

How Safe Is Your Child's School?

by NewsUSA

As a parent, have you ever thought about whether your child's school was designed and built with security in mind?

To raise awareness of school safety and security issues, the National Crime Prevention Council - best known for its icon McGruff the Crime Dog - developed the "Be Safe and Sound" initiative. The initiative offers tools and tips on how schools can be made safer and more secure for students and staff.

There are several basic measures that schools can take to help ensure a secure learning environment for children. The National Crime Prevention Council offers the following guidelines:

Visitors should be required to sign in or show proper identification. Unmonitored doors should be locked from the outside at all times to prevent unauthorized persons or items from entering the building unnoticed. Students entering and exiting the school property should be monitored. The receptionist should be equipped with a panic button for emergencies, a camera with a monitor at another location and a high-security lock on the front door that can be controlled. Access to identification badges, office keys and codes should be restricted and a process for reporting missing badges and keys should be in place. All doors should have high-security locks or electronic access control units. This applies especially to closets that have private information or hazardous materials, as well as outside doors and basements. Motion-sensitive and constant lights should be used outdoors. Dark places around the building should be illuminated and shrubs should be cut back so light can penetrate these areas. Stairwells and out-of-the-way corridors should be well-lighted. All doors should be solid. Sheet steel should cover both sides of the back and basement doors. Door frames and hinges should be strong enough to prevent them from being pried open. The National Crime Prevention Council suggests that parents talk to their children's principal and work with the school's PTA to encourage the school to implement these measures. If they remain concerned, they can team up with other parents to insist that their local school board make building security one of its top priorities.

The Be Safe and Sound initiative is conducted in collaboration with National PTA and funded by the Allstate Foundation, the locking solutions company ASSA ABLOY Group and the Security Industry Association. To learn more, visit www.ncpc.org/besafe.

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