Premises and Site Security Policy

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1. Supporting Documents

- Health and Safety Policy (EDU.POL.038)
- Critical Incidents Policy (EDU.POL.045)
- Fire Safety Policy, Procedures & Guidance
- Safeguarding Children in Education Policy (EDE.POL.002)
- Supervision of Pupils Policy (EDU.POL.043)
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Educational Visits Policy (EDU.POL.028)

Related policies are held within RADAR in the School's policy folder.

2. Introduction

At Acorns School, we keep our site safe and secure so that pupils, staff and visitors are protected and our pupils can learn in a calm and settled environment. A secure site is part of how we safeguard children. This policy sets out how we control access to our buildings and grounds, how we keep the premises safe, and how we prepare for and respond to a security threat.

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We are a special school, and we design our security to fit our pupils. Some of our pupils become distressed and may try to leave a room, a building or the site. Our arrangements keep them safe without making the school feel like a locked or institutional place. We aim for a site that is secure, welcoming and therapeutic at the same time.

3. Aim & Scope

This policy applies to all staff, governors, pupils, parents and carers, visitors and contractors at Acorns School, and to the whole of our site, including buildings, grounds and any premises we use off site. It aims to:

- Keep the site secure and control who can enter our buildings and grounds.
- Make sure the premises are safe, well maintained and fit for our pupils.
- Reduce the risk from intruders, violence and terrorism, and prepare a clear response.
- Balance strong security with a calm, welcoming and therapeutic environment.

It is read with our Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Supervision of Pupils and Critical Incidents policies (EDU.POL.045), which carry the detail of the related procedures.

4. Abbreviations and Definitions

Site security. The arrangements that control who can enter our buildings and grounds and that keep the premises safe.

Access control. How we manage entry to and exit from the site, for example through locked doors, gates and signing in.

Lockdown. Securing the building and keeping everyone inside and away from a threat. Invacuation means bringing people in from outside as part of a lockdown.

Public protection procedures. Under Martyn's Law, the procedures staff follow if there is reason to suspect a terrorist act, covering evacuation, moving people to safety, controlling who can enter or leave, and communication.

Standard duty premises. Under Martyn's Law, premises where it is reasonable to expect that 200 or more people may be present from time to time. Larger premises where 800 or more may be present are enhanced duty premises.

5. Policy Content

5.1 Principles and Approach

Our approach rests on the following principles.

- Secure and therapeutic. We keep the site secure in a way that fits our pupils and keeps the school calm and welcoming.
- Safeguarding first. Site security is part of safeguarding, and we treat it that way. We know who is here. We control access and we can account for everyone on site.

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- We plan for the worst and practise. We assess the risks to our premises, including terrorism, and we rehearse our response.
- Security is integrated. Our counter-terrorism, fire, lockdown and safeguarding procedures work as one system, not separate ones.
- Proportionate. We match our security to the real level of risk to our site, and we keep it under review.

5.2 Premises and Site Security in Practice

Controlling access to the site

At Acorns School, we control who can enter our buildings and grounds. External doors and gates are kept secure, entry is through a controlled point, and the boundary is maintained so that people cannot enter or leave unseen. We balance this with the needs of our pupils, so that the site is secure without feeling like a locked institution. The arrangements for our site are set out in the annex.

Visitors and contractors

Every visitor and contractor signs in, shows identification where appropriate, is given a badge, and is supervised in line with our Education Safeguarding Policy (EDE.POL.002). We check the identity and, where required, the vetting of contractors and visiting professionals before they have any contact with pupils. Contractors working on site follow our health and safety and safeguarding rules, and we manage their work so that it does not put pupils at risk.

Knowing who is on site

We keep an accurate record of everyone on site, including pupils, staff, visitors and contractors, so that we can account for everyone in an evacuation or lockdown. This works with our fire and emergency procedures and our Supervision of Pupils Policy (EDU.POL.043).

CCTV and surveillance

Where we use CCTV, we do so lawfully and proportionately to keep the site secure, and we manage the images in line with our Data Protection Policy. We make clear where CCTV is in use.

Keeping the premises safe and maintained

We keep our buildings and grounds safe, clean and properly maintained, in line with Part 5 of the Independent School Standards. We carry out regular premises checks, deal with hazards promptly, and keep records of inspections, servicing and repairs. The detail of premises health and safety is in our Health and Safety Policy (EDU.POL.038).

Counter-terrorism and Martyn's Law

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We assess the risk of a terrorist act affecting our site and we put proportionate protective measures and procedures in place. The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, known as Martyn's Law, places duties on premises where 200 or more people may be present from time to time. At Acorns School, we assess whether our site meets this threshold, including at events, and we apply the duty where it does. Whether or not the threshold is met, we adopt sensible protective security and public protection procedures as good practice, and we keep our assessment under review as the law comes into force.

Public protection procedures

If there is reason to suspect a terrorist act on or near our site, staff follow our public protection procedures. These cover getting people out by evacuation, bringing people in and securing the building by invacuation and lockdown, controlling who can enter or leave, and communicating quickly with everyone on site and with the emergency services. They are the same procedures we use for other serious threats, and the step-by-step response sits in our Critical Incidents Policy (EDU.POL.045) and emergency plan. We plan them with our pupils in mind so that they prompt a safe response rather than panic.

Public-facing events

When we hold an event that the public can attend, for example a performance, fair or sports fixture, we assess the additional security risk, plan access and supervision, and consider whether the event itself falls within Martyn's Law. The arrangements for each event are recorded with the event planning.

Lone working and out-of-hours security

We have arrangements to keep staff safe when they work alone or out of hours, and to keep the site secure when it is closed, including alarms and secure locking up. These arrangements are set out in the annex.

Pupils who try to leave the site

Given the needs of our pupils, some may try to leave the building or site when they are distressed. Our access control reduces the chance of this, and where a pupil has a known risk we put an individual plan in place. Staff respond with relationship and de-escalation first. The full response to a pupil who is missing on site or who has left the site is in our Supervision of Pupils Policy (EDU.POL.043).

5.3 Recording, Monitoring and Reporting

Premises checks, servicing and security incidents are recorded, and any incident with a safeguarding dimension is recorded on CPOMS. Our premises and counter-terrorism risk assessments are documented and dated. Leadership reviews premises and security risks and incidents, reports to the proprietor and governors, and updates the risk assessments and this policy so that Acorns School learns from each incident and from any change in the law.

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The school undertakes an annual security risk assessment which includes visitor management, access control, lone working, site vulnerability and counter-terrorism considerations.

5.4 Equality and Inclusion

At Acorns School, this policy is applied fairly and in line with the Equality Act 2010. We make sure our premises and security arrangements are accessible to disabled pupils, staff and visitors, and that they do not disadvantage any pupil. Our security is designed to keep pupils safe without restricting them more than is necessary. Any concern that this policy disadvantages a pupil should be raised with the headteacher.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Pupils

Follow the rules about doors, gates and signing in and out, and tell a member of staff if they see a stranger on site or a door or gate left open.

6.2 Staff

Follow the access control and signing in arrangements, challenge or report anyone on site who should not be there and keep doors and gates secure; know the lockdown signal and the public protection procedures and act on them.

6.3 Leadership

Leadership at Acorns School makes sure the site is secure, the premises are safe and maintained, the premises and counter-terrorism risk assessments are in place and current, and staff are trained. Leadership leads the response to a security incident.

6.4 Governance

The proprietor and governors at Acorns School make sure the school has effective premises and site security arrangements and that this policy is followed, and they review premises risks and security incidents.

6.5 Parents and carers

Follow the site's arrangements for entering and leaving, wear a visitor badge when asked, and do not hold doors or gates open for people they do not know.

6.6 Named leads

The person responsible for premises and site security at Acorns School Marple is the Headteacher, Miranda Rathmell. The designated Safeguarding Lead is Paula Tankard. The deputy designated safeguarding lead is Carrie-Anne Harrison. Where Martyn's Law applies to our site, the senior individual responsible for it is the Headteacher.

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The person responsible for premises and site security at Acorns School Ashley is the Headteacher, Paula Tankard. The designated safeguarding lead is Paula Tankard. The deputy designated safeguarding lead is Ellie Coot. Where Martyn's Law applies to our site, the senior individual responsible for it is the headteacher.

7. Training Requirements

All staff are trained on access control, signing in and out, challenging strangers, and the lockdown and public protection procedures, as part of induction and regular updates. Staff receive counter-terrorism awareness training appropriate to their role, for example the nationally recognised Action Counters Terrorism training, and we rehearse our lockdown and public protection procedures so that staff and pupils can act quickly at Acorns School.

8. Equality Impact Statement

All policies will be developed and implemented in a manner that promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring fair and equitable treatment for all individuals. Policies must align with relevant equality legislation and reflect the expectations and standards set by our regulatory bodies. They will demonstrate a commitment to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering an inclusive environment that respects and values the diverse needs, backgrounds, and experiences of those we support, as well as our workforce.

9. Sources of Information / References

This policy reflects current statutory guidance and legislation, including:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Part 5 on the premises and accommodation of pupils, read with the Independent School Standards guidance (April 2026).
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, known as Martyn's Law, whose duties are expected to come into force in 2027 after an implementation period, and which is regulated by the Security Industry Authority.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025, and the 2026 version from 1 September 2026), in particular site security and the checks on visitors and contractors.
- Prevent duty guidance (Home Office).
- Equality Act 2010, so that our premises and security arrangements are accessible to disabled pupils, staff and visitors.
- DfE guidance on emergency planning and response, and on school and college security.

10. Version Control

This document can also be found in Radar.

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This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes, including as the duties under Martyn's Law come into force. The named owner for review at Acorns School is the headteacher.

11. Appendices

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11.1 Appendix A: School-Specific Annex

At Acorns School Marple, the following local arrangements apply:

- Site boundaries, gates and controlled entry points are the side gate to the secondary outside area, the gate to the primary outside area, the two front entrances and the side entrance. These are all kept locked, and entrance is via a video entry system.
- Visitor and contractor sign-in and badging is the responsibility of the Administrator, and will take place in the admin office.
- We do not have CCTV on site.
- Lockdown signal is a radio message to say 'attention all staff: secure the building'. Our lockdown procedure is:

1. Follow staff instructions immediately without asking questions or leaving the room.
2. Move to the designated safe area in the classroom or nearby room, away from doors and windows where possible.
3. Stay low and out of sight if directed by staff.
4. Remain silent and calm, with mobile phones silenced (if pupils have them).
5. Do not open doors or leave the room unless instructed by a recognised member of staff or emergency services.
6. Wait for the all-clear before resuming normal activities.

- The site does not meet the Martyn's Law threshold.
- The premises lead and senior individual for site security is the Headteacher
- Out-of-hours security, alarms and locking up are the responsibility of the Headteacher
- We do not currently have pupils with an individual plan for leaving the site. The generic procedure for a pupil who leaves site without permission is for staff to keep them in line of sight and alert SLT that a pupil is off the premises. If pupil is no longer in sight, staff supporting are to inform SLT who will contact parents, social care, and/or police as appropriate.

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At Acorns School Ashley, the following local arrangements apply:

- Site boundaries, gates and controlled entry points: There is a main gate off from the car park that leads to the building, this is for pedestrian access only. There are double gates on the playground where vehicles can enter the playground area if needed. To enter the building, you would need a fob, a set of keys and an alarm fob. There is a key safe in the playground, near the common room steps.
- Visitor and contractor sign-in and badging: All visitors must report to reception where they are signed in by the administrator. This includes safeguarding information, fire drill, evacuation information and contractor sign in.
- CCTV locations and management: There is CCTV covering the outside of the building, playground and gates. This is controlled in the admin office via a separate monitor and PC connection.
- Lockdown signal and procedure:
    - Lockdown Lockdown Lockdown spoken into the radios.
    - All staff to move pupils into the nearest classroom. Place tables behind the door and ask pupils to go under the desks
    - If pupils are outside the staff will need to radio for SLT advice on where is best to place the pupils and staff.
    - All blinds and windows closed.
    - Communicate to the headteacher or deputy headteacher which children and which staff are in the classroom.
    - The headteacher or deputy headteacher to use the emails / text messages to ensure the whereabouts of all staff.
    - The headteacher to call appropriate emergency services / Keys staff.
    - Headteacher to liaise with emergency personnel and to communicate with staff.
    - Headteacher to use the radios to communicate when lockdown is over.
    - Headteacher or deputy headteacher to complete after incident de-brief.
- Whether the site meets the Martyn's Law threshold, and the public protection procedures: The school does not meet the threshold for Martyn's law.
- Premises lead and senior individual for site security: Headteacher and Caretaker.
- Out-of-hours security, alarms and locking up: The school is usually locked up be the contract cleaner as his shift finishes between 6:30 and 7:00 pm. However, members of the SLT sometimes lock up. The school is opened by a member of SLT (usually the headteacher. However, all staff have keys to enter the building and those who arrive early have an alarm fob. The school has an out of hours security company that regularly patrols around the school site in the evening and weekends.
- Pupils with an individual plan for leaving the site: One pupil has a PEEP, their 1:1 support worker and class teacher are aware and will manage their evacuation.

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11.2 Appendix B: Site Security Quick-Reference

Use these steps if there is an intruder or a suspicious person on or near the site. Protect pupils first. Record the incident afterwards.

1. Stay calm and do not approach anyone who may be dangerous. Keep pupils with you and away from the person.

2. Alert the person leading the response and nearby staff. Say where the person is and what they are doing.

3. If there is a threat to people, start lockdown using the agreed signal and follow the public protection procedures. Move pupils away from doors, windows and sight lines.

4. Account for pupils, staff and visitors, and report anyone missing to the person leading the response.

5. Call 999 if there is any threat to safety. Follow the instructions of the police when they arrive.

6. Keep pupils calm, supervised and informed at a level they can manage, and follow individual plans for those who need support.

7. Wait for the all-clear from the person leading the response or the police before returning to normal.

8. Once it is safe, record the incident, inform the designated safeguarding lead, and review what happened to improve the arrangements.

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