibilities that all schools need to budget for. So while finances across the public sector are increasingly tight, needs must!

To ensure full compliance with legislation, and to keep Ofsted inspectors happy, you simply have to insist on the correct and proper qualifications, NSI or SSAIB. For the best results use NSI Gold approved companies.

Remember there's no such thing as a free lunch... cheap quotes are usually too good to be true. Compromises leave the school open to prosecution and fines.

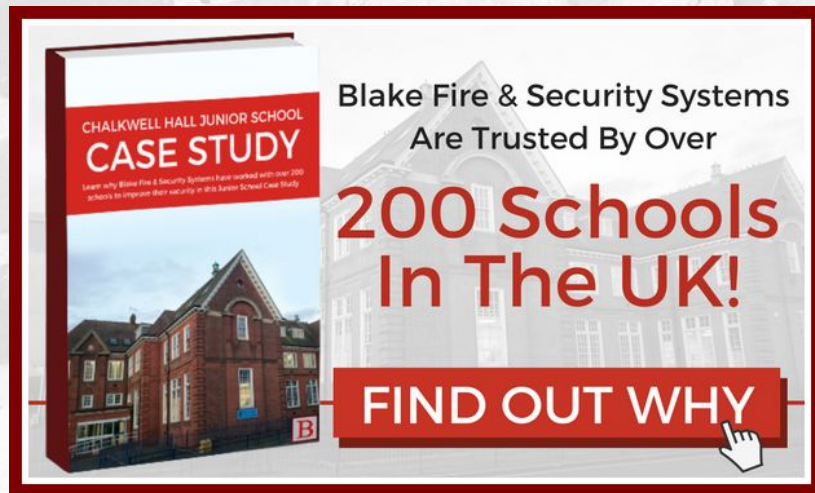


WHAT'S NEXT?

Learn How Blake F&SS Helped Chalkwell Hall Junior School

Blake Fire and Security Systems have been working with schools across Essex for many years. With an extensive list of more than 200 happy schools, we have the track record, skills and qualifications to design, install and maintain the Security System that is right for you.

Click the button below to read how we improved the security at a medium sized Junior school in Southend.



CHALKWELL HALL JUNIOR SCHOOL
CASE STUDY
Learn why Blake Fire & Security Systems have worked with over 200 schools to improve their security in this Junior School Case Study

Blake Fire & Security Systems
Are Trusted By Over

**200 Schools
In The UK!**

FIND OUT WHY

Or call us today on **01702 447800** to speak to a member of our team!

