



## SAFETY MATTERS

RISK  
MANAGEMENT  
NEWSLETTER

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MAY 6, 2022

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## 7 TIPS TO PROTECT YOUR SCHOOL FROM VANDALISM

**OBJECTIVE** When vandalism occurs, it can disrupt the normal learning process for students while forcing the school to spend additional time and resources to repair the damaged item(s). Consider these 7 tips to protect your school from vandalism.

Certain physical attributes of school buildings and grounds affect their vulnerability to vandalism and break-ins. It's not uncommon for schools to become the target of vandalism. According to the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics, 38% of schools reported having one or more incidents of vandalism either on the school grounds or at a school-sponsored event such as a sports game. Here are 7 tips to protect your school from vandalism.

### 1. Connect with the Local Police Department

Most police departments will gladly work with you to protect your school from vandalism. For instance, you can call to request regular patrols during the evenings and nights when the property is unoccupied. Just the presence of a patrol car driving by on a regular basis is often enough to deter potential vandals.





## 2. Set Up Video Surveillance Monitoring

Installing a video surveillance system will also help protect your school from vandalism. Consider setting up outdoor video cameras around your school's property, covering all angles and points of entry. Some schools only have a couple of video cameras, leaving certain areas unprotected — and it only takes one unprotected area to provide an ideal target for vandals. The bottom line is that your school's video surveillance system needs to cover all areas of the property. Video surveillance can also be a strong deterrent to violence on school campuses.

## 3. Install an Access Control System

Unfortunately, vandals aren't the only worry for school administrators and parents. Ensuring that only people who have the authority to access your buildings or specific areas of your school is becoming paramount in today's climate of violence on campuses. Access control can range from number pads to card readers to high tech biometric hand and finger scanners — meaning only those with passwords, badges, or biometric markers can enter buildings or secure areas. Combined with video surveillance, administrators can monitor who approaches a building and grant or deny access if the person (such as a parent or volunteer) does not have prior authority to access an area.

## 4. Install Fencing

Fencing should be determined on a school-by-school basis, as all sites have different security needs. School security teams can help to evaluate weaknesses in existing perimeter and playground fencing and determine the need for additional fencing. Fencing material should not be easy to vandalize, cut, or climb. Ornamental fences, such as wrought iron, are considered the best in these cases. High-quality ornamental fences are also low maintenance, which saves money over the years. While chain-link is often the most economical option, it can be easy to climb and vandalize. Perimeter fencing should include at least two points of entry in case one is blocked during a crisis. Additional access points should be considered if students would be potentially in harm's way circumnavigating an uninterrupted fence line. Access points should be wide enough for grounds maintenance and emergency vehicles.



## 5. Have Students Paint a Mural

If there's a particular building or outside wall that's being targeted with graffiti, consider having the students paint a mural over it. This isn't a fool-proof way to protect your school from graffiti vandalism, but it may help. [GraffitiHurts.org](http://GraffitiHurts.org) reports that vandals rarely tag paint brush murals. Besides, students are sure to appreciate the fun hands-on experience of painting a mural.

## 6. Install an Alarm System

We can't talk about ways to protect a school from vandalism without mentioning an alarm system. A professional-grade alarm system will create an invisible barrier of protection around your school. If a vandal or some other individual with nefarious intent enters the building during off-hours, the alarm will trip, creating a loud audible buzz or siren while simultaneously notifying the respective monitoring company.

## 7. Connect with the Community

Last but not least, seek help from the community in protecting your school from vandalism. It's in the community's best interest to preserve the integrity of the educational system, so most citizens will gladly offer their assistance. Whether this includes reporting suspicious activity, donating money for repairs, or volunteering to clean up vandalized property, connecting with the local community is a step toward creating a safer environment for everyone.

*This California Schools JPA fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.*





# SIGN-IN SHEET

## 7 TIPS TO PROTECT YOUR SCHOOL FROM VANDALISM

Trainer: \_\_\_\_\_ Trainer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

### Class Participants:

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