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Guide

Acts of violence with significant consequences in schools

A guide for school management and security officers

Preface

This guide focuses on school response to acts of violence with significant consequences. The guide is aimed at school management teams, school staff and security officers and aims to raise awareness of what to do before, during and after an incident and provide people with the knowledge they need.

Swedish schools are major organisations with large numbers of students and staff, and it is important for schools to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment. However, the nature and size of schools make them vulnerable to acts of violence, but requirements in respect of security can be combined with an attractive environment offering knowledge and awareness.

The single most important factor in enhancing safety is to raise awareness among individuals, both students and staff, and to give them the knowledge they need to deal with any incidents. First and foremost, in the event of an incident people need to know what they should do to protect themselves and others by following the advice Run – Hide – Tell. This advice should always provide a starting point for improving safety in schools.

This guide provides tips and advice on what your school can do to improve safety for students and staff. This guide has been produced by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB): their remit includes working on safety in public places. The guide has been developed in cooperation with the Swedish Center for Preventing Violent Extremism (CVE) and the Swedish Police Authority. Additionally, a number of municipalities have assisted in efforts to develop this guide.

We hope this guide will support you in your work.

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1. Introduction

Safety work should form part of the school's regular activities and be monitored as part of systematic quality management, just like other activities. Working with security can present a challenge, but when it comes down to it, it involves:

- assessing risks and vulnerabilities
- managing the risks and vulnerabilities identified
- monitoring and evaluating the actions implemented.

That said, working to prevent acts of violence with significant consequences can appear to be difficult in relation to other efforts to enhance safety and security in schools.

Acts of violence often have significant consequences and there is not much chance of such an act occurring, while the action that needs to be taken may appear to be difficult to implement. However, there are good reasons to adopt a holistic approach to safety work, as it should be integrated with the school's regular processes for reasons of efficiency. Analyses, plans and other efforts relating to safety should be clearly interlinked. Such an approach avoids duplication of effort and makes efficient use of resources.

The physical protective measures that need to be implemented in order to enhance security and prevent acts of violence and attacks in schools are not usually very extensive, and even little things can have a big impact: raising staff awareness and keeping school premises clean and tidy, for instance. Effective efforts to create security and implementing strong accident prevention measures are a useful starting point. However, different schools have different circumstances, mainly due to their physical layout, which means that the advice presented in this guide should always be adapted to local circumstances.

This guide aims to provide a basic knowledge of:
- how to assess risks and vulnerabilities
- what protective measures can be effective
- the knowledge and skills that students and school staff should have
- how to return to regular school activities following an attack.

1.1 School efforts to prevent attacks and lethal violence – a broader approach

Like the rest of society, schools can be affected by various types of violence and attacks, sometimes with severe consequences. The intent may be to harm institutions, groups and individuals in order to influence societal development and democratic decisions. However, the motivation and purpose may also stem from someone seeking meaning and excitement in their life, or wanting to make a difference with regard to perceived injustices. The latter motivation is more common in schools compared to other environments.

However, there is a key distinction between attacks carried out in schools and those in other parts of society: the perpetrator is often a current or former student. This means that schools should adopt a broader approach to preventing severe acts of violence, attacks and lethal violence. Therefore, efforts should include measures to counter radicalisation and measures to enhance the protection of students and staff from acts of violence.

This broader approach is described in documents such as *Nationell strategi mot våldsbejakande extremism och terrorism – förebygga, förhindra, skydda och hantera, Skr. 2023/24:56* [National Strategy against Violent Extremism and Terrorism – Prevention, Deterrence, Protection and Response, Doc. 2023/24:56], which outlines how efforts should be conducted to combat terrorism. The document describes aspects such as how society should work with measures to counter radicalisation and violent extremism, as well as measures to enhance safety and security for individuals. It describes Swedish counterterrorism efforts in general, but it can also be useful in guiding how Swedish schools can adopt a broader approach in their work.

The acts of violence and attacks carried out in school environments may involve terrorism, and terrorism is often defined as an extreme form of violent extremism, based on the purpose of the act of violence. However, even though the intent behind an act of violence may vary, the methods used can be the same. This is the main reason as to why, in this guide, we use terms such as 'acts of violence with significant consequences' and 'attacks', rather than terms like 'terrorism' or 'terrorist attacks'. Regardless of the intent, the guide ultimately focuses on serious violent crime.

The main focus of this guidance is to describe how schools can enhance security and protection for students and staff, but it also includes information on efforts to counter radicalisation and violent extremism.

1.2 Roles and responsibilities

Preschools and schools are managed by either a public or a private accountable authority, and it is the responsibility of this accountable authority to ensure that operations are conducted in accordance with applicable law.

The Swedish Work Environment Act (1977:1160) contains provisions on the requirements for a good work environment. Certain issues relating to the work environment are also covered by the Swedish Education Act (2010:800). Most of the rules in Chapter 5 of the Swedish Education Act are relevant to the work environment. The provisions in Chapter 6 on measures against degrading treatment can also be said to concern the work environment. The Swedish Work Environment Authority has also issued regulations and general recommendations on Violence and Menaces in the Working Environment (AFS 1993:2). The Swedish Work Environment Act covers both staff and students in all types of schools from preschool level upwards. On a day-to-day basis, school management, in the form of principals, makes decisions under delegation from the board or owner, and these decisions concern aspects such as the work environment in the workplace. Work environment management must be systematic and form a natural part of the organisation, covering everything from fire safety to the organisational and social work environment.

The Swedish Work Environment Authority's Regulations on Systematic Work Environment Management (2001:1) are applicable to all employers and mean that the employer has to investigate, implement and monitor activities to prevent accidents and ill health.

To support the school management, it is advantageous to have an organisation dealing with safety work where all employees and functions – such as teachers, caretakers, support staff, student health services and work environment representatives – at the school are involved in helping to create a safe and secure school. If there is a security specialist connected to the school, such as the municipality's security coordinator, this function can also contribute to the work. If there is a delegated mandate and responsibility, it is important for it to be clearly defined and known within the organisation. Who can be consulted with regard to security matters within the organisation should be clear.

2. Attacks and lethal violence in schools

The trend for society as a whole, to a greater extent than in the past, has been for attacks to be carried out by lone perpetrators or a small group of people using simple methods, with the general public as the target. The number of attacks has also increased over the past decade, although this trend has levelled off in recent years.

Schools and education are evolving in line with society in general. However, schools are not more vulnerable environments than other locations. That said, there are some aspects that set schools apart from other environments in terms of risk perspectives.

It has been relatively common for students or former students to carry out attacks, targeting students and staff at the school. Such attacks have often unfolded very quickly and been over within a few minutes. It is also during these first few minutes that the highest number of casualties has occurred, meaning that the actions taken by school staff and students in the initial minutes of an attack are extremely important.

Figure 1. Consequences related to time

Number of people dead/injured
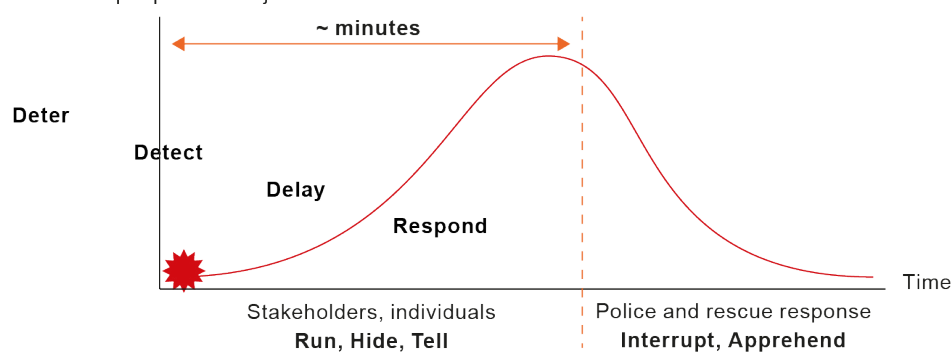
An attack can be an impulsive act triggered by events in the world or personal experiences. However, there is strong evidence to suggest that many school attacks are planned, where even attacks carried out with simple means and methods may be prepared very carefully. Moreover, the perpetrator may often have communicated their intentions to someone in their immediate circle before the attack.

In a Swedish context, historically the most common approach has involved the use of bladed weapons. Other approaches have been very rare.

Although there have been relatively few attacks in and against Swedish schools, risk perspectives can change rapidly. That is why it is important for any guide aimed at raising awareness and increasing preparedness to take a broader view of risk perspectives by briefly describing different approaches on the basis of international experience. The foundation for the need for schools to adopt a wider risk perspective is a central aspect. Conclusions and recommendations in this chapter are based on information about school attacks in Europe, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

2.1   The five phases of an attack

A planned attack can be described in terms of five different phases:

1. **Selecting a target.** The perpetrator often has some form of knowledge of or relationship with their chosen target and is therefore able to assess the chances of success with an attack. As stated previously, it is not uncommon for the perpetrator to be a current or former student, which means they have a knowledge of the site, and perhaps relationships with students and staff as well.

2. **Planning.** During the planning phase, the perpetrator assesses the level of security at the scene of the attack and how the attack will be carried out. Information gathering and reconnaissance take place here, and this can be done on site or online. It is not unusual for the perpetrator to have a good knowledge of the premises, staff and procedures relating to safety and security work at the school, for example.

3. **Practising.** In some cases, the perpetrator may practise the attack, which includes determining the method, estimating the time required and identifying any problems that may arise. As part of this practice, the perpetrator may also test to see whether there is any response from staff at the scene of the attack, for example.

4. **Attack.** The attack is carried out quickly and is often over within minutes.

5. **Exploitation.** It is not uncommon for the perpetrator to attempt to amplify the effects of the attack in various ways, such as by releasing statements and using social media or photos and videos that prolong the impact of the attack.

The more you know about the phases of an attack, the greater the chances of identifying and interrupting the perpetrator's process by taking action in time. Depending on the point in the process that the perpetrator has reached, sometimes as simple as just talking to them about their perceived problems may be enough to make them abandon their thoughts of an attack.

Figure 2. Phases of an attack

| Selecting | Planning | Practising | Attack | Exploitation |
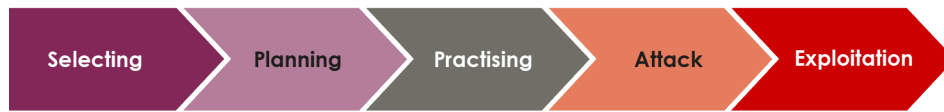
Figure 3. Methods of attack

2.2 Methods of attack

The following are known approaches in the event of attacks. In a Swedish context, as stated previously, the most common approach has historically involved bladed weapons.

Firearms

Attacks with firearms often result in many fatalities in a short time, and the consequences increase if the perpetrator uses a longer weapon such as an automatic rifle or shotgun rather than a handgun. This is mainly because there is more chance of them hitting the target. Firearms require both training and knowledge.

The most important aspects of defence against a firearm attack are the ability to run away and access to cover. This mainly involves ensuring that evacuation routes are known and not blocked in any way. If running away is not possible, there should be spaces where people can temporarily lock themselves in.

Bladed weapons

Bladed weapons are readily accessible, easy to conceal and can be used by anyone. Historically, these weapons have resulted in fewer injuries and deaths compared to firearms. Attacks with bladed weapons are often silent, which can delay detection and make escape more difficult.

The protective measures against attacks with bladed weapons are essentially the same as those for attacks with firearms.

Vehicles as weapons

Using a vehicle as a weapon is an uncommon method in school attacks, but the vulnerability to such attacks increases during events such as end-of-term ceremonies, student graduations and other outdoor activities that gather many people in a confined space.

Vehicles are also readily accessible, require no special training and are sometimes used in combination with other methods.

Protection against attacks using a vehicle as a weapon may, for example, include regulating traffic near the school and ensuring that student gatherings are not exposed to vehicles. Another approach is to use various types of barriers that physically prevent vehicles from reaching protected areas.

Explosives

Using explosives of various kinds requires knowledge and a significant degree of preparation, and their use in school attacks is less common compared to bladed weapons or firearms, for example. Historically, explosives used in school attacks have often been home-made and relatively unpredictable and unstable. Explosives can be used in a variety of ways, such as being placed somewhere or carried by a person or vehicle. The most common method is to hide them, with the perpetrator leaving the scene.

Explosives have multiple levels of potential damage, such as the blast wave from the explosion, shrapnel from the device itself, or fragments of glass or other materials from the surrounding area. An explosive device has less impact if it is placed in a large, open area, rather than in a confined space such as a small room.

Protective measures against explosives include reducing the chances of bringing in and hiding objects, which can be challenging in a school environment that often has no access restrictions. However, regular searches of school premises and maintaining good order can make it easier to detect dangerous objects. The most crucial aspect is ensuring that the organisation knows what to do if a suspicious object is discovered. (See section 6.7 *What to do if a suspicious object is found.*)

Arson

Arson is an uncommon attack method but it can, for example, be used to amplify the effects of an attack carried out using another method. A fire may also result from gunfire or detonation of explosives, which is why fires should be considered as part of the risk perspective. A fire can be created relatively easily with readily available materials, and its impact can be amplified if the perpetrator delays evacuation or prevents the emergency services responding.

The most important protection against fires is a functioning fire alarm system and ensuring that evacuation routes are known and clear of debris or other obstacles that could block or hinder evacuation.

3. Assessment of risks and vulnerabilities

All schools should have a plan that outlines how the school should prepare for, respond to and recover from incidents such as attacks. Each individual school should design its plan on the basis of its own specific circumstances and the risks that can be identified.

Practical responsibility for the work environment often rests with the school's management team, but it is important to ensure that all staff at the school are involved in systematic quality management and safety work in terms of working preventively and building trusting relationships, participating in mapping, reporting risks, suggesting measures and providing feedback when various measures are evaluated. All school staff have a crucial part to play in safety efforts.

3.1 Risk management

To work effectively with school safety, a common understanding of the school's specific risks and vulnerabilities is needed. An important step toward such an understanding involves conducting a risk assessment, identifying and analysing both unwanted events that could occur at the school and looking at how these could harm people or disrupt operations.

When conducting a risk assessment, it may be wise to distinguish between unintentional incidents, such as accidents, and intentional incidents, where a perpetrator deliberately seeks to cause harm, such as various forms of violent acts and attacks.

- **The risk of unintentional incidents** due to factors such as poor maintenance, planning errors or communication failures is addressed within the school's preventive systematic quality management.
- **The risk of intentional incidents** should be addressed in a separate risk analysis; these risks are more difficult to assess than unintentional incidents, as a perpetrator usually deliberately tries to avoid detection and circumvent security measures.

3.2   Scenario-based risk analysis

Working with scenarios has a number of advantages. For instance, a scenario is generally easy to grasp and understand, even for people who do not typically work with risk analyses. Creating a scenario involves describing the incident, the attacker's method and the circumstances at the time of the attack, identifying scenario-specific vulnerabilities and the risks they pose, and finally assessing the consequences of the attack.

When developing a scenario, consideration should be given to locations where an attack is likely to begin, and to locations or situations that are particularly vulnerable or where the consequences could be particularly severe. Relevant locations may include those where it is easy to enter unnoticed, where it may take longer to detect that an attack has begun, where people have difficulty running away or seeking shelter, or where raising the alarm may be challenging, such as areas without mobile coverage.

Figure 4. The risk management cycle: identify the risk, analyse the risk, assess the risk and mitigate the risk
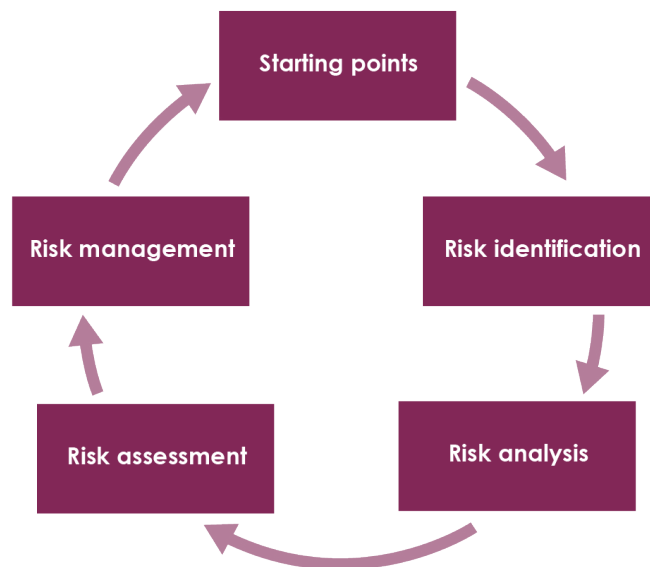
A scenario-based risk analysis takes place in four steps:

Identify the risks

- Determine a number of potential scenarios: What could happen? Which attack methods are likely? These scenarios can specify the attack method, location, time and other circumstances.

Analyse the risks

- Assess vulnerability in each scenario: What features or measures are in place that could prevent, delay or halt the attack? The measures can be deterrent, detection-based or obstructive, for example. Rate the vulnerability of the organisation in respect of the scenario in question. A vulnerability scale can be used here: see the example below.
- Assess the consequences of each scenario: What would be the consequences of a successful attack? An impact scale can be used here: see the example below.

Assess the risks

- Select which scenarios to proceed with, based on a combined assessment of vulnerability and consequence.
- Focus on scenarios with significant consequences, but also consider scenarios with lesser consequences but high vulnerability.

Mitigate the risks

- Identify and decide on action to reduce vulnerability or the consequences of an attack. This could include measures that make it easier to detect and raise the alarm, delay the perpetrator or make it easier for people to run away or seek shelter.

Table 1. Example: vulnerability scale

Description of a vulnerability scale	
1. Low vulnerability	A number of layers of effective safeguards are implemented. A perpetrator would have major difficulty in conducting a successful attack.
2. Medium vulnerability	Effective safeguards are implemented. However, there is at least one weakness that a perpetrator could exploit in order to carry out an attack.
3. High vulnerability	Some safeguards are implemented. However, there are still a number of weaknesses that a perpetrator could exploit.
4. Critical vulnerability	There is no effective protection and it would be easy for a perpetrator to exploit weaknesses.

Table 2. Example: impact scale

Description of an impact scale
1. Very limited impact, e.g. minor injuries, short-term interruption of operations, minor structural damage, some loss of reputation.
2. Limited impact, e.g. multiple injuries (no loss of life), significant interruption of operations, some structural damage (no risk of collapse), significant loss of reputation.
3. Serious impact, e.g. loss of life and severe injuries, long-term interruption of operations, major structural damage (no risk of collapse), major repair costs, very significant loss of reputation.
4. Very severe impact, e.g. extensive loss of life and severe injuries, permanent interruption of operations, catastrophic structural damage requiring immediate action, very high repair costs, very significant loss of reputation, major political consequences.

Table 3. Example of a vulnerability assessment

Scenario	Vulnerability	Consequence	Action
An armed perpetrator attacks the entrance during the morning rush.	**3. High** Glass entrance, lots of bushes to hide in, no way to lock the doors. At the same time: Many adults (parents) present who can intervene or prevent the attack.	**4. Very severe impact** Up to 150 students could be on site if an attack occurs during the morning rush.	1. Have staff standing at the entrance during the morning rush. 2. Cut back bushes to improve lines of sight. 3. Install doors that can be locked. 4. Draw up a procedure for alarms. 5. Create the possibility of sectioning. 6. Establish safe rooms.
A former student enters the school via the main entrance in the late afternoon, after the staff on break duty have finished for the day.	**3. High** The visitor tag system works well, but when the staff on break duty have gone home, there are relatively few adults on site who can detect an unauthorised person without a visitor tag. However, the person has to go past reception.	**3. Severe impact** Virtually the whole school can be reached from the main entrance. But in the afternoon, fewer students are at school.	1. Reception needs to pay more attention to unauthorised persons when staff on break duty have left.

4. Preventing attacks on schools

As stated earlier, the perpetrator of attacks on schools is often a student or former student. That is why there is every reason to also consider preventive efforts aimed at countering school attacks and radicalisation. It is important for students to feel that someone cares and wants them to do well at school, and the school should always follow up on student absence. The Swedish National Agency for Education provides support material on health promotion and preventive work in schools and its democratic mission.

The Swedish Center for Preventing Violent Extremism (CVE) works to reinforce and develop preventive efforts against violent extremism. Not all perpetrators have extremist motives, but it is common for them to be inspired by extremist notions and symbols. Perpetrators often draw inspiration online from acts of violence in general and school attacks in particular. CVE has developed a methodological guide for professionals seeking support in managing and investigating concerns.

4.1 Managing and investigating concerns about a student

After various school attacks, it has often been found that warning signs were present but only became clear afterwards when all pieces of the puzzle from different stakeholders were put together.

It is the school's responsibility to address the issue if there is any suspicion that something is wrong. Well-established cooperation within the school, as well as between the school, social services, local police and healthcare services through student health services, is a key success factor in dealing with students displaying concerning behaviour.

If there are any concerns about a student, the school should take action and seek support:

- School staff are legally obliged under the Swedish Social Services and Education Act to immediately report any concerns to social services if they suspect that a child is having problems.

You can discuss the situation with social services without revealing the child's identity if you are unsure whether the circumstances surrounding the child are such that the matter should be reported to social services. However, a consultation can never replace a formal report. The school must also work at the initiative of the social welfare board to cooperate with public authorities, organisations and other relevant stakeholders on issues concerning children who are at risk or having problems. Student health services must cooperate with healthcare, social services and other stakeholders, where necessary. Such cooperation can be remedial as well as preventive, and promote health.

Student health services can, for example, work in collaboration with other stakeholders to promote student health and school attendance and to prevent crime or ill health.

- Notify the school management team and consult with student health services according to your regular procedures for reporting concerns.

The principal usually decides how to proceed and how the team will be informed. Do not keep your concerns to yourself – talk to others. You will also find out whether anyone else shares your concerns, and you may see a pattern. The principal decides who is to talk to the student, and this should be done as early as possible. Also talk to the student's guardians. In most cases, consent can be given to contact other public authorities for support. See CVE's methodological guide for tips on what questions to ask and how to structure the conversations.

- The principal or school staff can contact the police.

Discussions about the student can be conducted anonymously and do not need to be reported formally but rather provide a way to discuss the matter and determine whether the situation should be reported. The police work preventively and need information early on to be able to liaise with other relevant public authorities and implement appropriate mitigation and support measures.

4.2   Risk factors and protective factors

A common question that arises in relation to concerns about school attacks is what school staff should look for: What signs and signals are there? Are there any specific risk factors? These are difficult questions to answer because there are rarely specific signs; rather, they can vary from person to person. However, there are lessons to be learned from research and past experience.

Risk factors

Essentially, risk factors can be described as factors that increase the risk of a person wanting to make the switch from thought to action. There are few studies on school attacks in a Swedish context, but a number of studies have been conducted in the US. These studies indicate that school attacks are rarely impulsive acts: they are often preceded by planning. Additionally, the people around the perpetrator have often been aware of their attraction to and fascination with violent acts. An interest in violence and school attacks may have been expressed in school essays, poems or in other forms of visual and written content. Moreover, the perpetrator has often leaked information about their thoughts and plans to carry out a school attack. The motives behind school attacks vary, though, and so it is difficult to establish a single perpetrator profile for such incidents.

Perpetrator motives identified include experiencing bullying or other grievances related to school and their classmates, poor home conditions, a desire for revenge or suicidal thoughts. A negative message or incident will often trigger a perpetrator to make the switch from thought to action. It is also evident that several perpetrators have studied and been inspired by previous school attacks and their perpetrators, many of whom have harboured sympathies for far-right extremism.

The FBI has analysed a number of attacks in the US and concluded that in most cases, the perpetrator either attended or used to attend the school where the attack took place, and that many school attacks occurred at the beginning or end of the school year or on specific dates chosen to honour infamous individuals or locations. Several school attacks in the US have also been prevented by parents and friends who alerted the school and the police that someone was planning to carry out a school attack. Schools played a crucial role in several of these cases, as school staff were often the ones to report an imminent attack.

The Swedish Police Authority has observed similar patterns in school attacks that have occurred in Sweden. The perpetrator is often a young man who feels socially isolated, may have some form of neurodevelopmental disorder (NDD) and suffers from mental health issues such as depression and/or suicidal thoughts. The perpetrator's sense of alienation causes them to perceive a grievance against the school, classmates, school staff or society in general.

The perpetrator has drawn inspiration online from acts of violence in general and school attacks in particular, and the Swedish Police Authority has noted that radicalisation, particularly among young people, can occur rapidly through digital platforms containing references to violent extremism, which could serve as both

a clear driving force and a retrospective justification. Moreover, the perpetrator has also shared information with the people around them about their fantasies or plans to carry out a school attack.

The Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) describes a phenomenon that can be referred to as 'gamification' in society, where the boundaries between games and reality become blurred and individuals transfer the logic of games into the physical world. This is evident from several school attacks carried out in recent years, where the perpetrator has livestreamed the attack. Digital platforms can be used for radicalisation, dissemination of propaganda and planning of attacks. When adopting a preventive approach, it is important to stay informed about the most relevant platforms at any given time.

When talking to students who are causing concern, it may therefore be useful to ask whether they are active on digital platforms and what role the Internet plays in their lives.

The conversation guide in CVE's methodological guide includes suggestions for questions that could be asked about this.

Protective factors

It is also important not to overlook protective factors in a student's life. Protective factors can be described as elements that both reduce the risk of a student committing a school attack and increase the chances of them leading a healthy and positive life. This involves identifying what is working well in the student's life and reinforcing it – if, for example, the student has family and friends who provide strong support, or if they participate in sports clubs or other social activities where the student can pursue their interests.

The school itself is a key protective factor in empowering children and young people. Thus, promotive and preventive efforts in schools can also be viewed as a way to enhance protective factors in a student's life. More information on protective factors can be found in CVE's methodological guide. The Swedish National Agency for Education has also produced support material on health promotion and preventive work.

> The Swedish Center for Preventing Violent Extremism (CVE) has a helpline that professionals can call if they have any concerns. They can be contacted on 08 527 44 290 between 9am and 3pm on weekdays.
>
> The centre's mobile support team has experience of working to prevent both school attacks and violent extremism. Support can be provided digitally or face-to-face on site.
>
> All support is free of charge.

5. Knowledge and skills of students and school staff

The single most important protective and security measure involves raising awareness among school staff and students. Above all, this involves improving the ability and knowledge to respond appropriately during an ongoing attack.

Other protective measures, such as organisational or physical security, are largely based on Run – Hide – Tell. The organisation's role in this respect is to provide support that will enable individuals to run away and, if that is not possible, to seek shelter. Another crucial aspect, particularly for school staff, is a knowledge of how to save lives, such as understanding how to stop bleeding.

5.1 Run – Hide – Tell

A more detailed description of the advice Run – Hide – Tell is presented below. As a teacher or other member of school staff, you will usually find yourself in a setting with many students for whom you are responsible. However, you can only take responsibility for the students in your immediate vicinity, such as in a classroom. Each situation is unique, and it can be difficult to predict what conditions might prevail in the event of an attack. It often comes down to deciding whether it would be safest to instruct students to run away or to take the initiative to seek shelter in a locked classroom, for example.

RUN (Run away). If you find yourself in a violent situation, you must first assess whether you can run away without putting yourself in more danger. Leave your belongings behind and encourage others to follow, but do not wait for anyone who hesitates.

Evacuation procedures in the event of an armed attack are not the same as in the event of a fire, so do not go to the designated assembly point until you have confirmed that it is safe to do so. To be able to run away, it is important for you to know which escape routes apply to your location.

HIDE (Seek shelter). If you are unable to run away, seek shelter. Lock the door and barricade it. Seek shelter near the floor, or behind something sturdy. Set your mobile phone to silent and keep quiet. Close any curtains or otherwise try to prevent people seeing in. Anything you can do to make it more difficult for a perpetrator to enter or see inside is positive. Even small measures can make a difference.

 112

TELL (Raise the alarm). Call 112 as soon as possible. Provide the following information to the police, emergency services and paramedics:

- where you are and what has happened
- the number of attackers, their weapons, clothing and last known location
- information on the number of people injured and the types of injuries.

Follow the instructions that the operator gives you. Distinguish between what you believe and what you know.

The police may find it difficult to tell the difference between you and your attackers during a police operation, so they may treat you firmly and decisively. In this regard, it is important to

- follow the instructions that the police give you
- keep your hands where they can be seen and avoid sudden movements.

As a last resort – the right to self-defence. There are legal provisions on necessity and self-defence. These rules apply only in serious and urgent situations. The provisions of the Criminal Code providing for a general possibility to intervene physically on the grounds of self-defence or necessity apply to everyone. The rules allow anyone to physically intervene or use force in certain circumstances involving a criminal attack on a person or property in a way that would otherwise be considered unlawful and constitute a criminal offence.

The self-defence provision means that anyone has the right to intervene physically to prevent the attack if a situation arises in school where a student uses violence against another student, a teacher or property. The imminence of an attack is sufficient to justify the use of self-defence measures.

However, in the situations covered by this guide, it is important to remember that the best option is always to run away if possible, or to seek shelter if escape is not an option.

5.2   Saving lives

A massive, life-threatening haemorrhage can occur as a result of a serious act of violence but also as a result of other incidents, such as accidents. As a rule of thumb, if the pool of blood next to the injured person is the size of a dinner plate or the equivalent of half a 33 cl soft drink can or more, the bleeding is massive and directly life-threatening. Anyone can save a life by first applying pressure to the wound.

What to do in the event of massive bleeding:
- Raise the alarm – ask someone else to call 112, or dial the number yourself and put the phone on the ground.
- Apply pressure to the wound – use a piece of fabric if you have one to hand. The fabric does not need to be clean; any fabric will work. Use your hands if no fabric is available.
- Use your body weight – press down with your arms straight, lean over the wound and use your body weight to apply downward pressure. Do not release the pressure.
- Keep pressing until an ambulance arrives.
- If possible – apply a tourniquet above the wound.

In the event of an attack, the priority of the police is to locate the perpetrator and stop the attack. As a result, it may take some time before the area is considered safe enough for medical personnel to be allowed in. This means that you may have to look after for yourself or someone else until medical personnel arrive.

The school can provide information and train staff on how to recognise and stop a severe bleed in connection with training on CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation), for example. Everyone should know where bleeding control materials can be found and how to use them.

A first aid kit should contain:
- tourniquet
- wound packing gauze
- highly elastic compression bandage (non-adhesive)
- trauma shears
- medical gloves
- marker pen (to note down the time on the tourniquet).

First aid equipment should be distributed across strategic locations around the school. All staff should be aware of and have access to these locations, which may include the canteen, reception, the principal's office, sports hall, workshops, staff room or other suitable areas. The important thing is for staff to be aware of where the equipment is stored, and to know that it is not all kept in a single location that could become inaccessible during an evacuation or invacuation.
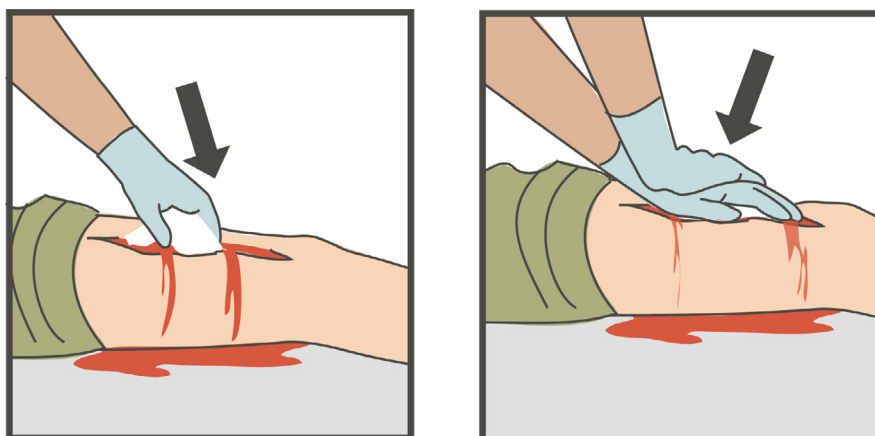
5.3   How to stop severe bleeding

Stop the bleeding with your bare hands

Figure 5. Maintain pressure with your hands

Figure 6. Apply a dressing and maintain the pressure

Stop the bleeding with a tourniquet

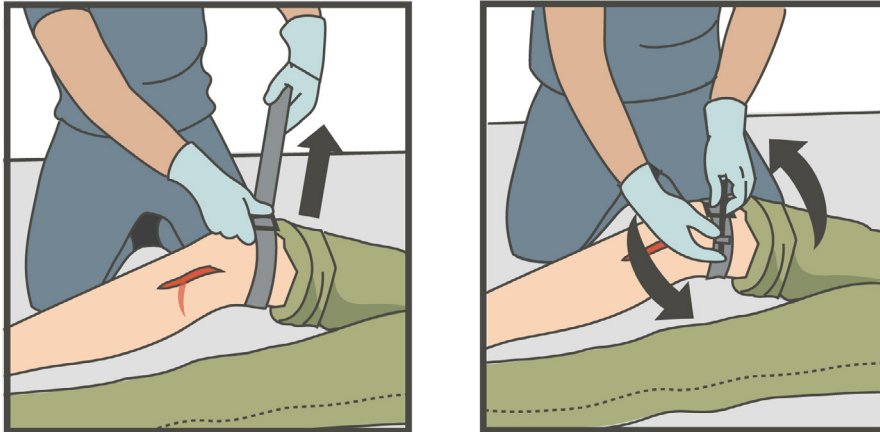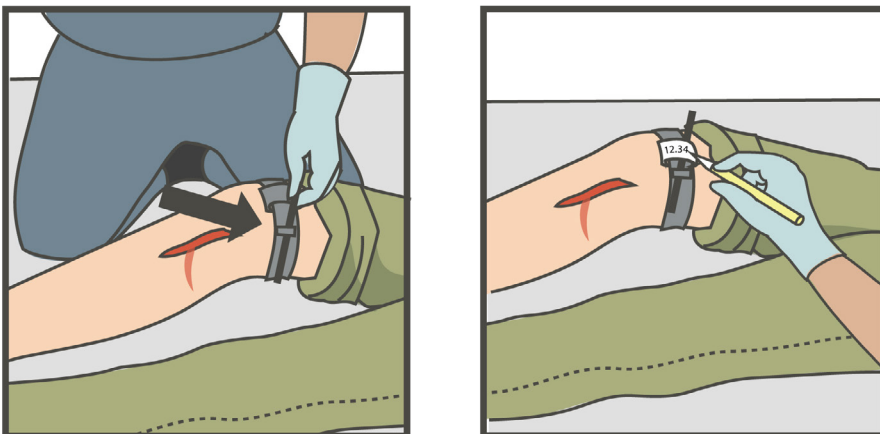**Figure 7.** Apply the tourniquet, tighten it and twist

Figure 8. Secure the tourniquet and record the time when it was applied

6. A safe and secure school environment

This chapter presents several examples of protective and security measures that may be worth considering. The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency guide entitled Säkerhet i offentlig miljö – Skydd mot antagonistiska hot och terrorism (Security in public spaces – Protection against antagonistic threats and terrorism) provides additional examples of measures and various principles that can be applied in order to enhance protection and security.

Schools are primarily places of learning, which means the environment needs to be accessible and perceived as attractive and open. These needs then have to be combined with the need for safety and security. Proportionality and prioritisation are crucial in this regard.

Security measures should be based on the school's risk assessment and adapted to local conditions. Vulnerability and consequence are key factors, but cost and feasibility should also be taken into consideration when deciding on measures. Additionally, measures need to be proportionate and functional as part of day-to-day operations: poorly thought-out actions that inconvenience users as they go about their business risk being circumvented, disabled or completely ignored.

The overall objective of security is to reduce vulnerability or minimise the impact of an attack. However, bear in mind that security measures may need to be analysed from a number of different perspectives. For instance, measures aimed at making things more difficult for an antagonist, such as doors that can be locked, may in some cases impair the ability to evacuate the school in the event of a fire.

Therefore, always consult the property owner or a fire safety consultant before altering the design of the premises. Often, a combination of physical, organisational and staff-related measures is the most effective approach.

6.1 Multiple layers of protection

No one protective or security measure serves as a perfect solution; instead, these measures typically consist of multiple layers of protection. This means that if one measure fails, another measure may still be effective. It is also easy to seek technical solutions for something that is better addressed through procedures and awareness. For instance, monitoring entrances is an important protective and security measure, where improved natural surveillance with staff in attendance

– especially at entrances, in the schoolyard and in areas where many students gather – is preferable to relying solely on cameras or access control systems.

The single most important tool for detecting an imminent or planned attack is to alert staff who react to anything unusual. Greeting strangers with a 'Hello! Can I help you with something?' may be enough to deter a perpetrator from carrying out an attack.

6.2   Evacuation, invacuation and lockdown

Evacuation, invacuation and lockdown are key methods for protecting against attacks and largely serve as the foundation for other protective and security measures. The various methods support the recommendations aimed at individuals: Run – Hide – Tell. Which method is used depends on the situation.

Evacuation, invacuation or lockdown decisions can be made for the whole school at the same time, but each individual student or staff member must assess what is most appropriate in their own particular situation. Another common challenge with these decisions is that they have to be made on the basis of limited and un-certain information – the best course of action often only becomes clear after-wards. However, the most important thing is to make sure a decision is made.

Who makes the decision also depends on the school's warning systems. If the only warning system is the fire alarm, it can be difficult to communicate in-structions effectively in an emergency.

> Avoid using the fire alarm if there is no fire, as this may lead to inappropriate behaviour by individuals, the police and the emergency services.
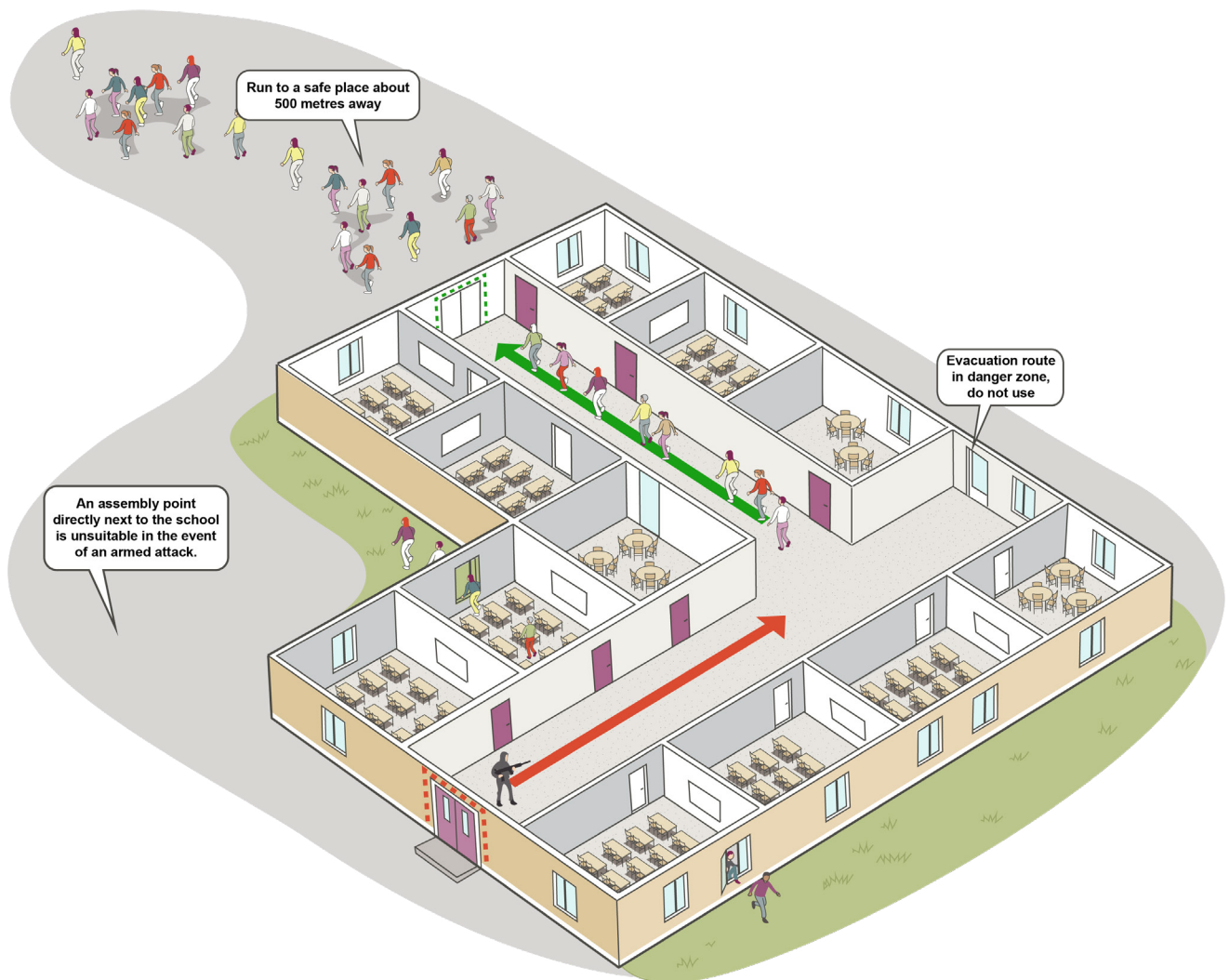
Evacuation

Evacuation means that students and school staff move out of the school in a safe direction. Evacuation during an attack is slightly different to evacuation on account of a fire. For example, it is not advisable to have an assembly point directly next to the school, as a large gathering of students and staff could become a new target for a perpetrator. The advice should therefore be to move some distance away from the school, a general rule of thumb is to move 500 metres away.

Evacuation in the event of an attack also places great strain on the evacuation routes as people are trying to evacuate at speed and a smaller number of evacuation routes are normally used for evacuation.

Figure 9. Evacuation of a school

Invacuation

Invacuation involves people locking themselves into one part of the building, such as a safe room or a part of the school that acts as a natural boundary to other parts. However, invacuation requires an analysis of which parts can be closed, or which rooms can serve as safe rooms before invacuation takes place.

(More information about safe rooms can be found in section 6.3.)

Figure 10. Invacuation of a school

Lockdown

If a threat or danger arises outside the school, it may be safer to allow students and staff to remain on the school premises, as evacuation may put people at risk from an attacker outside the building. In the event of a lockdown, there should generally be a way to communicate clearly with students and staff, such as through a public address system.

Figure 11. Lockdown at a school
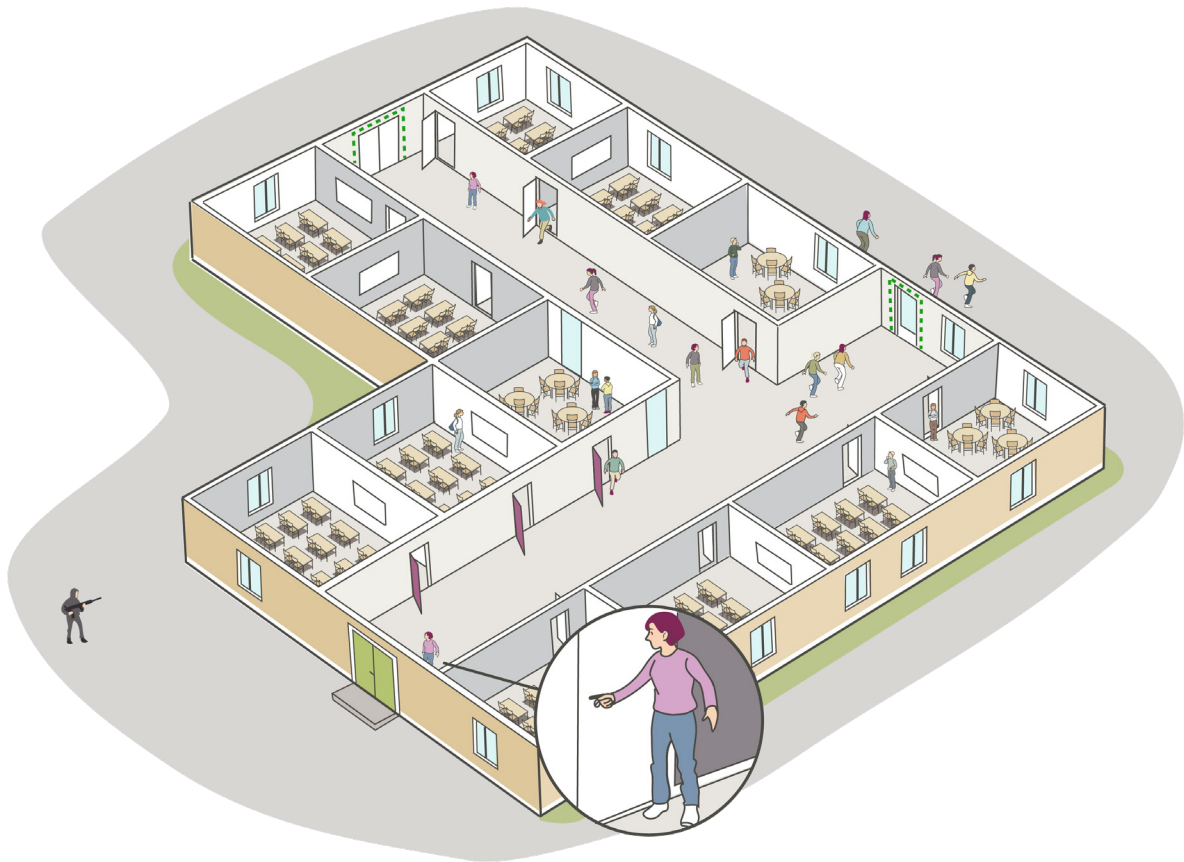
Planning for evacuation, invacuation and lockdown

The existing fire and accident prevention procedures provide a useful starting point for planning evacuation, invacuation and lockdown. If there is an established, simple and well-practised fire evacuation plan, it provides a strong foundation for planning invacuation and lockdown procedures as well. The key is that the plan should be simple, not dependent on specific individuals and known to students and school staff.

Different schools have different circumstances in terms of size, layout and classroom design. That is why any plan should be adapted to local circumstances.

Some things to consider:

- Is there a warning or communication system? Is there any need for such a system?
- Should the school normally be locked? How should the main doors be locked?
- Are there any natural boundaries that allow for sectioning?
- Which rooms can be used as safe rooms?
- How are decisions made on evacuation and lockdown made, for instance, and by whom?

Training should be conducted regularly and can be integrated with the school's fire drills.

6.3   Safe rooms

A safe room is a pre-designated room where individuals can seek shelter if escape is not possible. It is not a bulletproof room: it can be a regular classroom or another room that meets the necessary criteria.

The purpose of the room is to be difficult to breach and large enough so that a perpetrator cannot randomly target the people taking shelter inside.

The door to the safe room must be difficult to break open; an ordinary interior door made of solid wood, for example, will suffice. It should be possible to lock the door from the inside using a standard mechanical thumb-turn lock. Key locks on the inside are not recommended. If the door has a card or key fob lock on the outside, the card or fob should require a PIN code if possible.

Visibility should be minimised. If there are windows in the door, for example, there should be a way to cover them immediately. Also, bear in mind that it should not be possible for a perpetrator to break a window and so open the door from the inside. There should be a way to cover other windows as well.

It should be possible to barricade the door using available furniture in the room, for example.

Figure 12. Example of a safe room. A safe room is a standard room with a solid door and a thumb-turn lock that can be locked from the inside. It is beneficial if the door can be reinforced by barricading it with heavy objects
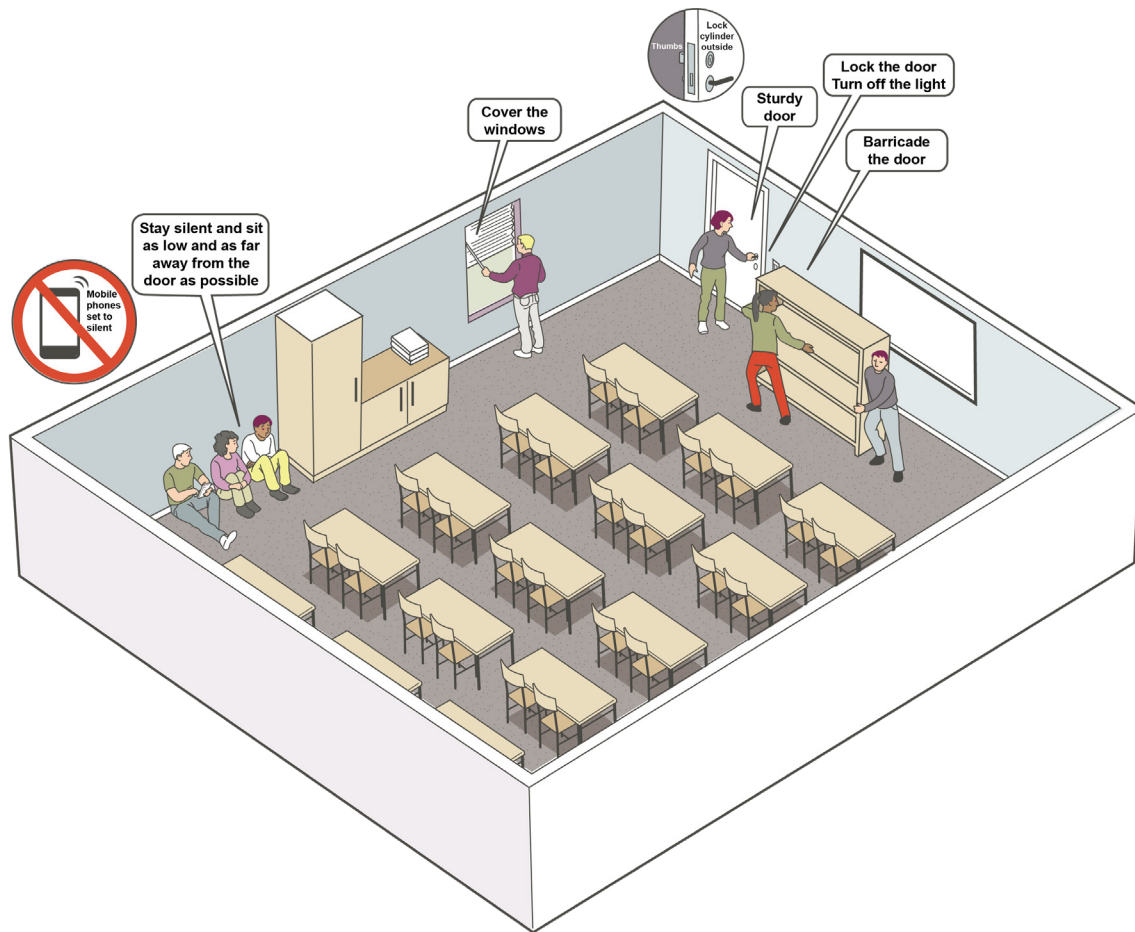
6.4   Warning and alarm systems

When an attack is detected, the ability to warn others and raise the alarm quickly is crucial in determining the severity of the consequences. The ability of students and staff to take appropriate action is delayed if there is no reasonable way to raise the alarm, warn others or communicate decisions on aspects such as evacuation.

Some examples of how schools can improve their ability to warn people and raise the alarm are presented below:

- **PA system.** A PA system is a sound system that can be used to broadcast spoken messages throughout the school premises. Messages should be prepared, and there should be procedures in place for their use.
- **Evacuation alarm with spoken message.** Spoken alarms allow for different recorded messages to be played for different types of incidents.
- **Mobile applications.** There are dedicated applications for smartphones where individual school staff can raise the alarm and warn other staff.
- **Panic alarms.** Different types of panic alarms exist, both portable and fixed. If such an alarm is to be used, it is important to ensure that the alarm is connected to a staffed alarm centre with clear action instructions for the alarm operator.
- **Audible signals.** You can have a special audible signal for invacuation, for example. However, this requires staff and students to be familiar with the sound, and that it can be readily distinguished from fire alarms. The signal from such an alarm should never be confused with a fire alarm.

6.5   Sectioning

Sectioning involves making it difficult for the perpetrator to move freely around the school, such as by locking doors that have to be broken or otherwise forced open. Any natural boundaries between different parts of the school should be utilised. Even small measures can make a difference.

Figure 13. Example of sectioning with no action being taken
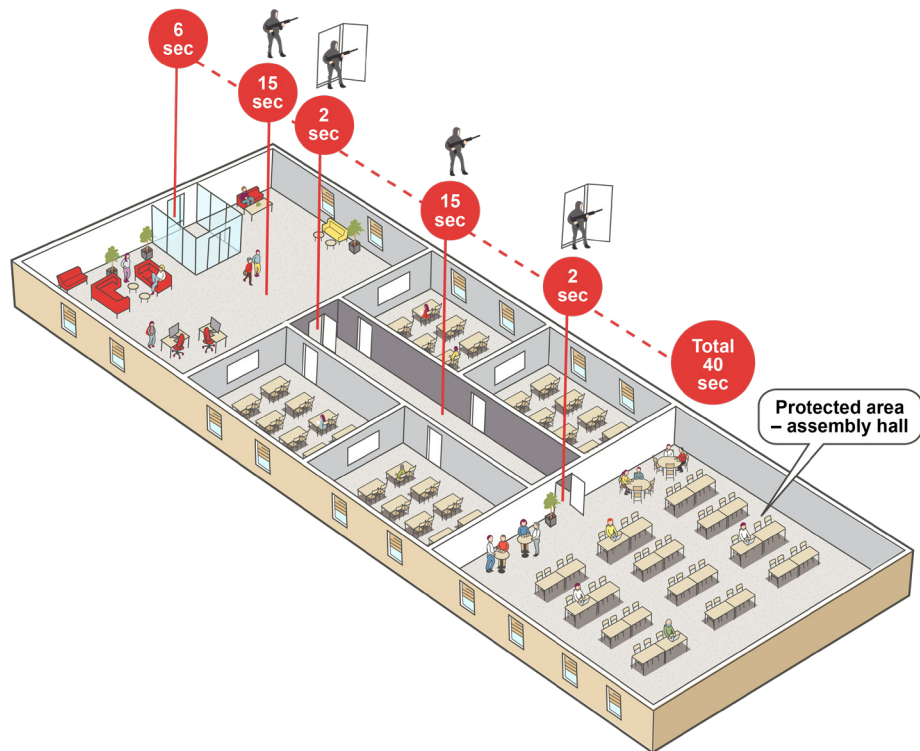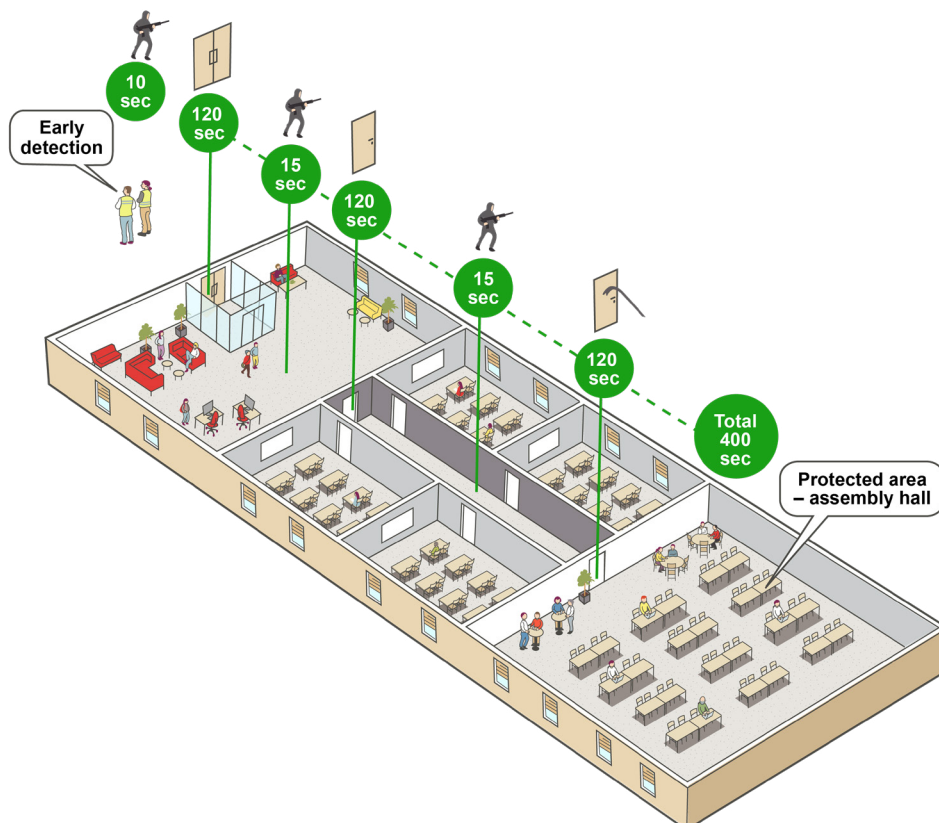

Figure 14. Examples where a number of safeguards have been implemented. Entrance staff detect a threat and manage to close and lock several doors leading to the protected area

6.6 Vehicle protection

Vehicles can be used as weapons in a number of ways; if the perpetrator drives into people or forces their way through obstacles, for example, or if the vehicle contains dangerous objects such as explosives.

Attacks using vehicles do not typically pose a major risk for schools, but the risk should still be considered in situations where large groups of students gather, such as: in areas the immediate vicinity of the school where many students gather, such as at bus stops where students wait for public transport. Another occasion is at end-of-term ceremonies and student graduations, when schoolyards and other gathering places are often packed with people. Temporary vehicle barriers may be necessary on such cases. More permanent measures are largely the responsibility of the municipality.

There are various ways to reduce the risk of a vehicle attack or accidental collision:

- traffic calming measures that reduce speed
- fixed barriers, such as bollards, walls or park benches
- temporary barriers, such as strategically placed vehicles that obstruct direct access to crowds or buildings.

More information about vehicle protection can be found in the MSB guide *Säkerhet i offentlig miljö – Skydd mot antagonistiska hot och terrorism* (Security in public spaces – Protection against antagonistic threats and terrorism).

Figure 15. Vehicle protection – Heavy vehicles
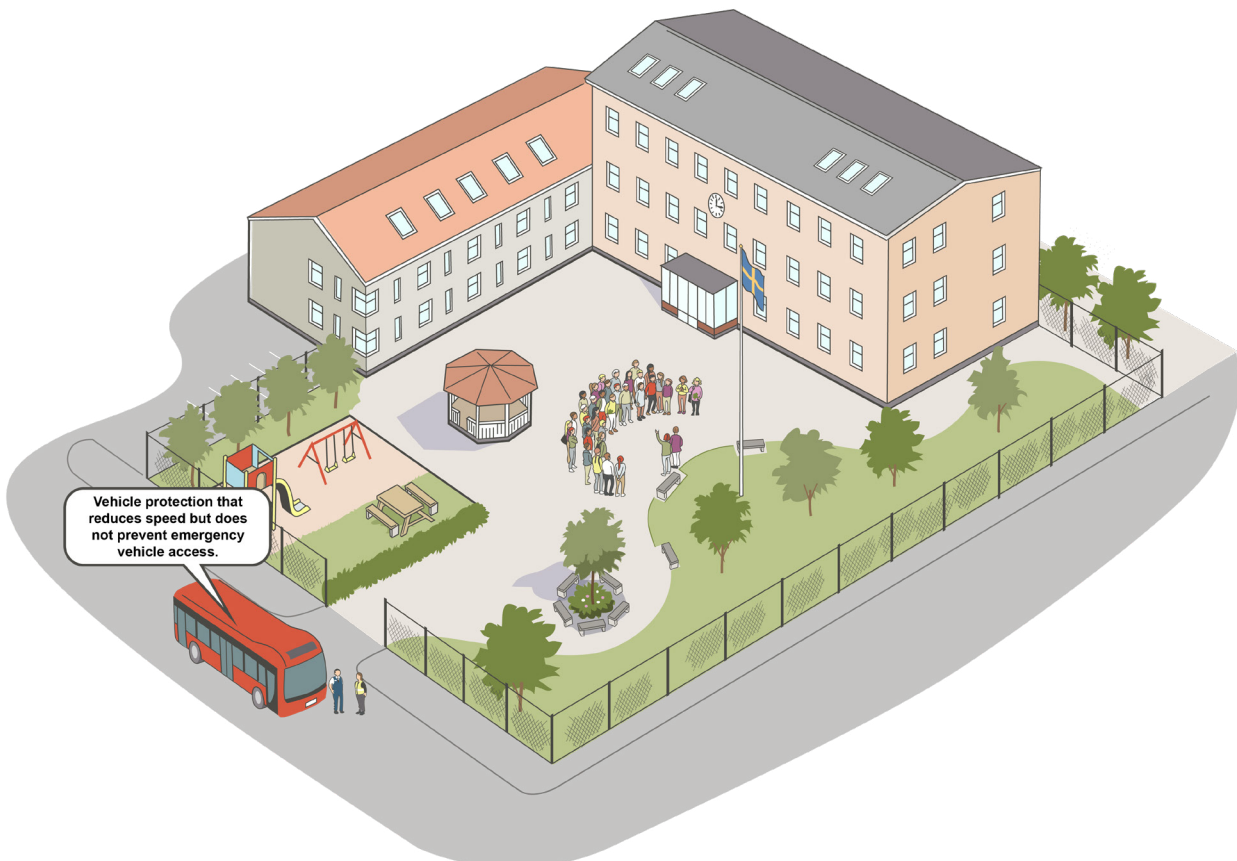
6.7   What to do if a suspicious object is found

Suspicious objects may, for example, include explosive or incendiary devices that have been placed to cause injury or damage to property. In many cases, a placed object is not inherently dangerous, and sometimes it is even positioned in a way that ensures it will be discovered. However, when an object is found that might be dangerous, it is still important to ensure that it is handled systematically.

Decisions often need to be made before the police arrive, and the challenge here lies in the initial assessment, which essentially involves determining whether or not the object is suspicious.

A suspicious object is something that deviates from the norm. To facilitate the identification of suspicious objects, consider the following questions:

- Is the object hidden, or has someone tried to hide it? An item left behind is less likely to have been hidden deliberately.
- Is there anyone near the object who acknowledges ownership of it? Ask whether anyone knows who the object might belong to.
- Is the object clearly suspicious? Does it have visible wires, circuit boards or batteries? Does it contain liquids or explosives? Is the object smoking, or does it smell?
- Does the object fit the regular environment? Seeing a suitcase is normal at a railway station, for example, but would be unusual in a school.

BUSA – Confirm, evacuate, secure the area, report the matter and raise the alarm

If you consider an object to be suspicious, follow the BUSA mnemonic:

- **B – Bekräfta (Confirm):** Identify the object and confirm that it is suspicious. Do not touch the object, and do not use radios or mobile phones within 15 metres of it.
- **U – Utrym (Evacuate):** Evacuate the area within a minimum 100-metre radius if it is a small object, such as a backpack. Instruct people to take cover behind a solid structure and to avoid areas where there windows, glass panels or materials that could be turned into shrapnel.
- **S – Säkra platsen (Secure the area):** Ensure that no one else enters the danger zone. Cordon off the area if possible.
- **A – Anmäl och larma (Report the matter and raise the alarm):** Report the matter to responsible personnel and alert the police.

Ideally, multiple staff members should carry out these steps simultaneously.

Figure 16. BUSA mnemonic – Confirm, evacuate, secure the area, report the matter and raise the alarm

Potential characteristics of an improvised explosive

May sometimes:
- Emit a pungent odour
- Give off smoke
- Catch fire

May contain:
- Wiring
- Film
- Batteries
- Radio receiver
- Metal container
- Timer
- Gas cylinders
- Tape
- Nails, screws

Confirm

- Do not touch the object.
- Is the object hidden?
- Is the object clearly suspicious?
- Does the object fit naturally into the enviroment in question?
- Check whether anyone nearby acknowledges ownership of the object.

Evacuate

- Do not use radios or mobile phones within 15 metres of the object.
- Mark the location, if possible.
- Evacuate the area within a minimum 100-metre radius if it is a small object, such as a backpack.
- Coordinate with colleagues to carry out multiple actions simultaneously.
- Instruct people to take cover behind robust materials that do not produce shrapnel.

Secure the area

- Prevent people from entering the danger zone.
- Cordon off the area if possible.

Report the matter and raise the alarn

- Report the matter to responsible personnel and alert 112.
- Inform the police of the location of the object and the actions taken.

6.8 Good order

Good order in and around the school premises is not just a matter of comfort and appearance. It also serves an important safety function. A pile of empty cardboard boxes could increase the fire risk, a misplaced stack of chairs could block an evacuation route, and a table on which information leaflets are placed could delay access to a fire extinguisher. These seemingly minor hazards may appear insignificant individually, but in combination they can have very significant consequences. These minor hazards can be quickly identified and addressed when everything has its designated place.

Maintaining good order also makes it easier to spot anything that deviates from the norm.

Keep the following in mind:
- Endeavour to create an organised environment that is user-friendly – it should be easy to do the right thing.
- Regularly check fire extinguishers and life-saving equipment.
- Ensure that common areas and outdoor spaces are clean, tidy and well-lit.
- Lock offices, rooms, spaces and storage cabinets that are not in use.
- Repair broken windows or damaged equipment immediately.
- Keep the premises and surroundings in good condition.

Figure 17. Examples of measures against arson
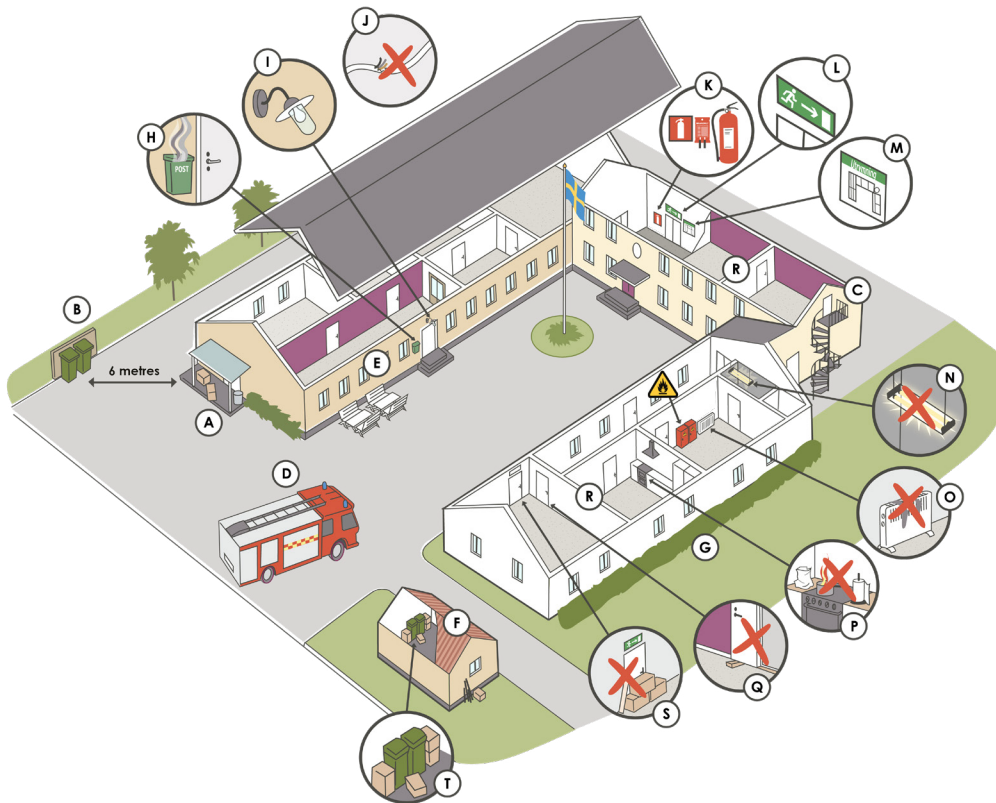

How to reduce the risk of arson

Things to consider outdoors

A. Waste bins can pose a fire hazard if they are overfilled or placed under canopies or mounted on walls. Preferably use non-combustible materials.

B. Avoid keeping loose combustible materials in courtyards or corners, as they could serve as fuel for arson attempts.

C. Evacuation routes such as emergency exits and outdoor staircases must be kept clear of obstacles, cleared to remove snow and treated to prevent slips. Doors must be easy to open from the inside.

D. To ensure that emergency vehicles can get as close as possible to the building during an operation, it is important to plan for this when positioning vehicles and containers, and when clearing snow.

E. Ground-floor windows should have shatter-proof glass and be kept closed to prevent objects from being thrown inside.

F. Storage units or temporary storage spaces must not be placed too close to the main building.

G. Bushes and vegetation near the building should be kept low to improve visibility, which may reduce the risk of arson.

H. Letterboxes can pose a risk of arson.

I. Exterior lighting around the building is crucial for security and visibility. Things to consider indoors

Things to consider indoors

J. Damaged plugs, pinched cables, extension cables or overloaded power strips can cause fire.

K. Fire equipment must be suitable for the premises, sited visibly and marked clearly.

L. Evacuation signs must be visible and intact. Electric signs must be illuminated.

M. Evacuation plans must be clearly posted at entrances.

N. Flashing fluorescent lamps and unprotected hot bulbs can pose a fire hazard.

O. Do not cover radiators or fan heaters, and do not store items on top of drying cabinets.

P. Keep the area around stoves clean and free from combustible materials.

Q. Doors between fire compartments must be closed or held open with magnetic holders that release in the event of an automatic fire alarm. They must not be blocked or propped open in any other way.

R. Fire compartments have fire-rated walls and doors, and the layout can be found in the plans for the building.

S. Evacuation routes must be free from combustible materials and must not be blocked.

T. Excess packaging and waste in storage rooms and indoor waste disposal areas pose an unnecessary fire risk. Keep these areas as clear as possible from unnecessary flammable materials.

7. Recovery following an incident
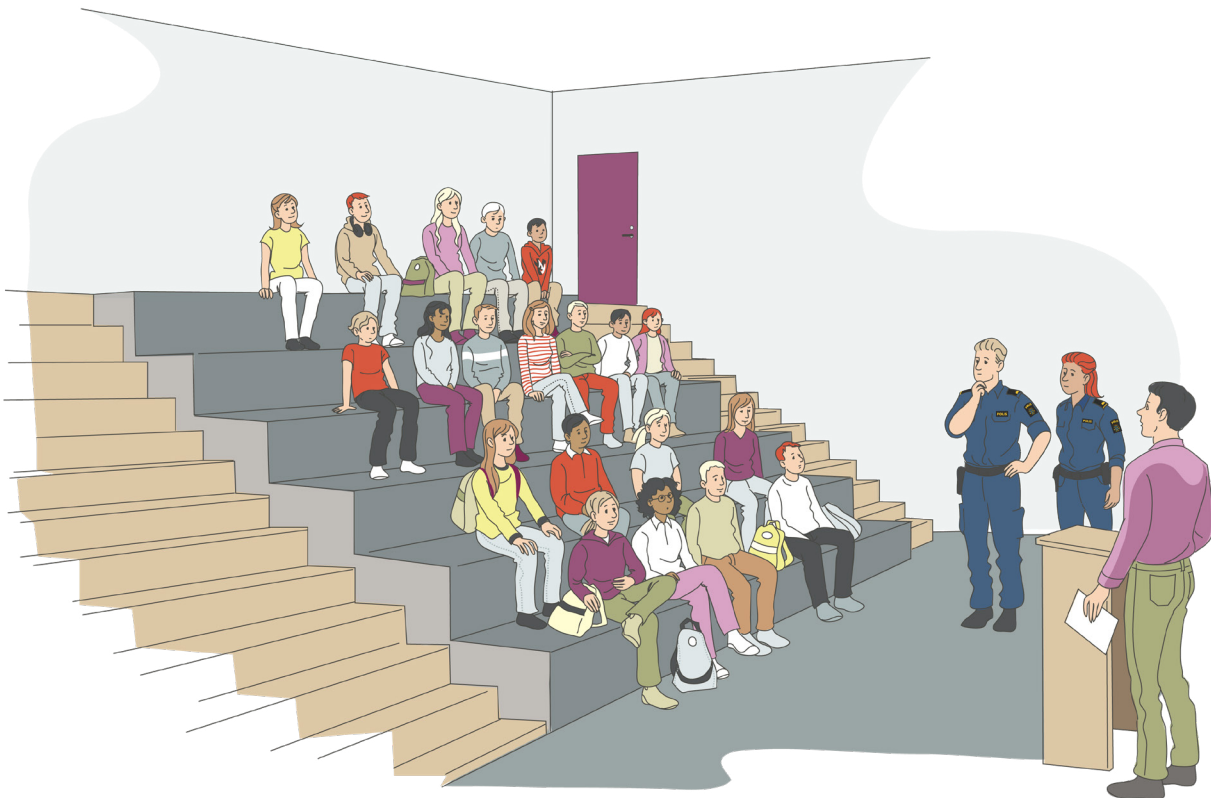
7.1 Crisis communication

Having effective communication can be critical following an emergency. It is essential to ensure that the right information is shared internally with staff and students and externally with guardians, the media, public authorities and the surrounding community, including nearby schools.

Key points to consider:

- Endeavour to reduce the spread of rumours. Provide accurate information as soon as possible. Instruct staff not to speculate in the media.
- Coordinate with the police on what information can be shared so as not to compromise the investigation.
- Ensure that as many people as possible have access to regular and accurate updates. The more people are informed, the better the communication flow.

- Expect to be unable to compete with the speed of the media.
- Assume that access to the school will be restricted while the police are conducting forensic investigations.
- Establish a dedicated crisis communication team separate from regular duties to focus entirely on dealing with the incident.
- Coordinate communication both externally and internally.
- Be prepared to use communication channels other than the mobile network; do not rely on mobile phones to communicate with public authorities, relatives, colleagues, the media, etc. In a large school with many students and staff, mobile networks are likely to become overloaded during a major incident.

The work of and responsibility for crisis communication should be shared in order to ensure efficiency:

- The principal or another member of the school management team should be responsible for internal communication within the school.
- The administration or group management should bear primary responsibility for external communication and any press conferences in collaboration with other relevant parties such as the police.

In the event of a crisis, it is particularly important to ensure that information is fast, accurate, clear and answers the questions being asked by the general public, the media and other organisations. The way the crisis is presented in communications shapes how it is perceived by the media, public authorities, organisations and local residents.

Following an attack, there is often a lot of information and media pressure at various crisis centres. Consider the conditions in advance so that anyone particularly affected receives both support and the information they need, and so that media personnel arriving on the scene receive the information they need. At the same time, it is important to show special consideration for victims who are in shock. It may therefore be beneficial to have designated staff at a crisis centre who are prepared to deal with the media so that victims can be protected.

The following people, roles and communication channels may be useful, either through the school or via the administration/group management:

- **Communications manager.** Appoint a communications manager and at least one deputy.
- **Collaboration personnel.** Designate collaboration personnel from various departments and establish an information team to ensure that the communications manager does not become overwhelmed with detailed practical tasks.
- **Switchboard.** Review staffing and establish round-the-clock procedures for setting up the switchboard and procedures for providing switchboard operators with information.

- **Information centre.** Review procedures for dealing with the most common questions and answers, identifying important queries and passing them on to responsible officers and management. Consider when and how such a function should be initiated.
- **Crisis communication plan.** Have a crisis communication plan ready so that communication efforts can begin quickly.
- **Press officer.** Appoint a press officer who can coordinate a press conference in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

Before starting on crisis communication work, it may be useful to decide or find out the following:

- What are the interfaces between the school and the administration/group management? Who are the contacts, and how can they be reached?
- Who will communicate with guardians at different stages?
- What is the best way to reach guardians?
- Who will communicate with the media at different stages?
- How does collaboration with authorities take place at different stages?
- How does collaboration take place with regard to joint information and messages?
- Should the school have its own press officer or spokesperson?
- Should the school establish its own crisis team? What should its capabilities be?
- Should the school have the ability to set up its own crisis centre? Where should this be located? How should it be staffed?
- Who is responsible for documenting the incident?

Collaboration with key stakeholders

Establish initial contact with the municipality's crisis support organisation or the psychosocial crisis support (POSOM) team, which can provide details on how crisis support is organised in your municipality and map out the stakeholders available in your municipality. Consider whether there are students who do not reside in the municipality. This may affect whether other municipalities are informed in the event of an incident, and if so how.

It may be useful to maintain an updated contact list. The following are examples of roles that should be included in such a list:

- blue light organisations (police, rescue services, healthcare services)
- security coordinators
- on-call municipal officer (TiB)
- other schools in the municipality
- security companies
- religious communities
- the municipality's crisis management function or POSOM team

- public transport services
- caretakers and property owners
- cleanup company
- other related activities.

7.2   Crisis support

A crisis is often described as an incident where previous experiences and learned responses are insufficient to allow an individual to understand and manage the situation. The Swedish Work Environment Authority's directives on first aid and crisis support (AFS 1999:7) describe crisis support as the immediate care of a person in crisis, providing basic compassionate, practical, psychological and social support following a traumatic experience.

Having an effective crisis support programme is particularly important in the school environment, as children and young people are a particularly vulnerable group. They are strongly affected by traumatic events and depend on the support of trusted adults around them. Moreover, depending on their age and maturity, they may express their reactions differently and have varying needs for support.

The employer's responsibilities

Severe incidents such as armed school attacks do not just affect students and staff at the affected school; such incidents affect large parts of society and can even become a national trauma. That is why the need for crisis support and social assistance can quickly overwhelm an affected school and place excessive demands on both occupational health services and student health services. Planning for such a large-scale response can feel overwhelming, and in the heat of the moment there is a risk of trying to do too much and encroaching on the responsibilities of other stakeholders.

That is why employers must systematically plan how crisis support efforts will be organised at the workplace and in collaboration with other stakeholders, both during the immediate crisis and over time. Crisis support must also be clearly defined, ensuring that no organisation takes over the responsibilities of another.

Some key aspects to consider:
- What agreements exist with the occupational health service, how quickly can they respond, and what are the limits of their resources?
- Which measures need to be implemented immediately, and which can be carried out over time?
- Who is the target group for support and information?

Bear in mind that different target groups have different needs for support and information.

It is also important to establish effective cooperation in advance with other schools in the municipality; they may be able to help with student health work or provide evacuation facilities? Other societal stakeholders, such as public authorities and representatives from faith communities and civil society can also take responsibility, contribute and provide support during an incident. The important thing is to ensure that everyone is aware of each other's roles, responsibilities and limitations.

Figure 18. Crisis support for victims
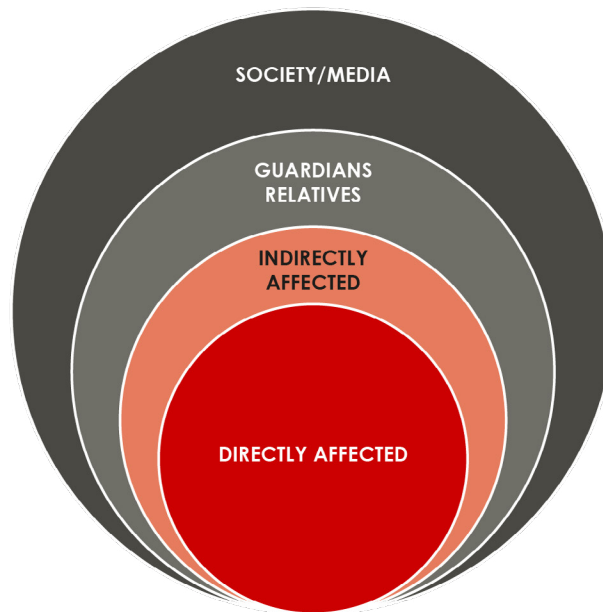
Emergency crisis support in the event of an incident

The crisis team needs to be deployed in the event of a crisis at a school or preschool. The principal often bears primary responsibility for crisis management, but this role can be delegated in an emergency.

- ensure that all students and staff are out of immediate danger and assemble in a safe, secure location that does not pose any further risk
- ensure that students can have contact with and are reunited with their guardians promptly
- address medical needs promptly and attend to the immediate needs of victims, including safety, warmth and water.

Some key points during an incident:

- Obtain contact details for the various members of the crisis team and others such as the police, property managers, alarm companies, social services and local media.
- Call in the crisis team and appoint a crisis leader.
- Ensure that the crisis management team can remain abreast of what is happening, analyse the situation and decide who does what.

- Appoint a secretary to keep a log of what happens and what decisions are made and by whom.
- Designate a person responsible for regular activities.
- Designate a spokesperson responsible for contact with the media. Ensure that the spokesperson receives regular updates and is available to the media.
- Prepare the team to interact with guardians and other relatives and answer their questions.

Sometimes, an incident occurring outside the preschool or school can trigger a crisis within the organisation. In this case, follow the instructions provided by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) on the website www.krisinformation.se, via the Krisinformation app, or by phoning 113 13, and do what the crisis plan says.

Report to the Swedish Work Environment Authority

Employers are always required to investigate and report occupational accidents in the event of serious threats, injuries and deaths in the workplace.

Remember that reports submitted to the Swedish Work Environment Authority become public documents. The purpose of the report is to enable the Swedish Work Environment Authority to initiate an investigation. Therefore, do not include names or any details that could interfere with the police investigation – just provide a brief description of the actual incident.

Reporting forms can be found on the Swedish Work Environment Authority website: Anmäl allvarliga olyckor, allvarliga tillbud eller arbetsskador – Arbetsmiljöverket (anmalarbetsskada.se) (Report serious accidents, serious incidents or occupational injuries – Swedish Work Environment Authority).

7.3   Returning to the regular school day

Gradual return to school

A severe act of violence is traumatic for anyone involved, which is why it is crucial to have a plan for how the school can return to normal operations.

Arrange cleanup and restore the premises to their original condition

Returning to a workplace that still bears traces of the incident should be avoided. Consult the police to find out when the site investigation is expected to be completed so that cleanup can begin.

Investigate in advance what is needed for cleaning up the scene of a crime:

- Is the service included in the existing contract with the school's provider of cleaning services, or does it need to be procured separately?
- Can the service be requested through the property owner's contract with a cleanup company, where applicable? Damaged premises, furniture and equipment should be replaced and restored.

Create a plan for the coming days and weeks

Returning to school following a traumatic event can bring great uncertainty and unpredictability. Providing clear and continuous communication to students, guardians and school staff can help alleviate this.

It is reassuring for staff to know exactly what is going to happen in the coming days and weeks, and what support they can expect to receive to help them deal with their own emotions and reactions to the event, and support linked to their profession and ability to support their students.

Teachers and school staff need information and support before facing students. However, many staff members may experience significant anxiety about handling questions and emotional reactions from students, and about not being able to respond to questions or provide appropriate support for their students. In many cases, teachers and other staff may find themselves in situations where they need to address rumours and misinformation about the incident. That is why it may be beneficial to create a conversation guide in the form of an information sheet containing verified facts about the incident, the measures being taken and the support available, which will ensure that all school staff have access to the same confirmed information.

International research on supporting children following serious incidents identifies several key factors for success:

- Inform and support parents, teachers and other members of the adult community in order to enhance the level of knowledge and increase preparedness.
- Prevent separation between children and their guardians.
- Support opportunities for maintaining contact with friends.
- Maintain everyday activities such as school, preschool, etc. as far as possible.
- Explain the situation to children and give them opportunities to express and communicate their feelings.
- Provide open and honest information and communicate with children, describe the actual situation.
- Allow time for mental and emotional processing through discussion and questions.
- Accept and provide opportunities for play and activities.
- Encourage adults to express their own emotions.
- Allow children to participate in rituals such as funerals and memorial services.
- Limit children's exposure to television and other media coverage.
- Talk to children about emotions such as fear and guilt.
- Ensure that support persons are available in cases where guardians may need assistance.

8. Drills and training
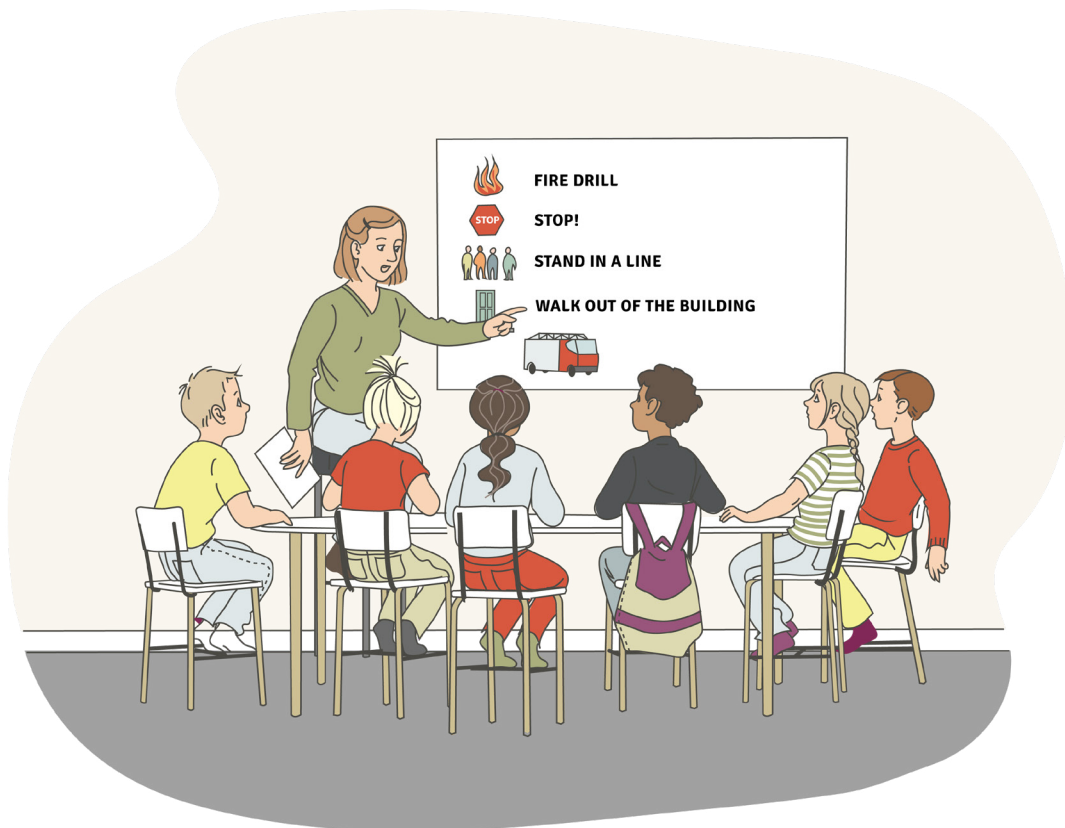
For students, training and drills are primarily intended to provide them with sufficient knowledge to protect themselves in the event of an attack. The intention is the same for school staff, but in this regard it is necessary to provide additional knowledge about various safety and security measures so that staff can actively help to make the school safer and more secure.

The guiding principle involves training both students and staff and conducting drills based on the Run – Hide – Tell principle.

Drills do not necessarily require significant resources in terms of time and money and can be conducted using simple methods and tools. The table below provides examples of different types of drills and exercises, what is required and what they aim to achieve. The simplest form of training is a seminar exercise. A seminar exercise – or tabletop exercise – involves the exercise leader guiding discussions with participants based on a specific question or scenario.

Table 4. Exercise format

Discussion-based exercise	Seminar exercise (tabletop exercise)	Practical drill
Requires few resources and can be managed internally. No disruption or interruption of operations.	Requires more resources and more planning. May also include external stakeholders.	Requires considerably more resources to plan and implement.
Can identify problems in security measures implemented.	Scenarios can be used to identify vulnerabilities.	All staff members have the opportunity to practise their roles.
Does not identify the effectiveness of security measures implemented.	The effectiveness of the security measures implemented can be assessed to an extent. Practical issues do not arise as they would in practical drills.	Practical drills can build confidence in the ability to cope with real events or incidents.

There are advantages and disadvantages to different practice methods. Occasionally conducting full-scale practical drills with staff provides a solid foundation while also fostering trust in the ability to cope with real incidents effectively. This can also serve as a good starting point for more long-term efforts, as it generates interest and focus on issues related to safety and security in schools.

However, drills are only conducted by the people who are present at the time, and as planning a large-scale drill requires a great deal of resources, there is a risk that it will be a one-off event. To a large extent, drills and training aim to create mental preparedness and raise awareness. That is why it is probably more effective to organise simpler training courses more frequently, rather than holding large-scale drills on a small number of occasions.

The vast majority of schools conduct fire drills once a term. These usually take place at a scheduled time under calm and controlled conditions, and participants typically have time to put on hats and gloves in winter or open umbrellas if it is raining.

Even though the drill takes place in a calm and controlled manner, it still serves its purpose by building strong mental preparedness among participants. Since evacuation is the primary response regardless of whether the emergency in question is a fire or an attack, it may be worth considering whether training or practice for an attack scenario could be integrated into the same drill. This would allow for better resource utilisation and help incorporate security measures into a wider context.

8.1   Training and drills for staff

School staff need a knowledge of Run – Hide – Tell, as well as a basic knowledge of security and protective measures that are effective against attacks. Basic knowledge places them in a better position from which to contribute to a safer, more secure school. It can also useful to have basic knowledge of how to assist others, such as how to stop bleeding.

It is important to ensure that all staff who regularly work or spend time on school premises are included in the school's preparations and training. Therefore, external providers such as kitchen staff, cleaners or other staff should also be included.

Suggestions for implementation
1. Regular training for staff by means of lectures or online courses on Run – Hide – Tell, protective principles and how to stop bleeding.
2. Regular fire drills.
3. Regular discussions at workplace meetings, for example: What should you do if this happens?

8.2   Training and drills for students

Students mainly need to know how to protect themselves in the event of an attack, which mainly involves Run – Hide – Tell. Training should take place regularly, preferably in conjunction with fire drills. Before an evacuation drill takes place, it is useful for students to be familiar with their surroundings and have a clear understanding of the locations of all evacuation routes. It is also helpful if students have physically visited the various evacuation routes rather than just seeing them on a diagram.

Being aware of Run – Hide – Tell and the location of all evacuation routes is probably one of the most important aspects of protection against attacks in schools.

Suggestions for implementation
1. Regular Run – Hide – Tell training for students.
2. Regular fire drills.

8.3   Training and drills for children and young people

Historically, school attacks targeting younger children (from primary school age and below) have been very rare. As the perpetrator is often a current or former student, it is natural for training to primarily be directed at older children and teenagers. That is why the educational materials and instruction videos developed by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency and the Swedish Police Authority are mainly aimed at secondary and upper secondary students. However, training and drills may also be needed with younger children depending on needs; if there is a particular risk perspective to consider, for example.

If children are to be able to absorb information, it has to be adapted to their age, maturity, abilities and circumstances. That is why it is important to be aware of children's typical development, needs and abilities, as well as individual children's maturity and abilities. This information is normally held by educators who work at the school.

Broadly speaking, a normally developed twelve-year-old in a safe environment can engage in dialogue in the same way as adults. Hence, it is not harmful for children to receive information and talk about what to do in the event of an attack at school. Moreover, adults often underestimate children's awareness and how much they already know. Children are largely aware of violent incidents happening around the world. There is sometimes a tendency for adults to withhold information with a view to protecting children, leaving them to process difficult situations and thoughts on their own.

During training and drills, it is useful for children to be given the opportunity to get involved on the basis of both their wishes and their needs. Such participation can be encouraged by making it clear what the discussion or training is all about and providing opportunities for dialogue and questions. One method might involve starting off with a knowledge inventory, asking students what they know about various school attacks. After that, the discussion can move on to whether they have thought about what they would do in such a situation. As mentioned previously, full-scale drills involving students are regarded as being an ineffective way to improve knowledge and preparedness. Drills involving students often require extensive preparation and planning. For this reason, it is generally better to provide theoretical training on Run – Hide – Tell, while the practical drill involves conducting a fire drill.

Appendix A: Crisis checklist

The checklist below can be used to support staff in the event of a crisis in school, such as a threat or similar. Follow the checklist to ensure that no important actions are overlooked.

The principal or school management is responsible for leading operations in a crisis. The principal's focus should be on students and staff. The security coordinator, the head of education, the school director and the communications officer are available to support the effort. The security coordinator must always be contacted.

Actions	Completed	Time

Report the situation to the police

- Always call 112 in an emergency or in the event of an ongoing crime ☐ (Time)_____
- Contact the police on 114 14 if the matter is not urgent ☐ (Time)_____

Convene a meeting of the crisis team

- Security coordinator ☐ (Time)_____
- Head of education ☐ (Time)_____
- School director ☐ (Time)_____
- On-call communications officer, KiB ☐ (Time)_____
- Principal ☐ (Time)_____

Communicate the crisis

- Inform staff ☐ (Time)_____
- Contact guardians and students ☐ (Time)_____
- Inform the switchboard ☐ (Time)_____
- Press conference (at the discretion of the press officer/communications manager) ☐ (Time)_____

Contact the emergency

- Contact the alarm team if necessary (locks and alarms) ☐ (Time)_____
- Other staff and roles ☐ (Time)_____
- Inform the kitchen manager and kitchen staff ☐ (Time)_____
- Inform the cleaning manager and cleaning staff ☐ (Time)_____
- Inform the trade union ☐ (Time)_____
- Inform safety representatives ☐ (Time)_____
- Inform the caretaker/manager ☐ (Time)_____
- Supplies (food, contractors, etc.) ☐ (Time)_____

Provide reassurance

- Contact municipal security officers (at the discretion of the security coordinator) ☐ (Time)_____
- Increase staff presence ☐ (Time)_____
- Contact municipal field assistants ☐ (Time)_____

Appendix B Risk assessment

Table 5. Risk assessment of the school's physical environment and procedures

School: **Date:**

Visitors to the school		
Is it clearly stated anywhere that the school is not a public space?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is there clear signage indicating where visitors or contractors should register and sign in when they turn up at the school, for both arrival and departure?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is this information properly displayed on or near the entrance doors?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Does the school office know who is expected to be visiting the school, such as contractors scheduled to carry out work?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Do visitors to the school receive a visitor tag that they need to wear visibly?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Do school staff know what to do if a visitor is not wearing a visible tag?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Do school staff wear visible tags during school hours?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Are new staff informed about visitor procedures and management of keys and tags?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is a log kept of visitors to the school?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is the log inaccessible to unauthorised persons?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Do school staff handle the receipt of deliveries?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is there clear signage indicating where deliveries should be made?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Outdoor areas		
Is the schoolyard supervised properly?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Are there any hiding places where unauthorised persons could conceal themselves?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is the external lighting adequate during the hours of darkness?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Are unusual or suspicious objects checked?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is graffiti and vandalism addressed promptly?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Does the locking system work?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Can the school be locked in the event of an external threat?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Are the external doors clearly marked with letters or numbers?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is there CCTV surveillance of the schoolyard?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Does an alarm alert a security company?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is the school divided into alarm zones?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Are external doors marked with letters or similar identifiers?	☐ Yes	☐ No

Keys and tags		
Do several people have access to the school's master keys?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Are master keys stored in a secure place to prevent unauthorised access?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Are keys signed out, and is there any indication of what access they should provide?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is there an annual review of who has which key and what access they should have?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Are keys and tags returned when a permanent or temporary staff member leaves?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Do students have tags for the school?	☐ Yes	☐ No
If so, are there clear procedures in place regarding how these tags are handled when a student is suspended or leaves the school?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Common areas		
Are fire cabinets and other inspection hatches regularly checked, which includes ensuring that no unauthorised items are being stored there?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Are areas such as ceiling tiles and small storage rooms inspected in the event of suspected sabotage or concealed objects?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is there a procedure for dealing with unattended items, such as forgotten bags?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Are glass partitions kept free of posters?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Are emergency exits kept clear for evacuation purposes?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Are rooms containing hazardous materials kept locked?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Are external doors locked in areas where no active lessons are taking place?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Are evacuation plans still posted up in the designated locations?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is there CCTV surveillance indoors?	☐ Yes	☐ No

Classrooms		
Can each classroom door be locked from the inside?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Do the classrooms have glass partitions?	☐ Yes	☐ No
If so, is it still possible to hide in the room?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Can curtains or blinds be drawn for concealment?	☐ Yes	☐ No
If there are glass partitions, would the broken glass shatter into small fragments or crack into larger pieces?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Can blinds or roller shades be drawn down over the windows?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Are sharp objects such as scissors, knives and tools stored securely to prevent unauthorised access?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Are windows closed at the end of each lesson?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Are doors kept locked to prevent unauthorised access?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Are there motion detectors for indoor lighting?	☐ Yes	☐ No
If so, can they be turned off manually?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Communication		
Is there an all-call system in place at the school?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Can classrooms be contacted using an internal telephone system?	☐ Yes	☐ No

References and further reading

Material from Swedish public authorities

Swedish Work Environment Authority (1999)
Första hjälpen och krisstöd (ADI 534), brochure

Swedish Work Environment Authority (1993)
Våld och hot inom omsorg och skola (ADI 522), brochure

Swedish Work Environment Authority (1993)
Våld och hot inom omsorg och skola (ADI 525), checklist

Regulations

Swedish Work Environment Act (1977:1160).

Swedish Work Environment Authority directive
First aid and crisis support (AFS 1999:7)

Swedish Work Environment Authority directive
Violence and Menaces in the Working Environment (AFS 1993:2)

Books and articles

Lawrence J. Fennely and Marianna A. Perry (2014)
The handbook for school safety and security Best Practices and Procedures

Online references

Swedish National Agency for Education. Säkerhet och krisberedskap i skola och förskola https://www. skolverket.se/skolutveckling/sakerhetochkrisberedskapi-skolaochforskola (accessed on 29 March 2023)

Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency. Säkerhet i offentlig miljö – Skydd mot antagonistiska hot och terrorism https://rib.msb.se/filer/pdf/28917.pdf (accessed on 29 March 2023)

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